



GYV

Generation Y Volunteer;

An exploration into engaging young people in
HACC funded volunteer involving organisations.

Nicole Adams
Youth Development
Volunteering Tasmania
10/2/2009

Authorised by:
Adrienne Picone
CEO
Volunteering Tasmania

Executive Summary

There are many individuals and groups working on strategies to boost volunteer numbers, particularly when it comes to engaging young people in volunteer activities. The abundance of resources available focusing on how to best interact, attract and satisfy young people, in particular 'Generation Y' can be overwhelming.

Home and Community Care (HACC) funded Volunteering Tasmania to undertake a Youth development Project. As a result this research was initiated to discover the most effective ways in which young people can be encouraged to participate in volunteer activities. To effectively accomplish this, two key areas were explored:

- The perceptions and attitudes of young Tasmanians toward volunteering.
- Current practice within HACC organisations in regards to young volunteers.

The major assumptions in the initial stages of research were that young people were put off by the services HACC organisations offered and that volunteering in general didn't appeal to young people. The research uncovered the following points;

- Motivation to volunteer is not a problem. Young people are enthusiastic to learn and gain a wide range of experiences.
- Lack of information on; the benefits of volunteering, the diverse sectors in which volunteering can take place and local volunteer opportunities, is a major barrier to participation.
- Organisational culture can make or break the success of volunteer involvement.
- Open communication is essential for volunteer success stories.
- Young people and the community as a whole receive great benefits from youth participation in volunteering.
- Lack of young people in volunteering roles is not sector specific.

Organisations which engage young people in volunteer activities are key players in tackling social inclusion, creating social capital and growing community capacity. They play an integral part in allowing young people to build skills and grow self worth. These organisations help young people find their place in the community and instill a sense of belonging and responsibility, fostering positive community contribution from individuals into the future.

This report will guide the reader through its content and aid thinking on the ways volunteering can be invigorated. The participation of the next generation in civil activities is essential to the survival of many services.

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
INTRODUCTION.	5
LITERATURE	7
Young People	7
Organisations	8
Community	9
METHODOLOGY	11
Research objectives	11
Data sources	11
Data collection	12
Analysis	14
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	15
Youth	15
HACC Volunteer involving organisations	24
Youth views on HACC.	28
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	30
BIBLIOGRAPHY	32

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank all the volunteer coordinators representing various HACC organisations that gave their time, expressed their views and gave me insight into the running of their programs. Thanks also to all the young people who participated in the interview process, especially to those who showed genuine interest in the project by offering great insight, complete answers and asking further questions throughout the interview.

Special thanks to my work colleagues for reading and improving my work, for their input, ideas and their patience in seeing me finalise the report. Volunteering Tasmania Acknowledge the State Government of Tasmania, The Department of Health and Human Services and the Home and Community Care sector for the their support of funding to carry out this research.

Introduction.

'They lack commitment, are self centred, have no respect for others and don't value community'. This sentiment in the wider community is often the portrayal we hear of young people. The 1 in 5, 11-24 year old Tasmanian's who do volunteer¹ are often overlooked and the negative stereotype often resonates in everyday comments.

"Young people don't have enough life experience or skills to relate to old people, they are not interested in age care."(Primary research 2009)

This stigmatization of young people by society is by no means a new phenomenon, in fact Socrates commented in 425BC;

*"Children nowadays are tyrants- they gobble their food, contradict their parents and tyrannise their teachers!"*²

A lack of understanding toward the younger generation will continue to be common place, unless society is ready to listen, acknowledge and accept the ways that each generation sees and thinks about the world around them. This insight and acceptance into the psyche of young people is a major step on the path to effectively engaging the next generations in civil society.

In recent years there has been extensive research comparing the different generations. An expansive range of topics have been covered; from the impact food advertising has on different age groups, to their workplace expectations within a job. It leaves us asking 'what is accurate and what should we believe'?

McCrindil² discusses the change in workplace dynamics when employing 'generation Y'. For this generation, age and dedicated service are no longer grounds on which to be served promotions or to demand colleague respect. This generation assess worker value on the worker's understanding of the job/industry, their performance and the attitude they bring to the workplace. This is not to say 'Gen Y' don't wish to work with or respect their older colleagues - in

¹ **Mission Australia.** *national survey of young Australians* . s.l. : Mission Australia, 2008.

² **McCrindil, Mark.** *New Generation At Work*. Baulkham hills : McCrindell research, 2006.

fact, figures state that 32.7% of surveyed participants (aged 15-29) think a mix of different ages creates a better work environment and a further 35.1% said that age doesn't matter at all².

This understanding and adaption is not only necessary for employer-employee relationships but also for those wishing to recruit and coordinate young volunteers. Locke & Rowe³ stress the need for new/young volunteers to be recruited, retained and encouraged to develop their leadership skills. This should allow organisations to function into the future without putting undue strain on volunteers already engaged in their services. If new volunteers are not encouraged and retained, existing volunteers may experience excess strain, creating high levels of stress and burnout, possibly leading to the closure of programs and services.

2007 saw the release of the Demographic Change Advisory Councils issues Paper/*Challenges and Opportunities* (2007) and the findings of The University of Tasmania's study on *Sustainability of Rural Volunteers in Tasmania* (2008). In response to topics raised in both papers, Volunteering Tasmania successfully sought funding from the Home and Community Care Program (HACC) to recruit a Youth Development- Project Officer. The primary aim of that position was to develop and implement strategies for engaging young people as volunteers within HACC funded organisations.

In order for the project officer to gain firsthand knowledge on the current thoughts of Tasmania's young people toward volunteering and explore the attitudes, practices and organisational culture within HACC volunteer involving organisations, a new research project was undertaken. This report presents the findings from that research and outlines recommendations for action.

³ Locke, Fran and Rowe, Penelope M. *Engaging Young Volunteers in Rural Newfoundland*. Toronto : Knowledge Development Centre, Imagine Canada, 2006.

Young People

It is acknowledged that young people are categorised as belonging to a varied array of age groups. For the purpose of this research young people were defined as between the age of 12-30 years. This is due to indications from the HACC volunteer sector that 30 was considered young for individuals engaged in current volunteering activities. Also this age bracket covers the definition of generation Y; born between the years of 1980-1994⁴ on which extensive engagement and management research has been published.

'Gen Y' is a product of the civil rights movement, having grown up with cultural diversity, body piercings and bold hair colours as the norm. They are extremely tolerant of others appearances, respect their personal experiences and expect that acceptance to be reciprocated. This is a generation comfortable with endless variety and change, with constant developments in technology bringing life to their fingertips; they're familiar with fast and convenient. Patience is no longer a virtue but a trait that may leave you behind in the wake of change and opportunity⁵.

Considering these broad generational traits, it is of little surprise Ellis⁶ calls on the need for a volunteering image makeover to successfully engage young people, one that highlights its great diversity, opportunity and potential for self development. She identified the process should be peer led using those already involved to spread the word on the benefits of volunteering. Ellis moves on to discuss the need for this reinvigoration to be backed up by a fresh take on how organisations are seeking to engage young people.

Volunteering Australia⁷ highlight the fact that young people must not be stigmatized as a homogenous group, there is a need to recognise that whilst they may be sharing similar

⁴ McCrindil, Mark. 2006. Ibid .p. 8.

⁵ Merrill Associates. 2005. Call them Gen Y or Millennials; They Deserve Our Attention . *Merril and Associates*. [Online] may 2005. [retrieved: June 11th, 2009.] <http://www.merrillassociates.net/topic/2005/05/call-them-gen-y-or-millennials-they-deserve-our-attention>.

⁶ Ellis, Angela. 2004. Reasearch Bulletins. *Institute for Volunteering Research*. [Online] 2004. [retrieved: 6 11, 09.] <http://ivr.org.uk/NR/exeres/06A50AF2-EDCD-4801-B479-02F00F622DF3.htm>.

⁷ Volunteering Australia. *young people and Volunteering- Take a Closer Look*. Melbourne : Volunteering Australia, 2007.

transitional life experiences the way they face situations and deal with challenges will be diverse. Equally the attitudes and perceptions they hold will depend on varying influences such as age, family structure, peer influences, gender and cultural background.

Organisations

HACC is a branch of the Health and Humans Service Department under both State and Federal Governments. Its primary role is to provide community based care to the 'frail aged' and young people with disabilities with the aim to promote independence to avoid long term residential care⁸.

The Tasmanian Demographic Change Advisory Council⁹ discuss the impact an aging population will have on volunteer recruitment, it suggests that a shift in views and attitudes toward volunteering is already evident. They state the 40-50 age bracket are more likely to volunteer in something of interest or a role which reflects their skills, rather than the traditional influence of civil duty.

Young people are seeking job opportunities and the chance to support causes they believe in or feel strongly about. To attract them, organisations need rethink traditional volunteering roles, be ready to offer opportunities that are growth orientated and offer reachable goals with visible benefits¹⁰.

The need for volunteer job descriptions and the benefits they bring to both organisations and volunteers cannot be emphasised enough. They enable organisations to target and recruit young people for specific tasks, tease out development opportunities and identify relevant training needs. It allows the potential recruit to view a clear outline of commitment requirements, understand the extent of their responsibilities and imagine possible outcomes. A clear position description is also easily transferred to a resume and offers more possibilities to expand on interests and self development than a general call for willing volunteers¹¹.

⁸ Department of Health and Human Services. Health and wellbeing directory. *Department of Health and Human Services*. [Online] [retrieved: june 11, 2009.] http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/health_and_wellbeing/hacc.

⁹ Demographic Change Advisory Council. 2007. *Demographic Change In Tasmania: challenges and opportunities*. Hobart : Printing Authority of Tasmania, 2007.

¹⁰ Fryer, Andy. 2001. Engaging and retaining volunteers for youth development. *The source*. [Online] 2001. [retrieved: june 17, 2009.] www.thesource.gov.au/ausyouth/conf_pdf/pg22.pdf.

¹¹ Locke & Rowe, 2006. *ibid* .p. 13

The University of Tasmania¹² research recommendations suggest that organisations experiencing difficulties recruiting new volunteers should examine the internal organisational culture. They may benefit by assessing whether the existing culture is off-putting to new comers or difficult to penetrate. Change to an organisation and attitudes within may be needed for an organisation to survive. This was certainly the case within some HACC organisations interviewed for the research, programs had been run in a similar fashion for many years with some only ‘just surviving’. With a little adjustment to the way they publically present their programs and new initiatives in volunteer recruitment and involvement, these organisations may thrive.

Community

“Volunteering is essential to creating an inclusive and mutually supportive society” Tony Blair¹³

The question asked by many volunteer coordinators is; “why put in this extra effort to recruit and retain young people when they will just leave after a couple of months?” and then “we can get older volunteers if needed which are more reliable.” Valid concerns about the extra resources and time needed to adapt to young volunteers can override the greater long-term benefits the interaction would bring to community, young people and the organisation.

Rivers and Moore¹⁴ identify the impact greater civic engagement has on young people; academic achievement is higher, they are less likely to partake in ‘risky’ behaviour and more likely to continue to engage in civic activities into adulthood. Similarly Howard¹⁵ mentions many benefits of youth participation at a civic level; increased self esteem, lowered feelings of isolation, greater respect for others and an increased sense on individual and community responsibility. Locke & Rowe¹⁶ state that if young people have positive voluntary experiences it leads to a cycle of re-engagement. With the right approach organisations can foster a future of ongoing civic participation and sense of responsibility in young people.

¹² Crowley, Suzanne, et al. 2008. *Sustainability of Rural Volunteers in Tasmania*. Launceston : UTAS Department of Rural Health, 2008.

¹³ volunteering England. 2007. *The Art of Crazy Paving*. London : Volunteering England, 2007.

¹⁴ Rivers, Andrew and Moore, Kristin A. 2008. resources. *Child Trends*. [Online] May 2008. [retrieved: 06 11, 09.] http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2008_05_28_FS_WWCivic.pdf.

¹⁵ Howard, Naomi. 2003. *Young Peoples Perceptions of their Participation as Volunteers in Community Based Organisations*. Tasmania : s.n., 2003.

¹⁶ Locke & Rowe, 2006. *ibid* .p. 2-3.

“I want to make sure that we can encourage the next generation of volunteers to get involved in their local communities.” David Bartlett.¹⁷

Intergenerational interaction is another benefit organisations, volunteers and service clients receive when young people become involved in volunteering. This is particularly the case in the area of HACC services. When reviewing a project which established an internet café as part of a Residential aged care facility which included interactions with local school groups, the Department of Health and Ageing¹⁸ noted several benefits to the intergenerational interaction taking place. The benefits were: enriched understanding between the generations which challenged stereotypes and encouraged the sharing of visions for the future; a skills transfer which encouraged greater access to communications for clients and in turn reduced feelings of isolation; and an increase in staff moral and commitment. Numerous studies show this level of interaction encourages new cognitive, social and physical activity and leads to improved health conditions for older people.¹⁹

The Demographic Change Advisory Council²⁰ predicts Tasmania’s 65 years and over population may grow by 80 per cent in the next 20 yrs; it notes that this age group also volunteer more hours than any other. Therefore if the benefits mentioned above can be gained and there is likely to be an influx in older volunteers, then volunteering may be the ideal ground for intergenerational interaction to occur, ultimately leading to a more sustainable, healthy community.

¹⁷ Bartlett, David. 2009. *State of the State Address*. [interv.] Public. March 2009.

¹⁸ Department of Health and Ageing. 2006. Aged Care e-connect. *Department of Health and Ageing*. [Online] April 2006. [retrieved: 6 11, 09.] <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-rescare-clinitfly-case7.htm#top>.

¹⁹ Chen, Nina. Youth Family and Older Adults. *Extension Info Net*. [Online] [retrieved: 6 11, 09.] <http://extension.missouri.edu/EXTENSIONINFONET/article.asp?id=2557>.

²⁰ Demographic Change Advisory Council.2007. Ibid.p. 9

Methodology

Research objectives

The current research aimed to uncover barriers to youth participation in volunteering with particular focus on the lack of involvement in HACC funded volunteer involving organisations; the objective was to achieve this by answering the following questions;

- Are there current inclusive practice strategies within organisations toward young volunteers, if so what are they?
- Do organisational cultures and attitudes exist which may prevent youth involvement?
- Are there opportunities for young people to be involved, if not can roles be adjusted and how would all parties benefit?
- Do specific areas attract young people, what is it that attracts them and what motivates them?
- What prevents some young people from volunteering, why might they stop and how can these barriers be overcome?
- What can be done overall to encourage more of Tasmania's young people to volunteer?

Information was gathered direct from the stakeholders to identify any circumstances which may be unique to Tasmanian youth or HACC organisations. This would lead to outcomes being based directly on the topics raised by participants at a local level. This community driven approach should be effective at encouraging engagement within the state.

Data sources

A largely qualitative approach when gathering data was deemed most appropriate to explore the thoughts, motivations and attitudes of both HACC organisations and young people. This would also allow the researcher to understand the relevance of existing resources in relation to Generation Y and HACC organisations within Tasmania.

Young people were identified in three groups; currently volunteering, had volunteered in the past but no longer do and those who had never volunteered. By adapting a survey specific for each group unique patterns in motivation and attitudes could be discovered and lead to an understanding of why young people do or do not volunteer.

Another survey was constructed to obtain insight into the functioning of different HACC organisations, explore the potential for youth involvement and highlight any underlying attitudes toward young people. It was decided to survey some non HACC volunteer involving organisations for comparison.

As data collation from HACC organisations began, it became apparent that a further topic needed to be explored. It was the opinion of some volunteer coordinators that the greatest barrier to youth participation was young people's reluctance to engage with HACC clients; they are often identified by organisations as the frail aged and people with disabilities. As a result, an additional survey was designed to establish whether this perceived reluctance was the greatest barrier to youth participation within HACC organisations.

Data collection

The motivation for Volunteering Tasmania to undertake this research acknowledges a limited relationship between Volunteering Tasmania and young people. At that time Volunteering Tasmania had limited primary youth networks and therefore relied on secondary networks to access youth. It was found that secondary networks offered limited support functions; this was a representation of their limited resources and not an indication of their interest in the value of the research. It is also acknowledged that by accessing young people through networks of service providers, the population reached may have been largely already engaged in civil activity at some level and therefore not a true representation. As a result an 'out and about', one on one approach to surveying proved most effective, targeting events and areas where young people would be present, these included;

- Youth moving Forward event facilitated by the Huonville Council as part of National Youth Week 2009, attended by 3 high schools (Kingsborough, Huonville, Geeveston), resulting in 14 mixed surveys.
- Futures Youth Advisory committee, resulting in 7 'current' volunteer surveys.
- Hobart Academy/Polytechnic, resulting in 16 mixed surveys.
- Campbell St Polytechnic, resulting in 14 mixed surveys.
- Clarence Polytechnic, resulting in 20 mixed surveys.
- Networks online distribution, resulting in 1 'has but currently doesn't' volunteer survey.
- Individuals were asked whether they had time for a second short survey, willing participants lead to 18 HACC based questionnaires being completed.

The research recognises the population accessed were largely engaged in educational activities of some type at the time of survey and does not include many outside this arena. However through this consultation method, participants represented a diverse group of young people. Though not officially recorded, the gender of participants was considered balanced, approximately 8 participants were working full time, 4 individuals from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds and the residential status of participants varied from city, suburban and rural. It also acknowledges the 7 participants from Futures Youth Advisory committee may skew the results of areas of participation.

Program coordinators were contacted electronically through Volunteering Tasmania's list of known HACC Volunteer involving organisations, they were also addressed at the Southern HACC forum to notify them of the projects existence. Interested parties were invited to complete the survey and give feedback. Surveys were also attached to the minutes of the March HACC Forums. Again a face to face approach was deemed most successful in engaging participants and resulted in direct email and phone contact to set up meeting times with program/volunteer coordinators. These various engagement methods resulted in the following participants completing the survey;

- 1 East Coast based program.
- 2 programs based in the North.
- 3 programs based in the North West.
- 7 programs based in the South.

The majority of Programs participating in the survey were run under an umbrella organisation with many diverse services to offer within the community. Therefore it is recognised respondents gave feedback on behalf of the particular HACC funded program in which they coordinated volunteers but may have made reference to the functioning role of the parent organisation. When referring to these circumstances the terms organisation and program will be utilised to separate those references.

5 non HACC funded programs were also consulted to gain perspective of the bigger picture in regards to young volunteers. These organisations came from Volunteering Tasmania's primary networks, their interest in the research subsequently led to them offering input and information. This was done via the same survey used in the HACC interviews, allowing some comparisons to be made.

Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative data from the different surveys was entered into a database. The qualitative data was analysed to discover any reoccurring themes or common trends. For example; data from the youth respondents was examined by making comparisons based on their volunteer experiences, comparing the common themes of those currently volunteering to those who have never volunteered.

Age was recorded as it was thought some reoccurring themes may exist for particular age groups. This appears not to be the case and therefore is not used in the results. As age was the only quantitative variable the data represented is derived from qualitative data only.

Findings and discussion

The research findings will be presented in 3 separate sections. The first will focus on the responses of young people. These findings will be combined from the three groups when there is a consensus or similar theme. Youth findings will be summarised under 5 headings;

- Perceptions
- Motivations
- Barriers
- Commitment
- Engagement.

The second section will present the findings from the HACC volunteer involving organisations surveys. The research will discuss these reflecting on the findings from the youth surveys. The third will consider the responses of young people when questioned on HACC services.

For the ease of reading and deciphering content, this paper will present the findings of each topic, discuss them and draw conclusion before presenting the next set of findings. This will enable the reader to comprehend one subject at a time and avoid confusion.

Youth

Perceptions; findings

When asked what volunteering meant to them, the response from young people across the board was mixed. Doing work/helping without pay as an aspect of volunteering was the most common response from the three groups. Other popular themes included;

- Helping others (including the needy or less fortunate).
- Helping the community.
- Giving your time and skills for a good cause.
- Having Fun.
- Giving back
- Doing something of free will.

When comparing the responses from the three groups to the question “what does volunteering mean to you?” the perceptions of ‘young people currently volunteering’ were broader than those

of the other two groups. This became apparent when comparing the greater diversity in their responses to those given by the other groups. Giving up time for a social cause, gaining skills, following my interests and working with peers were some of the other themes mentioned as aspects of volunteering from that respondent group. Those 'who have but no longer volunteer' were also more diverse in their perceptions when compared to 'young people who haven't volunteered before'. We see a trend in the reduction of volunteering time leading to less diversity appearing in an individual's meaning of volunteering.

This trend was not reflected when asked "why do you think people volunteer" with a broad range of responses across the groups. However themes that did arise when comparing the two groups 'currently' and 'no longer'. Both groups stated that people volunteered because "they wanted to help" as their most common response, but group 'currently' gave greater recognition to people volunteering to further their skills, give back to the community and the social aspect of volunteering. The 'no longer' group largely linked people volunteering to "making themselves feel good".

Perceptions; discussion

Looking at the above responses to "what does volunteering mean to you", an assumption can be made that once young people are engaged in volunteering their perception of what it means to volunteer broadens; they are exposed to greater networks, information and opportunities through the interaction. They identify different aspects of volunteering which those who haven't volunteered may not recognise. This gives them an insight to the advantages volunteering experiences can offer and reasons to continue their involvement. Whereas young people who 'haven't volunteered' need to work hard to expose the reasons why they should be involved in, "work without pay".

When considering the responses to "why do you think people volunteer?" there is a need to reflect on the areas of involvement. Respondents from group 'currently' were largely participating in committee orientated roles or social change activities, whereas the 'no longer' group had predominately been involved in social welfare and more frontline activities.

The roles group 'currently' were involved in offered easily identified, transferable job skills such as; experience in leadership roles, decision making, chairing meetings, working in small teams and communication skills. On the other hand the 'no longer' group were involved in more task orientated, hands on roles which offer less obvious, seemingly more menial job skills with limited

potential for professional development opportunities. The 'no longer' group's involvement at this level did however contain more roles where results were more instant and client/subject focused, allowing them to see the change they were making. Resulting in them recognising the 'good feeling' attached to volunteering.

Perceptions; conclusion

Generally young people don't see volunteering as something boring or an activity only for the retired but do consider it based on their individual knowledge and experience; this is consistent with Volunteering Australia's²¹ statement on attitude and perceptions. To agree with Ellis²² volunteering does need a makeover in order to attract and retain those not yet involved. It should focus on the great diversity of volunteer roles, the opportunity to pursue interests, the possibility of personal development and networking.

This is not to say the greater good of volunteering should be ignored, but the traditional approach of waiting for people to feel obliged or to 'give something back' before they consider volunteering is not enough. To engage a generation brought up on the saying "you don't get something for nothing" volunteer roles need to offer them something more tangible in return.

Motivations; findings

When the groups were asked "what roles they do, have or would you be likely to volunteer in" the responses indicate that young people do or would volunteer in a wide variety of roles across a diverse range of sectors; from aged care to the State Emergency Services(SES) and opportunity shops to animal welfare.

When talking about what motivates young people to volunteer, it is impossible to pin it down to one particular aspect. Young people who were 'currently volunteering' indicated it was many things that initially motivated them to volunteer; skills share, school, the social aspect, to make a difference, they were asked to and to feel helpful. Although when asked what attracts/ attracted them to a particular area, a reoccurring theme emerged across all groups, the majority of respondents indicated the need to be interested in the field in which they do or would volunteer. Many young people indicated the need to see outcomes in whichever field they were volunteering, some expressed frustration at not achieving goals or seeing tangible results.

²¹ Volunteering Australia, 2007.

²² Ellis, Angela. 2004.

Motivations; discussion

It was anticipated that a major motivation for young people to volunteer would be acquiring recognisable job skills, however this was rarely mentioned as a motivation by the young people themselves. Through the findings it is indicated that young people have a motivation wish list which includes;

- Something of interest;
- Good social interaction;
- Making a difference and seeing tangible outcomes;

Initially young people may use volunteering to pursue an interest, meet likeminded people or aim to create change in areas of concern to them, rather than utilising it as a path to a career. It seems that if a volunteer position can offer these things then any job skills gained are an added bonus.

It was also assumed that young people would be attracted to particular sectors or roles. For example the SES would appeal more due to its hands on exciting nature or environmental causes would be attractive because of their hot topic status, however this was not indicated. What did emerge was a lack of knowledge around the diversity in volunteering roles. Young people who hadn't volunteered associated volunteering with names they were familiar with; Red Cross, Meals on Wheels, St Vincent de Paul, The Salvation Army and the traditional social welfare orientated roles within these organisations. When the surveyor listed more diverse volunteering roles related to their interests, the reaction from many young people was that of enthusiasm.

Motivations; conclusion

As previous research has suggested, there is a need for organisations wishing to attract young volunteers to rethink their methods of recruitment. A general call for volunteers will not be the most effective way of recruiting the younger generation. Instead a directed, specific request presented as an opportunity to pursue interests, meet new people and gain skills in that field will be more effective. The request should also mention any short term or long term outcomes; this will enable the young person to evaluate the purpose behind a program and judge whether the cause is of interest to them.

Barriers; findings

There is no surprise that across the groups, time came up as the number one barrier to young people participating in volunteering activities. 52.2% of the 'haven't' group, stated lack of time was what prevented them from volunteering. They also stated that they simply hadn't thought about it, hadn't seen the opportunity to or didn't know where to go to find out about positions. When the 'haven't' group were questioned about the amount of time they would be willing to commit to volunteering the most common response indicated once a week, followed by my spare time and a few weekends a month.

When asked why they discontinued volunteering, the 'no longer' group gave too busy or the volunteer role had ended as their two most common responses. These responses were of equal measure and of large majority. Also mentioned was that they got work, they left school, it was boring or the cost involved.

Group 'currently' were asked what they didn't like about where they volunteered. Again time came out as the number one response, followed by extra work, over committing and not achieving goals. Quite a few young people 'currently' volunteering said there was nothing they didn't like about where they volunteered.

Barriers; discussion

There is a common perception amongst young people that in order to be involved in volunteering you need to dedicate roughly a day a week to the activity. Many young people are unaware of the variety of commitment options available when participating in volunteering activities. It appears once people discover volunteering can be done with little interference to other commitments and organisations can offer flexibility, they are keen to be involved. The real barrier is the lack of knowledge among young people in regards to volunteer opportunities in their communities, fields of interest and the flexibility these roles can offer.

Barriers; conclusion

Resources must be developed to inform young people of volunteer opportunities, these should represent the diverse fields of volunteering and the flexibility that may be offered within roles. Young people also need to be educated about their rights as a volunteer and feel comfortable to communicate any issues in regards to over committing or feeling outcomes are not being met with their supervisor. In being able to discuss these issues openly problems may be resolved as

they arise. It is recognised the supervisor should also be open to this communication for it to be effective, this will be discussed further in the HACCC findings.

Commitment; findings

Over 80% of the 'currently' group indicated they were more interested in a continual ongoing role rather than a short term role or one off event. They recognised the advantages were greater when involved for longer periods. These include networking, building friendships, skills share and opportunities for self development. Some participants from this group stated it was short term positions, or one off events which introduced them to opportunities available and the work achieved in their present role. Almost half of this group committed over 2 hours per week to their volunteering position, with some committing over 8 hours per week between numerous volunteer roles.

The majority of participants in both the 'no longer' and 'haven't' groups nominated a continual role as having more appeal than a short term role or one off event. Many respondents from these groups also recognised the advantages of being involved in a program/organisation for longer periods. Young people who indicated they were interested in short term roles, mentioned the need for school holiday programs and after school or weekend commitments due to lack of time. They highlighted the importance of seeing outcomes or the difference they were making.

Commitment; discussion

It was often perceived by many 'haven't' and 'no longer' group members that causes requiring volunteer involvement, were of such a nature that dedication was a key aspect and could not be met through short term roles or one off events. Rather they needed continual ongoing commitment to make a real difference and see tangible outcomes.

They expressed concern about taking on volunteer roles only to find they were too busy to keep up the commitment and letting others down. A few young people mentioned they were concerned that once they became involved they would be pressured into other volunteer roles or "guilt tripped" into over committing. This is where the lure of a short term role with an end and an outcome becomes attractive; they can commit themselves for a designated time, if the role is not what was expected it's not too painful for them to see it through and the outcome gives them something to work toward.

It is acknowledged there was a weakness in the method for questioning respondents about levels of commitment. The question asked “Are you more interested in short term roles with an end and an outcome, a continual ongoing role or one off events?” It is now believed short term roles and roles with outcomes should have been split into two separate options, as some respondents chose a continual role but indicated outcomes were necessary. Also in order for participants to be consistent in their understanding of the terms, it may have been useful if time frames were given for the options; i.e. short term (3-6 months). However as the majority of surveys were completed in interview, the researcher was able to offer a consistent definition of these periods.

There is undoubtedly a ‘nerdy’ or ‘do gooder’ stigma attached to young people participating in volunteer activities which comes from their peer groups. They may also be seen as over achievers, extra busy and only belonging to elite groups. Also messages spread by young volunteers may be those of frustration, lack of time and over commitment in order to play down their involvement. Their volunteer activities may be conveyed to other young people as being a hassle to them rather than an opportunity. Parents who volunteer may also return home to complain about misunderstandings, difficult situations and over committing, all impacting on a potential young volunteers perception of what volunteering entails.

Commitment; conclusion

An open communication policy between volunteer coordinator/supervisor and volunteers is imperative to volunteer involvement and retention. If young people feel comfortable, are encouraged to express their concerns and are aware their supervisor is willing to compromise and come up with alternatives in regards to commitment, rather than lose them as a volunteer, the benefits to both parties will be considerable. The young person will feel valued, respected, supported and recognised. The supervisor will be aware of concerns in the young person’s life which may affect their input and can attempt to prevent over commitment, disillusionment and loss of the young volunteer.

This is not to say volunteer coordinators should allow young people to ‘walk all over them’ in order to obtain young volunteers. The use of well designed recruitment methods, position descriptions and induction processes should ensure the program recruits the right person for the job. They should bring dedication and commitment at the time of recruitment but financial, relationship and study situations do change and coordinators willing to adjust to individual circumstances will be ahead of the pack in terms of volunteer retention.

Many respondents from the 'no longer' group indicated they stopped volunteering simply due to the role ending or they finished at the school where they had undertaken the activities. If more effort is made to direct these young people into other volunteer programs or organisations, the number of young people involved in volunteer activities would surely increase. Outside the school environment it is in the interest of the community if young people are encouraged to continue to participate in civil society and build social capital

Therefore it could be said there is no problem with commitment from young people but rather a perception of lack of time, a fear of over committing and a lack of information or encouragement to further engage. If young people who volunteer are adequately supported to cope with time management and other issues, then these issues will not be at the forefront of their volunteer stories. Rather the positive outcomes and opportunities they are presented with will dominate. These can then be capitalised upon to spread the advantages of volunteering among their peers and in turn increase volunteer numbers.

Engagement; findings

The overall favourite training style across all the respondent groups was hands on/participatory training, followed by leader example. The relevance of written training options was recognised but it was overwhelmingly indicated that young people feel they learn more when participating in hands on training, they also indicated it made it easier to recognise the need for certain procedures and methods of carrying out tasks.

Preferred management styles again came down to the individual; their past experiences and knowledge. The 'currently' group largely indicated the need to be included in decisions and given responsibilities, with only one respondent indicating they preferred to be delegated jobs. The 'no longer' group followed closely in this trend with a few more people preferring to be delegated tasks, in this group there was greater mention of the need to be treated equally. Group 'haven't', contained the greatest proportion of people who would prefer to be delegated jobs but was still dominated with preference of a more democratic process.

Across all groups the preferred communication styles were; one on one, group discussions and informal. There was general consensus that these styles offered a more relaxed approach which may incite mutual respect and allow less room for misinterpretation or misunderstanding. Other styles were acknowledged as being useful but less engaging or effective.

When asked what could be done to encourage more young people to volunteer, the top response was to raise awareness. Respondents acknowledged this by stating the need for information, to promote benefits and more advertising. It was indicated that using other young people who volunteer as examples and hearing their stories would have the most impact. Providing more opportunity for job skills recognition and introducing it in schools were also popular ideas.

Engagement; discussion

The indication of preferred training, communication and management styles may come from the majority of respondents either attending an educational institution or having recently finished studies. It may represent a desire to be respected as an individual and judged on merit, something the school environment may lack. The styles represent a less structured, more democratic, traditionally 'adult' way of interacting with others, where it is assumed each individual has ideas and skills to contribute to the situation. They may also be a reflection of the general public's preferred techniques for communication, training and management styles, and not linked to specific generational traits at all.

There was general consensus among participants that a hierarchy system was needed to keep order and draw clear lines of responsibility, but it was agreed this did not mean dictatorship was needed for a successful work environment. Respondents who indicated job delegation as their management preference often stated they would want to start being included in decisions if they were involved in a role for long periods. A minority mentioned they had enough to think about, it would just be nice to turn up, do something and then leave.

Engagement; conclusion

To successfully engage young people in volunteer positions, volunteer coordinators should be prepared to consider them as individuals. To talk to young people about how they would like to be involved - do they want to have input or just be given jobs to complete, would they prefer full supervision or are they comfortable to complete the task alone, do they want training, do they feel more comfortable filling out a feedback form when issues arise or are they ok to have a chat. Consulting the individual on these matters allows the coordinator/supervisor to form a relationship based on mutual respect and understand the limitations of their volunteer.

As mentioned in Barriers, conclusion; a simple, easy to use resource is needed to engage more young people as volunteers. It needs to outline the various fields in which volunteer work can be undertaken, the different outcomes that can be achieved, training opportunities and social

aspects. A campaign using young volunteers as ambassadors in school visits, articles and other promotion attempts is also recommended.

HACC Volunteer involving organisations

In presenting these findings the researcher acknowledges that circumstances, methods and cultures within organisations may have changed since the time of the initial survey. The aim of this section is to discover and discuss any gaps where organisations could attempt to improve their interactions with young people. This information will then be considered in conjunction with the topics discussed in the Youth section and presented as a brief discussion and conclusion.

Image; Findings

At the time of data collection, 1 of the 13 HACC programs surveyed identified as having an advertising strategy aimed at young people. That program utilised local school networks, job agencies and word of mouth to attract young volunteers and educate them about their program. Many other organisations/programs also used some of these resources but didn't utilise them to specifically recruit young volunteers nor to educate young people on the roles their services played in the local community.

When asked "how do you think your organisation appears to young people" 4 of the 13 program coordinators responded positively, concentrating on the strengths of their program; "great, people want to develop their networks", "It's an opportunity to grow as an individual" and "we try to portray the positive side of ageing, make it dignified". However the majority of coordinators thought their organisation/program either didn't appear to young people, "they don't know about it" or didn't appeal to them "better things to do as you don't get paid", "They think it's for old people".

The majority of programs/organisations didn't have a web page at the time of the survey or it was under construction. Many of the programs exist under the banner of a larger organisation. Subsequently they had a brief blurb about their program attached on the website of the umbrella organisation; many coordinators mentioned they felt this may be insufficient.

Image; discussion/conclusion

The above information correlates with the findings presented throughout the youth section; generally young people aren't finding out about volunteer positions within HACC organisations.

When trying to attract young volunteers, opportunities presented in a traditional fashion may go undetected, most young people won't wade through news papers and find a volunteer article to respond to, not when they can utilise a wide range of different media and receive information at the touch of a button. They have grown up in a time when they are constantly bombarded with advertising, political messages and up to date news, so how can organisations grab their attention?

As identified by the young people surveyed, a personal approach to recruitment will be most effective. Raising the profile of volunteering by forming relationships with local schools, having representatives from organisations guest speak at schools, by presenting them with relevant information and utilising young volunteers to tell their stories and encourage others to get involved.

Word of mouth is still the number one recruitment method for many organisations. If an organisation/program has young volunteers involved, they should greatly encourage them to tell their friends about their volunteer role and spread the word of volunteer opportunities. As indicated in the commitment, discussion section under youth; many young people ceased volunteer involvement simply because the role ended. Efforts should be made to direct the individual into another position within the organisation or work with networks to find a suitable position elsewhere. This will also ensure the volunteer feels valued.

The internet is one of the most utilised media forms today. Once young people have initially heard about an opportunity this will be one of their first methods to discovering more information on the subject. If there is insufficient information here or the terrain of the site is difficult to navigate, it may result in the young person losing interest or giving up the quest for further information. Organisations not effectively using this resource may find it increasingly difficult to recruit volunteers.

Organisations assuming they appear boring and uninteresting to young people are unintentionally going to convey that message through their dealings with the public. When asked "what specific opportunities do you have for young people as volunteers?" there was a large variety of responses such as; training, gain skills from older volunteers, IT activities, work with diverse range of people, food preparation and to be a part of their community were just a few mentioned. This view of opportunity and possibility conveyed here, greatly contradicts boring and uninteresting.

Within individual programs and organisations a shift in culture may be required for the perception of boring to transform into that of opportunity. A fresh look at activities undertaken by the organisation may uncover fields of interest to young people; somebody wanting to enter the hospitality field may be interested in gaining their food handling certificate, or learn about nutrition while they volunteer to cook in a respite day centre. A poster placed in a College reading, 'gain experience in a commercial kitchen while meeting your community' may pull more response than a general call of 'volunteers wanted' lost in a newspaper.

Engagement; findings

When discussing how young volunteers contribute to their organisation, volunteer coordinators listed advantages such as; adaptability, word of mouth and new members, they bring a new set of skills, are enthusiastic to learn and energetic. With overall good feedback from volunteer coordinators about their interactions with young volunteers, the reoccurring theme was that they found it difficult to retain them.

The list of ways in which coordinators recognise their volunteer contribution is extensive; certificates, get togethers, Christmas cards and food were at the top of this list. Three coordinators acknowledged that offering further training opportunities to volunteers was a way of recognising their contribution to the organisation. The opportunity for volunteers to develop their skills through further training was high, with a diverse range of topics on offer; from food safety to suicide awareness.

When asked "what level of commitment do you ask of your volunteers?" the response from volunteer coordinators was greatly varied. Some coordinators expected a weekly commitment while others replied that their volunteers weren't asked to commit at all. The research acknowledges this may reflect the varied service programs on offer. However, one reoccurring theme was the flexibility of the commitment made; coordinators often stated it was up to the individual to establish how often they would volunteer, they only expected the person to be reliable and fulfil the self nominated commitment.

Engagement; discussion/conclusion

With the large majority of HACC organisations limited to running programs within the working hours of 9-5, there is minimum opportunity for volunteer involvement for young people with daily work or study commitments. However many coordinators saw possibilities to adjust service delivery to invite their involvement. As mentioned in the Commitment; findings section under

Youth, there is room for new initiatives to be conceived in how to effectively engage young people in volunteer positions.

School holiday programs could be developed, offering short term or introductory spurts of volunteering, this may also allow for groups of young people to be involved, bringing more of a social aspect to the role. A young person may be recruited to develop a website or update online information for a program; this could happen via remote operation conducted at school or home. The effort in identifying and establishing such flexible positions will be rewarded with the positive contributions young volunteers bring, as identified by coordinators in engagement; findings.

As previously discussed, attempts should be made to encourage individuals in continuing their involvement in volunteering after specific one off/ short term roles have ended. This may be in the form of identifying new roles within the organisation that suit the volunteer or using networks to link the volunteer up with other possibilities.

There is also a need for organisations to advertise their flexibility around commitment. This is not to say coordinators should give a potential young volunteer free reign over when they want to volunteer, but coordinators should promote that the position commitment is, for example; an hour a week and on which day may be determined by the volunteer. Or that the day centre operates every Friday but a once a month commitment from a volunteer could be ok. When interviewing coordinators for the research, it was rare to find the level of commitment advertised in their recruitment material, let alone advertising the possibility for it to be flexible.

Training opportunities and the chance for young people to gain experience based employability skills such as; communication skills, team work, networking etc, should be greatly utilised as a lure when advertising for new volunteers. Organisations offer a large array of 'hands on' training which correlates with the style of training identified by young people as most preferred. With this in mind care still needs to be taken to ensure the training undertaken is relevant to the role and to the young person's path of development.

The method used for recognising volunteer contributions is an area that should show relevance to the volunteer. Certificates are a great way to show recognition and can present well in a resume. Many organisations simply use a template which is very formal and rigid with very little feeling or ability to convey the thanks truly felt. A way to adapt this form of recognition and introduce more relevance to the work fulfilled may be to produce a secondary complementary certificate produced by clients and staff. It may include photos of the young person helping customers and

little quotes on how the individual has brought positive change to individuals and the organisation. Any participation which shows some level of commitment to the program deserves to be recognised. Reimbursement or pre-imburement may be the most relevant way to recognise others.

Resources also came up as a barrier for organisations/programs wishing to recruit young volunteers. Some coordinators expressed concern about already having non funded extra work. With the effort needed in adapting recruiting tactics and the time spent rethinking ways volunteer opportunities could be adapted to better suit young people, coordinators often saw it as extra work. Many coordinators said they often didn't apply for extra funding to complete tasks, they commented the time spent filling out submissions could be spent just getting the task done if they did a little extra work out of hours.

Youth views on HACC.

Findings

100% of young people interviewed for the secondary survey had never heard of the acronym HACC. Nor were they familiar with the various services Home and community care programs may offer. When the interviewer explained the role of HACC services within the community, many people's first connection was meals on wheels. This connection often came from having family members who had volunteered in that program. Young people were less familiar with respite centres or programs that offered befriending services. Consistent with the topic that arose in Image; findings, young people didn't know about their services.

Lack of time arose as the major barrier to young people becoming involved in HACC organisations/programs. Half of respondents said they would be willing to give volunteering in a HACC service a go, with the other half expressing they weren't interested in that field. Over a quarter of respondents identified they may find it confronting and expressed concern about having to do personal tasks or not feeling safe.

Often linked to HACC services was the thought of carrying out somewhat 'menial' tasks such as cleaning and basic admin work. At the same time there was a large recognition that services provided by HACC programs would depend largely on volunteer contribution. Those interested in 'giving it a go' were quick to identify more obscure tasks such as helping with craft activities, companionship, empowering people and providing entertainment.

When asked what benefits volunteers may receive from being involved in a HACC organisation/program, self gratification and the knowledge that they were doing something good was the most common response. Other responses included; networking, learning communication skills, it would look good on a resume and gaining a different perspective on life and how things were.

Conclusion and recommendations

The major issue arising from this research is not a lack of commitment from young people in regards to volunteering, nor is it a lack of willingness to be involved. Rather it is the huge gap that exists between the opportunities volunteering roles can offer and young people acquiring knowledge of their existence. Many young people currently volunteering reported that once they had tapped into the resources and networks volunteering offered, it was like a 'hidden world' had opened up to them, with opportunities around every corner. There is a great need for resources and structures to be developed so this 'hidden world' is easily accessible and readily available to every young person.

An awareness raising campaign is also recommended to complement the information resources produced. This campaign should raise the profile of volunteering amongst young people, open their eyes to the opportunities it can offer and the various fields in which volunteering can take place. The campaign should happen through media with which young people are familiar and primarily focus on the benefits other young people have received through volunteering.

The greatest success for organisations involving young volunteers seems to stem from their early interactions through schools. Plenty of volunteer positions can meet schooling curriculum requirements. Structures for this interaction could be modelled on those organisations that have existing working partnerships with schools. Allowing organisations and schools to readily offer hands on community based learning to students. This may also have a knock on affect and tackle some social interaction issues between community and young people as well as creating new avenues to engage youth at risk of dropping out of the education system.

If an organisation spends time interacting with young people through the school environment and it leads to no new volunteers, time is not wasted. This interaction still broadens the scope of knowledge within a community about the role that organisation plays and also that of volunteering in general.

Interactive workshops for organisations could be developed to aid creative thinking around involving young volunteers. Allowing coordinators to work together to create and initiate fresh ideas, share success stories and consider barriers and strengths within their existing organisational culture.

The broader community benefits to involving young people in volunteering (as mentioned under the sub heading “community” in the literature review) should be considered by funding bodies, organisations and individuals doubting the worth of allocating time and resources to invigorating youth participation in volunteer activities.

In order for organisations to readily and successfully take on the task of involving young people in their volunteer activities, it may be worthwhile for funding bodies to explore new methods of resource allocation. A pool of funds dedicated to recruiting young volunteers, with very simple application and evaluation/reporting requirements, may help initiate action from parties more reluctant to take on this challenge.

As a final note, the researcher believes that it is fundamental for organisations to move toward a ‘new type’ of volunteer experience. This refurbishment is not only essential to attracting young volunteers but also to interacting with individuals from all walks of life. No longer is it appropriate to have a standard volunteer mould for an organisation, nor to disregard the ‘round peg’ because it won’t fit in a ‘square hole’. Individuals should be recruited and considered on individual merit and encouraged to tap into their unique strengths to become an asset to the organisation/program.

Bibliography

Bartlett, David. 2009. *State of the Stae Adress*. [interv.] Public. March 2009.

Chen, Nina. Youth Family and Older Adults. *Extension Info Net*. [Online] [retrieved: 6 11, 09.] <http://extension.missouri.edu/EXTENSIONINFONET/article.asp?id=2557>.

Crowley, Suzanne, et al. 2008. *Sustainability of Rural Volunteers in Tasmania*. Launceston : UTAS Department of Rural Health, 2008.

Demographic Change Advisory Council. 2007. *Demographic Change In Tasmania: challenges and opportunities*. Hobart : Printing Authority of Tasmania, 2007.

Department of Health and Ageing. 2006. Aged Care e-connect. *Department of Health and Ageing*. [Online] April 2006. [retrieved: 6 11, 09.] <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-rescare-clinitfly-case7.htm#top>.

Department of Health and Human Services. Health and wellbeing directory. *Department of Health and Human Services*. [Online] [retrieved: june 11, 2009.] http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/health__and__wellbeing/hacc.

Ellis, Angela. 2004. Reasearch Bulletins. *Institute for Volunteering Research*. [Online] 2004. [retrieved: 6 11, 09.] <http://ivr.org.uk/NR/exeres/06A50AF2-EDCD-4801-B479-02F00F622DF3.htm>.

Fryer, Andy. 2001. Engaging and retaining volunteers for youth development. *The source*. [Online] 2001. [retrieved: june 17, 2009.] www.thesource.gov.au/ausyouth/conf_pdf/pg22.pdf.

Howard, Naomi. 2003. *Young Peoples Perceptions of their Participation as Volunteers in Community Based Organisations*. Tasmania : s.n., 2003.

Locke, Fran and Rowe, Penelope M. 2006. *Engaging Young Volunteers in Rural Newfoundland*. Toronto : Knowledge Development Centre, Imagine Canada, 2006.

McCrandil, Mark. 2006. *New Generation At Work*. Baulkham hills : McCrandell research, 2006.

Merrill Associates. 2005. Call them Gen Y or Millenials; They Deserve Our Attention . *Merril and Associates*. [Online] may 2005. [retrieved: June 11th, 2009.] <http://www.merrillassociates.net/topic/2005/05/call-them-gen-y-or-millennials-they-deserve-our-attention>.

Mission Australia. 2008. *national survey of young Australians* . s.l. : Mission Australia, 2008.

Rivers, Andrew and Moore, Kristin A. 2008. resources. *Child Trends*. [Online] May 2008. [retrieved: 06 11, 09.] http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2008_05_28_FS_WWCivic.pdf.

Volunteering Australia. 2007. *young people and Volunteering- Take a Closer Look*. Melbourne : Volunteering Australia, 2007.

volunteering England. 2007. *The Art of Crazy Paving*. London : Volunteering England, 2007.