

Yarning with young people



Organisation:

Teach Learn Grow

Website: teachlearngrow.org.au

Focus: First Nations



Helen* is a First Nations tertiary student and passionate volunteer. Through volunteering, she has developed a sense of community, wellbeing and personal fulfilment. Helen has also gained new skills, expanded her social networks, and received new professional opportunities. She participated in a yarning session to share helpful insights on how to engage young First Nations youth as volunteers.

APPROACH

When asked about her motivations to volunteer with an organisation, Helen emphasised the importance of feeling valued and having a sense of purpose and belonging. She said that volunteer involving organisations should foster an inclusive environment and support volunteers by showing appreciation, prioritising opportunities for growth and focusing on collaboration and teamwork. “It’s important to offer meaningful tasks, establish good communication and to interact with positive leaders,” Helen said.

Reflecting on what matters to young people, Helen shared that aligning with personal values, being ethical, having opportunities to grow, and offering flexible work arrangements were key.

OUTCOME

During the yarning session, Helen highlighted the importance of cultural awareness and sensitivity training for other staff to help create positive experiences for young First Nations volunteers. This would promote understanding and respect, and help to foster an inclusive volunteering culture. Mentoring, accessibility considerations and regular evaluation were other strategies that all help to create positive volunteering experiences.

“Involving First Nations young people in decision-making and tailoring volunteer programs to their interests is crucial”.

– Helen (volunteer)

LEARNINGS

- Young people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, have different motivations for volunteering.
- Young volunteers look for meaningful roles that align with their personal values and/or tie in with their interests.
- Organisations that support their ongoing development will experience better retention with young volunteers.
- It is important to build a culturally competent organisation to foster an inclusive volunteering culture.
- Young people seek a safe and welcoming volunteering environment.
- Organisations may experience more success with young volunteers if they offer flexible volunteering opportunities.

See more learnings by visiting teachlearngrow.org.au/djinanginy-kaardijin