



## Research Team

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# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A Research Report on  
Student Volunteering in UCC

# The Research

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- To explore students' experiences of volunteering; the barriers to volunteering; and what more the university could do to promote volunteering.
- Based principally on an online survey of UCC students.



**46%** of the **2,038** students surveyed say they have volunteered in the previous six months.

Base =2038

The remaining **54%** had not volunteered during this period, but most had done so in the past.



# Routes into Volunteering

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- Majority of current volunteers became involved in volunteering before they came to UCC.
- A number of routes into volunteering, including schools, youth clubs and sports clubs.
- Progressed from being members of an organisation to volunteering roles.



**Highlights importance of prior involvement in youth/ sports clubs in building a future volunteering base.**



# Sources of Information

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Family and friends are amongst the main sources of information, which illustrates the role of ‘word-of-mouth’ communication and knowing people who are already involved with an organisation or cause.



‘Word-of-mouth’ is the primary way students find out about volunteering opportunities.

Students also found out about volunteering through UCC clubs and societies, the Students Union, the UCC Volunteers Fair and the UCC Works Award Programme



# Types of Volunteering

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➤ Wide range of volunteering activities, but three main categories:



Students are engaged directly with people across youth work (**40%**), sports/exercise/outdoor activities (**29%**) and tutoring/supporting learning (**22%**).

Comparatively few involved in conservation/environmental causes (**7%**) and animal welfare (**6%**).

- In most cases, work directly with different groups of people, e.g. coaching sports teams, tutoring children in homework clubs
- Students are also involved in fund-raising for charitable organisations and committee work for UCC societies and clubs.



# Motivations

- Altruistic motivations are most commonly cited as reasons to volunteer:

➔ **85% of student volunteers are motivated by a desire ‘to give something back’ and ‘to help others’.**

- The ‘opportunity to gain work experience and enhance my CV’ was important for 64% of respondents, while a slightly smaller proportion (59%) identified social reasons (meeting people and making friends) as important or very important.



# Barriers to Volunteering

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- The major barrier to volunteering, reported by those who had *not* volunteered over the last six months, is **lack of time owing to college work (77%) and part-time work (41%)**.
- Also deterred by not knowing how to get involved (31%) or not being sure what they can contribute (22%).
- **Lack of transport and the perception that volunteering could be expensive was identified by nearly a quarter of students (24% and 23% respectively).**



# Promote Volunteering

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- Offering 'more one-off volunteering opportunities'.
- Increasing 'publicity and awareness of volunteering', for example, by holding more than one volunteer fair per year.





This research report is an initiative of the University College  
Cork Civic and Community Engagement Committee

[Read the Full Report](#)

