



Youth Participation Kit

Resource sheet
for young people

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Making Your Experiences Work for You

Participating in your community comes with lots of great benefits. While you give back to your community, you can also get a lot out of participating, and you should make the most of what is on offer.

Resumes and job hunting

More and more, employers are looking to hire people with diverse skills and who show passion for their work. Being involved in the community is a great way to develop and show off those skills, and it shows a commitment and dedication that will catch the eye of people reading your resume.

When you're writing job applications, make sure you include details of your participation. There aren't any 'rules' about how you do this, so you can be flexible and try different ways to highlight all the great things you've done. Remember to give a brief overview of what you did or the organisation that you were part of before getting into the details. You can also consider

including links to a website with more information, if you think it's relevant to the employer.

You'll also need to include referees when applying for most jobs, and it's likely that someone you worked with while being involved in the community would make a great referee for you. Just ask!

Looking after yourself

Being involved in the community can make you feel great—you gain self-confidence, meet people with similar interests, and feel like you're making a difference. However, sometimes things don't work out the way you planned and can become stressful. This can happen for a number of reasons, such as personality clashes, people not being as enthusiastic as you, unexpected roadblocks and many more.

Useful tip

Include clear examples of the kinds of things you've been able to achieve, from the simple things like 'created and managed a project plan' to 'negotiated with local community leaders to gain their support for the cause'.

Including one or two achievements that you're particularly proud of will also show your passion, for example, 'I was very proud to achieve my goal of raising \$1000 for the local wildlife refuge'.



It's important to remember that while your cause is important, your wellbeing comes first. If you feel the stress starting to build, take a moment to reflect and think about what you can do to get things back on track. Talking things through will also help. Chatting to friends and family is a good start, and if you're volunteering with an organisation you should talk to your coordinator to see if there's anything they can do to help. Services such as the Kids Help Line, ReachOut.com and Lifeline are also available if things get too much. It's okay to take a step back from your participation and put yourself first.

Awards and recognition

Across the community, there are lots of people who want to celebrate the great contributions community members make. There are lots of different awards programs out there to recognise innovative projects, outstanding contributions and inspiring individuals. If you're particularly proud of something you've created, a program you've volunteered on, or someone you've worked with who went above and beyond, consider nominating them for an award. Being nominated is a great honour and is a way to celebrate the great things you've achieved.

The Department of Local Government and Communities supports a number of awards programs, including the WA Youth Awards and WA Volunteer of the Year Awards. The Department also provides certificates for volunteers to be given out on Thank a Volunteer Day. Local governments also have local awards programs, and some are part of the Premier's Australia Day Active Citizenship Awards program.

For more information, please contact:

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Example

Coordinator, Youth Against Bullying (voluntary role)

2013–Present

I founded the Youth Against Bullying campaign in 2013 to raise awareness of bullying in our community. Through this I have:

- managed a team of five other young people to run the campaign
- organised a successful awareness day at a local school for the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence
- managed a Facebook page and other social media to promote the campaign
- been interviewed and profiled in the local newspaper to raise awareness
- written letters and had meetings with local Members of Parliament.

My team received very positive feedback on our event for the National Day of Action and I received letters of thanks from the school Principal and the local Member of Parliament.

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