

Graduate Opportunities Videos
Fiona Jamieson – Volunteering Experience

Fiona Jamieson: I'm Fiona Jamieson. My day job is the Senior Youth Account Manager at the charity, Youth Net. And I am also a trustee of Volunteering England which is the Regional Development Agency for volunteering.

The benefits of volunteering can be anything and everything really; it's what you put into it. It's about getting skills on your CV, meeting new people, learning new skills. It's always a great ice breaker to kind of say, oh I went on a GAP year and did this or I do this in my spare time; it just shows you've got a little something else about you really.

Volunteering in the way that you meet people, you do different things with communities. You perhaps have experiences that you wouldn't really necessarily be exposed to in your working life – showcasing something that perhaps you wouldn't have thought of doing. You meet different people that have a different outlook on life, you learn different things...and it can just really, change the way that you perhaps that you view the world and your ambitions and your views about where you want to be in ten, fifteen, twenty years time.

You can volunteer in just about anything you want really, anything from going into prisons, working with disabled children because it's a really good kind of way to help them heal, young offenders who perhaps don't have very good numeracy and literacy skills.

One of the great things about volunteering is about adding something to your CV. Employers look through hundreds of thousands of CVs so you really need something that stands out and volunteering does that.

Whilst I was at university, I was doing a sports-related course and I thought I really wanted to develop my sports skills and that led onto a friend and I setting up sports-volunteering opportunities, and that was just the most amazing experience to both be a volunteer but also get involved in setting up projects. I got involved in the Olympic bid, huge things like that, that I wouldn't have had a chance with if I wasn't a volunteer and I hadn't taken that step and started doing sports coaching.

Lottie (case study): I see volunteering as something you chosen to do as opposed to doing something you've been told to do. So for me, it's about making a difference, and also broadening your horizons I suppose as well and gaining experience. But it really is essentially, in the true light of it, giving something for free and getting a lot out of it personally, not just about being paid for it.

I volunteered on my GAP year, I was a teacher in a primary school in Mexico – in a very small, sort of under-privileged village. Nowadays a lot of people have got degrees, and if you can show that you're different, you've got that added advantage of having done something, like volunteering, it gives you that little extra something, to say, well this is why I'm different, I've given a bit extra and I think it does help.

Fiona: Now, one of the massive benefits of volunteering is the people that you meet, the people that you get to volunteer with, but also those that find out about your work. My role when I finished university was a project manager for a charity, and the woman that was running that charity was someone I met through my volunteering. So, if she hadn't know about me and the fact that I was graduating, I

certainly wouldn't have got that job when I finished university, so volunteering can open huge numbers of doors for you.

You can get all those skills that you would need from your volunteering, and it's something you can sell on your CV, in your job applications to potential employers which is something that they'll look on and go, wow, this person has got a little something extra about them, let's give them a job.