

FLEXIVOL

Following the 1997 National Survey for Volunteering in the United Kingdom, the Institute for Volunteering Research published the report What Young People Want from Volunteering. It summarises what 16-24 year olds want from their volunteering experience and is now used by many volunteer organizations across Europe as a framework for developing their volunteer programmes.

FLEXIVOL stands for:

Flexibility: The most important factor in terms of time and commitment. The pressures and demands on young people as well as all the activities open to them, make it hard for them to find the time to make a long-term commitment to volunteering. Taster sessions, casual and 'drop-in' volunteering, short-term and one-off challenges, and recruiting a large pool of young people so you can rotate their input are all strategies you can use to ensure exibility.

Legitimacy: Creating a positive image of volunteering encourages young people to volunteer. Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting has a role to play to ensure that our young members are educated from an early age on the positive results of volunteering, and to overcome negative stereotypes. Introducing young people to the world of volunteering and the opportunities available to them is an important way to raise awareness.

Ease of access: Many young people simply don't know how to volunteer or who to contact. More information, more encouragement and easy points of entry into an organization would help break down these obstacles.

eXperience: Young people want relevant, useful experience and the chance to learn new skills. They want exciting opportunities in areas that interest them and the chance to explore different careers and to get work experience.

Incentives: This is not about providing financial reward (although expenses should be reimbursed wherever possible) but about how volunteers are recognised and rewarded such as by giving references validating their volunteer activities or certificates and qualifications attesting to their achievements.

Variety: Does your association offer variety in the types of volunteer roles it offers based on age, commitment and responsibility? Providing a range of options will attract the widest possible range of young people.

Organisation: Young people report that it's important volunteer organisations have a relaxed environment where they feel welcomed and valued but which is not over-organised or heavily supervised. They also want support when needed, the chance to progress when they're ready, and the ability to monitor their achievements and the outcomes of their activities.

Laughs: Volunteering should be an enjoyable and satisfying experience. Most young people like to socialise and are more likely to continue as volunteers if they are enjoying themselves. How can you create a positive atmosphere and ensure there is opportunity for laughter and fun?

<https://www.wagggg.org/documents/220/11.volunteering-toolkit-final.pdf>