

Volunteer challenge

Did you know?

95% of employers agreed that volunteering can be a credible way of gaining real-work experience to add to your resume. In fact, as long as the volunteering work is relevant to the role or industry you want to work in, “85% of hirers believe that it’s just as credible as paid work”. ([SEEK](#))

It is extremely useful to include on your résumé volunteer activities that range from community and mentorship, to administration. Here are some examples of activities in which you might become involved:

- Create a list of local community-based organisations (everything from community bands to summer camps for children). Are professions in your field of study involved in these organisations and, if so, in what ways are they involved? Is there a role for you to play in these organisations?
- Volunteer to lead activities at a local community centre, home for seniors, pre-school, etc. Seek professional guidance in planning these activities and keep a journal of your successes and failures.
- What community outreach activities are organised by professional organisations in your area (schools, colleges, theatres, choirs, community legal services, community kitchens)? Is there a way for you to become involved in these activities?
- Organise one or two activities that will benefit the community in which you live. Seek support for these activities by preparing a grant application and by soliciting local businesses for one-time funding.
- Find out what volunteer initiatives are run at your university or college. Often, these are run by the careers service or the student union / guild.

Make it count!

Make every experience count by taking the time to reflect on it. Start with these simple questions and then move to the deeper reflection to follow.

- What was great?
- What do you never want to do again?
- What new things did you learn?
- What do you need to learn?

How does the experience influence your career and life planning?

Looking back, Looking in, Looking out and Looking ahead:

- What process did you follow to meet the goals set by the organisers?
- What skills and experience did you bring to the volunteer work?
- How did the experience make you feel?
- What do your feelings tell you about what you like and dislike, and what you value?
- What did you learn from watching other people work?
- What might other people like and dislike about working with you?
- What will you do or learn before volunteering again?
- What will you do differently, and what difference will this make to the outcome?

This resource was developed by Glen Carruthers (Wilfrid Laurier University) and Dawn Bennett (Bond University).