



## Environmental Event Volunteers: Changing third-party Motivations, and Management

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This study analyses environmental event volunteering, considering changes in the event episodic volunteering landscape, including demographics, which necessitate a change in how organisations recruit and engage volunteers, and how this may differ in Non-Western countries.

How do modern, global volunteers engage with environmental episodic event volunteering, and why?

The study concludes that modern volunteers are typically younger, and with little differences between western and non-western volunteers. The rise of third party actors, such as companies and educational institutes, has changed the volunteering landscape, leading to a very effective way of recruiting teams to volunteer at events.

[#VolunteerRecruitment](#) [#EnvrionmentalVolunteers](#) [#Global](#) [#Motivations](#)  
[#Modern](#)

### Background & Context



- Existing research has focused on **western countries** and generally shown a **trend towards younger volunteers** in environmental events, from above 50 towards 25-34 years old being the largest group.
- These volunteers tended to be on **middle to high incomes**, more educated than the general population, **with a degree or higher**, although there were **no clear trends when focusing on gender**.
- In Western countries, there has been a **trend away from organisation-based volunteering**, which is **frequent and predictable**, towards individual volunteering, which is **sporadic** and may involve a **host and sending organisation**.
- The involvement of **other organisations, such as schools or employers**, has seen a dramatic shift in **how volunteers are recruited and engage** with volunteering events and activities.
- The authors study data from **13 countries**, considering **non-western perspectives**, to analyse the **motivations** of two groups of volunteers, **those volunteering individually and those as part of a group or association**.

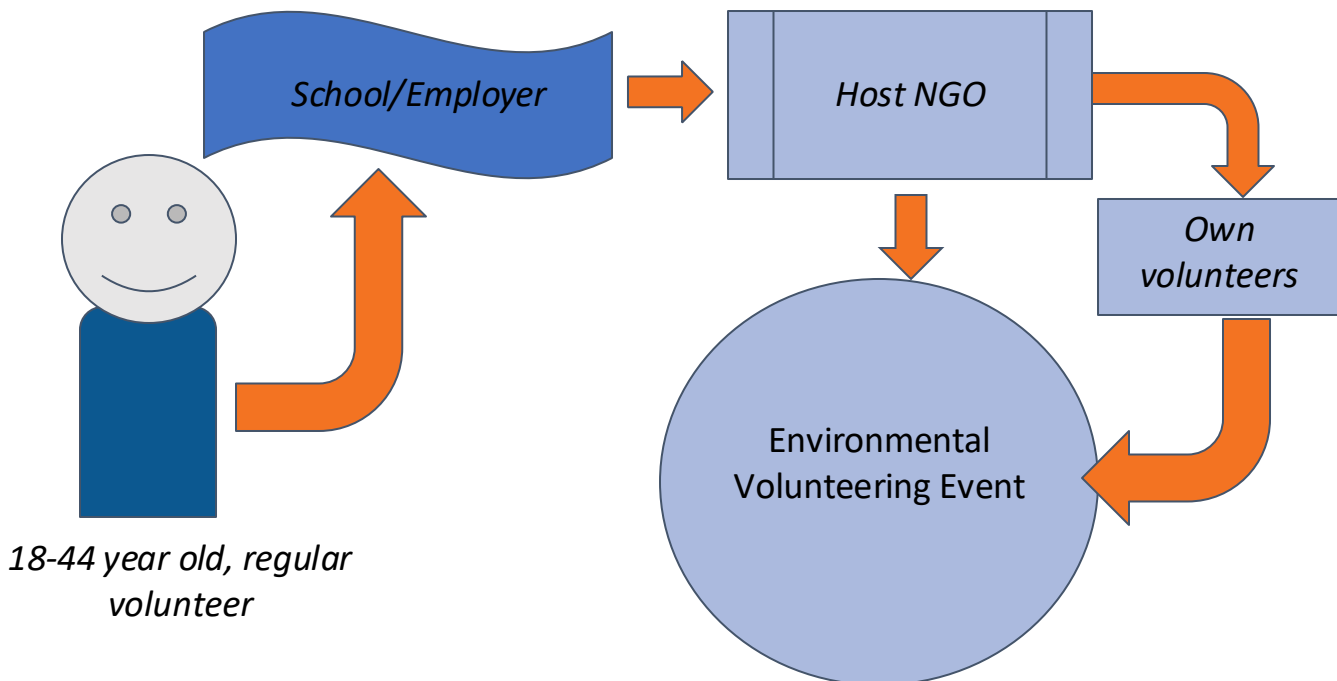
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### Take aways & Learnings



- Most volunteers in the study were **aged 18-44 years old**, indicating a **downwards trend** consistent with research in Western countries. While the **average income level is decreasing slightly**, the **education level remains high** among environmental event volunteers.
- The study **did not find significant differences in the demographics** of environmental event volunteers **between countries**, reinforcing that the focus is on **how the volunteer approaches the volunteering**.
- Environmental episodic volunteers were more likely to volunteer on a **regular basis**, typically as part of an **organisation rather than individualised**, though not usually with the same organisation, and reported a **high level of satisfaction** with the event they participated in.
- The data suggests that **rather than bringing potential new volunteers** to the landscape, third parties such as schools or employers **tend to attract existing volunteers** who may **only join the group and hosting organisation for one activity**.
- Strategies to **recruit and manage volunteers** should take account of this change in **how volunteers enter an activity** and harness the **increased utilitarian motivation of volunteers joining through a third party organization**. This points to the **need for a dual management structure**, where recruitment and guidance are treated distinct.



ERNOP Research Notes provide easy-to-read, practice-oriented summaries of academic articles on philanthropy and are written by practitioner experts. This ERNOP Research Note 2024/36 is published in December 2024 and has been written by Connor Audsley from the Centre for European Volunteering. More information can be found at [www.ernop.eu](http://www.ernop.eu).