



What influences youth to volunteer?

Youth volunteers

Canadian youth between the ages of 15 and 24 accounted for 18% of all volunteers and nearly 15% of all volunteer hours in 2000, according to data from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP). Almost 1.2 million young Canadians volunteered an average of 130 hours over the period between October 1, 1999 and September 30, 2000.

What differentiates the almost one-third (29%) of youth who were volunteers in 2000 from the over two-thirds (71%) of young people who did not volunteer that year?

Attending school vs. working

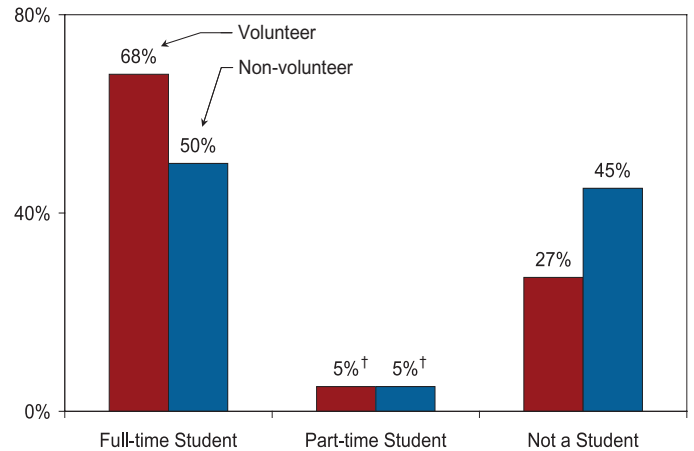
Youth volunteers in 2000 were more likely to be full-time students than were non-volunteers. Over two-thirds (68%) of youth volunteers were attending school full-time, whereas only half (50%) of non-volunteers were full-time students.

Youth volunteers were significantly less likely to be working. Just over half (53%) of youth volunteers had paid employment, compared to just under two-thirds (64%) of non-volunteers. Just under four in ten (39%) youth volunteers were not in the labour force, compared to less than one in three (30%) non-volunteers.

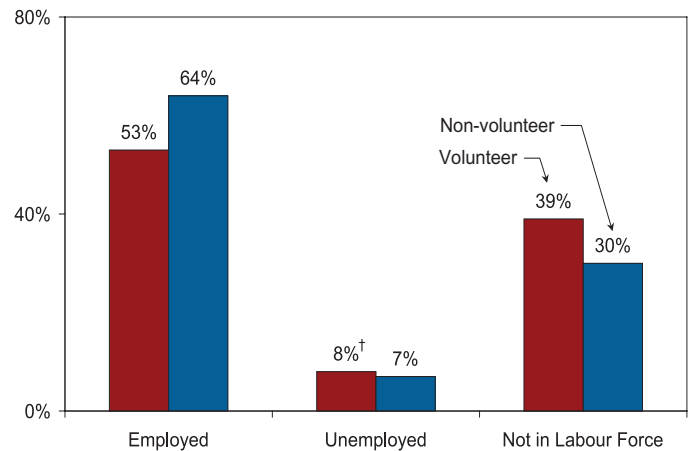
The role of religion

Youth volunteers were somewhat more likely to be religiously active than non-volunteers. Forty-eight per cent of young volunteers in 2000 considered themselves to be “very” or “somewhat” religious, compared to 35% of youth who were not volunteers.

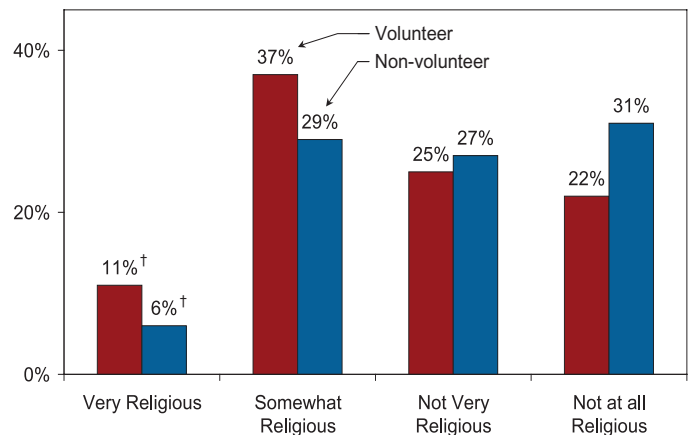
Educational Status by Volunteer Status, Canadians Aged 15–24



Employment Status by Volunteer Status, Canadians Aged 15–24



Religiosity by Volunteer Status, Canadians Aged 15–24 *



Career considerations

Youth volunteering is strongly influenced by career considerations. Among employed youth volunteers, half (49%) said volunteering gave them new skills that they could apply to their job. Among young people seeking paid work, nearly eight in ten (78%) believed that volunteering would help them get a job. Youth in general were much more likely than people of other ages to volunteer to improve their job opportunities (55% compared to 16% for older volunteers).

This employment orientation may help to explain the declining rate of volunteerism among youth. Between 1997 and 2000, the level of participation of young Canadians (aged 15 to 24) in the labour force increased significantly (61.5% to 64.4%) (Statistics Canada, 2002) while their rate of volunteering declined from 33% in 1997 to 29% in 2000. By contrast, from 1987 to 1997, when job prospects for youth in Canada were not nearly as good, there was an increase in volunteerism among young people.

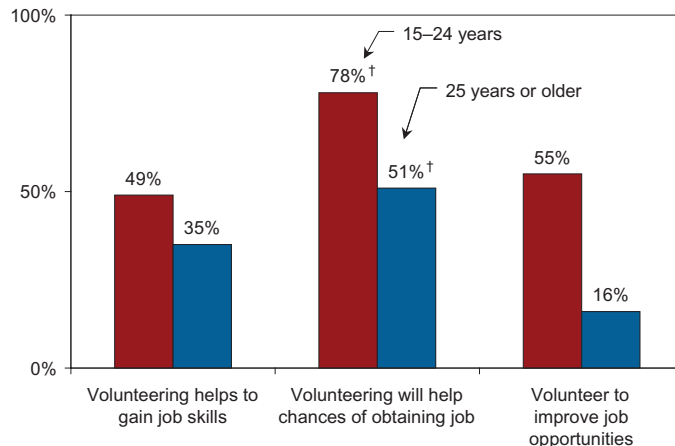
Personal goals

Youth volunteers cited other, more personal, motivations for volunteering, including: to explore their own strengths (71% of youth, compared to 54% of older volunteers) and because their friends volunteer (42% of youth, compared to 28% of older volunteers).

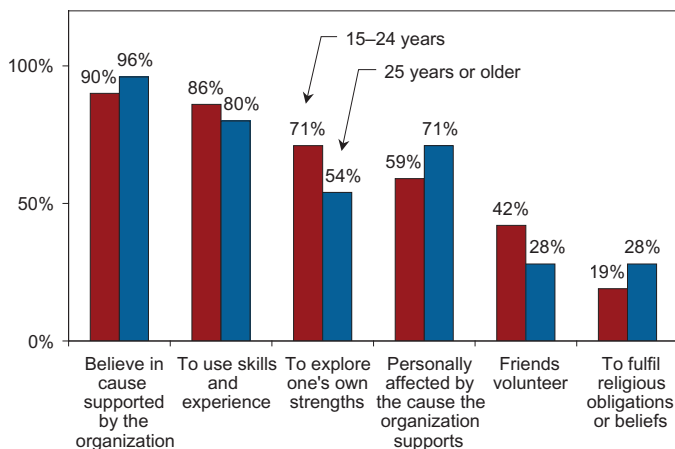
Community service vs. volunteering

Completing a specified number of hours of community service is a pre-requisite for high school graduation in some jurisdictions. Almost one in five (18%) youth volunteers reported that they had volunteered because they were required to by their school, employer or the government, compared to just 5% of older volunteers.

Attitudes Towards Employment and Volunteering, by Age



Motivations for Volunteering, by Age



References

Statistics Canada (2002). *Labour force and participation rates*. Retrieved August 26, 2002, from Statistics Canada, Canadian Statistics Web site: <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/People/Labour/labor05.htm>

† Sample size limitations affect the reliability of these estimates.
* Percentages do not sum to 100% because of non-response.

Written by the Canadian Council on Social Development

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF VOLUNTEERS



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