

MOTIVATION OF DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS TO ENGAGE IN VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

Jurgita Paužuolienė, Ilvija Pikturnaitė, Sidas Rafijevas

Klaipėdos valstybinė kolegija

j.pauzuoliene@kvk.lt, i.pikturnaite@kvk.lt, s.rafijevas@kvk.lt

INTRODUCTION

Relevance of the topic. For several decades, international and national documents and researchers' reports have highlighted the importance of volunteering. Acknowledging volunteering's critical role in addressing global challenges international institutions through their papers (for example UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/56/38, 2002; UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/63/153, 2008; Transforming Our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015; Volunteering opportunities with the European Solidarity Corps in Europe and abroad - Your Europe) provided a detailed framework for encouraging, supporting, and regulating volunteering. Volunteering is a powerful tool that fosters public well-being in numerous ways. Its significance extends beyond the immediate benefits to individuals and communities, influencing societal health, cohesion, and resilience on a broader scale.

Research problem question: what motivates people in different age groups to volunteer?

Research aim is to identify the motivation of different age groups to engage in volunteering.

Research methods: the analysis of documents and scientific literature.

Results. Volunteering is an activity when a person voluntarily, without financial gain, provides assistance or contributes to public welfare, the activities of organizations or communities. This may include work in social, environmental, educational, cultural, sports or other fields. Volunteers often work out of personal conviction to help others, gain new skills or experiences, strengthen a sense of community, or make a positive impact on society.



The word cloud was created to show various authors most often used terms related to volunteering being: activity, society, time, volunteer, social, free, person, benefits, volunteer, friend, work, age and others.

Motivation for volunteering can vary significantly between young people and older adults due to differences in life stages, goals, and experiences. While both groups may share certain motivations, such as the desire to give back to their communities, there are distinct factors that drive each group to volunteer.

Table 1. Motives for young people and older adults to volunteer

Motives	Young People	Older Adults
Career Development	Gain experience, build skills for future jobs	Apply existing skills, pass on knowledge and mentor
Personal Growth	Self-discovery, exploration, identity	Maintain purpose, stay engaged in life post-retirement
Skill Acquisition	Learn new skills and explore interests	Use and share expertise developed over a lifetime
Social Engagement	Meet peers, network, make friends	Combat loneliness, stay socially connected
Short-Term vs. Long-Term	Prefer short-term, flexible roles	Prefer long-term, consistent involvement
Focus on Future vs. Legacy	Advocate for future change, activism	Leave a legacy, preserve values, contribute to heritage

Summarizing the theoretical analysis, we present the essential motivations for volunteering among young people and older adults. These differences illustrate how volunteering meets different needs and motivations at various life stages. Understanding these motivators can help organizations create volunteer opportunities that appeal to both groups, maximizing the benefits of volunteerism for all ages.

CONCLUSION

Volunteering can be highly fulfilling for individuals across different life stages, but the motivations to volunteer often vary between younger and older adults. For many young individuals, it serves as a platform to explore different career paths, build essential skills, and boost their resumes. Volunteering enables them to work in diverse environments, engage with real-world issues, and take on responsibilities that they may not otherwise encounter in traditional education or early-stage jobs. It helps them develop critical soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership. Beyond professional development, volunteering fosters a sense of empowerment as young people realize that they can actively contribute to positive change, whether it's through social justice causes, environmental conservation, or community development. These experiences are formative, helping them build confidence, broaden their perspectives, and shape their values and identities in a rapidly changing world.

For older adults, volunteering offers unique opportunities that go beyond just giving back to the community—it becomes a deeply fulfilling and purposeful part of their lives. Through volunteering, older adults can continue to contribute their wealth of knowledge and experience in meaningful ways, often mentoring younger generations or using their skills to support causes close to their hearts. Volunteering also enhances well-being by promoting physical and mental activity, reducing stress, and creating a sense of accomplishment. Furthermore, it opens doors to meaningful social interactions, allowing older adults to build new friendships, reconnect with their communities, and combat feelings of loneliness. In both cases, volunteering contributes to personal satisfaction and social responsibility. For young people, it provides a path to personal and professional growth, and for older people, it provides ongoing engagement, purpose and connection.