

Engaging Young People in Volunteering

Tip sheet and activities for volunteer managers

This tip sheet was developed in collaboration with Boroondara Youth Voice, a youth reference group of young people in Boroondara. They shared their insights on the most effective ways to engage their peers in volunteering.

This tip sheet shares 4 key areas of youth volunteer engagement that community organisations can apply to their own programs.

1

Communication & Outreach

- **Be clear and direct:** Young people prefer concise, upfront information about roles, time commitment, tasks, flexibility, and impact.
- **Adopt a targeted approach:** Tailor volunteering opportunities to match young people's specific interests and skills.
- **Leverage social media:** Use fun, visually engaging content with minimal text. However, posters still remain an effective tool in schools and universities.
- **Promote group volunteering:** Encourage young people to get involved with their friends, making the experience more welcoming and fun.



2

Role Discovery & Matching



- **Speed networking:** Facilitate quick chats between young people and organisations to explore opportunities.
- **Highlight specific roles:** Avoid generic volunteering posts; showcase individual opportunities with clear requirements.
- **Short-term tasters:** Offer short term volunteering roles to let youth experience volunteering before committing long-term.

3 Motivation & Messaging

- **Focus on community impact:** Emphasise how volunteering helps society, not just personal benefits.
- **Career relevance:** Highlight how volunteering can enhance resumes and career prospects.
- **Appeal to values:** Many young people value giving back to their community, are passionate about causes but aren't actively seeking roles. Present opportunities proactively and show the value in the role.
- **Show impact:** Share stories, motivation and messaging of real volunteers and the difference they've made. Offer certificates or awards to recognise contributions.



4 Accessibility & Inclusion



- **Make it easy to join:** Clearly state age limits and experience requirements.
- **Flexible options:** Offer roles that accommodate busy schedules due to work or study.
- **Use trusted channels:** Partner with schools, councils, and youth organisations to build credibility.
- **Interactive format:** In training or induction, use games (e.g., Kahoot), videos, storytelling, and hands-on activities.
- **Location matters:** Promote roles where young people already are, like schools, universities and youth groups.

3

Activities to put this into practice

1. Volunteer opportunity audit:

Use the following checklist to audit your current volunteer advertisements:

- ☐ the role is clearly described
- ☐ the role is flexible and can be completed alongside study or part time work
- ☐ the tasks and benefits appeal to young people's motivation
- ☐ the role requirements are clear (eg. Working With Children Check)
- ☐ the ad has been reviewed by a young person to check tone and clarity
- ☐ clear contact details or a way to express interest / ask more questions

2. Flexi-match your enquiries:

Turn enquiries into active volunteers by asking key questions and adapting roles.

Create a simple flow chart with columns for:

- Volunteer Interests (e.g. sport, tech, art)
- Volunteer Skills (e.g. social media, event planning)
- Check if any current roles match these interests and skills
- Consider if any roles can be adjusted to benefit the volunteer AND your organisation

Use this to guide conversations with young volunteers.

3. Volunteer taster event:

Design a short term experience for young people to try out volunteering

1. Choose a simple, half or full day activity
2. Make it fun, social, and easy to join
3. Ensure volunteers can bring a friend
4. Make sure information on how to join is available
5. Promote it in schools or youth groups with clear information and visuals