



Conference: “Creating a more inclusive future for youth volunteering”

Evaluation Report



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Executive Summary

Background information

- The conference was co-designed and co-delivered by young people
- It was held on 25 Sept 2018 at the Tolbooth in Stirling and was attended by c. 80 – 90 delegates.
- The planned attendance was 100, but there were a number of ‘no shows’ on the day (a common problem with free events).
- An end of conference feedback form provided very positive feedback from 27 delegates, the results of which are summarised below.

Conference content

Elements rated ‘informative’ or ‘very informative’	% of respondents (n= 27)
Youth Panel	93%
Presentations	89%
Open space session	82%
Workshops	81%

Conference impact

‘Major impact’ or ‘impact’ on understanding of:	% of respondents (n= 27)
Barriers to inclusion	93%
Volunteering	89%
Ideas and possible solutions to achieve a more inclusive approach	82%

Most importantly, **81% stated that they were likely to use the conference to help make youth volunteering more inclusive.**

Lessons learned

In terms of lessons learned there are several practical recommendations to consider in the planning and delivery of future conference events of this nature:

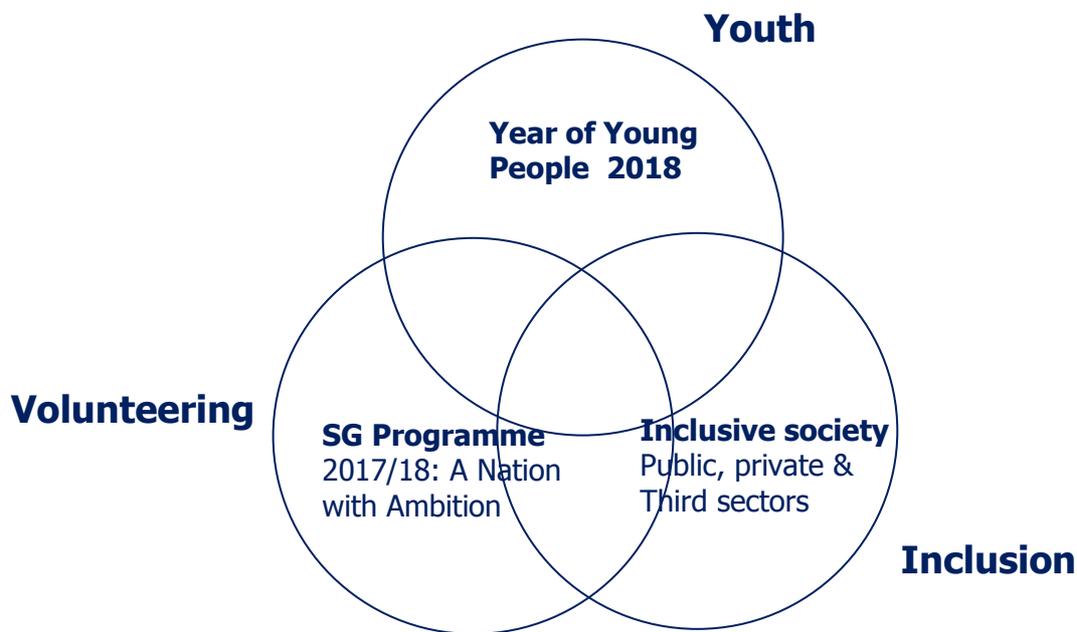
- De-clutter the programme – don’t be too ambitious in trying to pack too much into the programme
- Give more time to the ‘creative’ elements – both the workshops and open space session would have benefited from more time
- Overbook for free conferences – the number of call-offs/no-shows are significant. One suggestion to consider is taking credit card details for a penalty payment which would be due on any ‘no-shows’.

On the positive, one of the key lessons for Volunteer Scotland was the major impact you can generate through co-design and co-production with young people. Their contribution was widely regarded as the stand-out element of the conference – plenary speeches, youth panel and Q&A. The other key positive was the enhanced relationships we have developed with our partner organisations.

1. Background to the conference

1.1 Rationale and objectives of the conference

There were three intersecting policy areas underpinning the rationale for the conference: Youth, Volunteering and Inclusion:



Links:

- Youth: [Year of Young People 2018](#)
- Volunteering: [A Nation with Ambition, 2017-18](#)
- Inclusion: [Fairer Scotland Action Plan](#)

In particular, the Scottish Government’s Programme for 2017-18 blends volunteering with inclusion and YOYP 2018.

“We will be bold in realising our vision for volunteering and the role volunteers can play in shaping the lives of their communities. Volunteering is transformational: for the volunteer, for the beneficiary and for communities. We will do more to support groups currently facing barriers to engaging in their communities, including disabled people, older people and people out of work. Building on positive trends for youth volunteering, we will work with young people throughout the Year of Young People 2018 to better understand opportunities and motivations and ensure young people can contribute on issues that matter to them.”
(page 110: A Nation with Ambition)

The goal of the conference was to help realise this vision. Its specific objectives were to:

- **Understand the barriers** to volunteering facing young people, specifically those who are disadvantaged and suffering exclusion from society
- **Identify solutions** for how these barriers can be overcome – from the policy level to practical measures
- **Engage young people** in this process and provide a platform for ongoing youth engagement in 2018 and beyond.

The conference was also timed to coincide with the completion of Dr James Davies’s PhD: [Young People & Volunteering: Attitudes and Experiences in Areas of Multiple Deprivation, 2018](#)

1.2 Development Process

Youth Co-design - as part of YOYP 2018 the conference programme was co-designed by young people. Volunteer Scotland was supported by Young Scot, Project Scotland and the University of Strathclyde in planning of the co-design process. Representatives from Young Scot’s **Communic 18** youth team were then invited to help structure the conference programme.

Conference postponement – the original planned date in March 2018 had to be postponed due to industrial action affecting the University of Strathclyde venue. The conference was rescheduled for 25th September 2018 at the Tolbooth in Stirling. The advantage of the postponement was that it enabled the newly formed **Youth Volunteering Innovation Project (VIP)** team to help finalise the co-design process and support the delivery of the event.

Four members of the Youth VIP Team provided the following contributions:

- The opening and closing address at the conference
- The recording of the outputs from the workshops – referred to as the ‘Development Propositions’ - the most important factors to engage young people in volunteering and sustain their involvement
- Describing the Development Proposition in the Open Space session
- Youth Panel – 2 Youth VIP team members, 2 youth volunteers from PEEK and 2 from Project Scotland

1.3 Conference programme

The conference programme was structured into four phases – see full programme on the next page:

- **Understand:** the opportunities and challenges
- **Explore:** ‘what works’ in inclusive volunteering
- **Reflect:** prioritisation of ‘what works’
- **Act:** key priorities, next steps and responsibilities

Conference Programme

09:30 – 10:00 Arrivals, coffee and networking

10:00 – 10:10 **Welcome - George Thomson**, Chief Executive of Volunteer Scotland – outlining the conference goals and structure for the day

UNDERSTAND: The Opportunities & challenges

10:10 – 10:20 **Opening address – Bethany Spain & Michael Gowan**, Youth Volunteering Innovation Project

10:20 – 10:45 **Dr. James Davies, University of Strathclyde**, will present the findings from his PhD thesis: “*Young people & volunteering: opportunities and obstacles in deprived areas*”

10:45 – 11:00 **Q&A** facilitated by Dr Daniela Sime, University of Strathclyde

11:00 – 11:15 Coffee break

EXPLORE: ‘What Works’ in inclusive volunteering

11:20 – 12:05 **Workshops (first session)** – ‘routes to engagement’ facilitated by:

1. ‘Generation Cashback’ – Youth Scotland, Girlguiding Scotland, Boys’ Brigade and Scouts Scotland
2. Improving the life chances of children - Possibilities for Each & Every Kid (PEEK)
3. Young People’s Employability Journey: YouthLink Scotland, Project Scotland and Skills Development Scotland
4. Developing youth volunteering locally - Volunteer Glasgow & Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire

12:10 – 12:55 **Workshops (second session)** – repeat of workshops

13:00 – 13:40 Lunch

13:45 – 14:00 **Inspector Craig Rankine**, Police Scotland Youth Volunteers National Coordinator: “Engaging our disadvantaged youth – what works!”

REFLECT: Prioritisation of ‘what works’

14:00 – 14:45 **Open space session** - to develop and agree the most important development priorities for a more inclusive youth volunteering outcome

- Task 1 – Summarising the long list of development propositions
- Task 2 – Voting and shortlisting the propositions
- Task 3 – Critically appraising propositions and securing buy-in

14:45 – 15:00 Coffee break

15:00 – 15:45 **Ms Aileen Campbell**, Cabinet Secretary for Communities & Local Government – including Q&A with the ‘Youth Panel’

ACT: Key priorities, next steps and responsibilities

15:45 – 16:00 **Key priorities** – Youth Volunteering Innovation Project
Next steps & responsibilities – George Thomson

2. Evaluation results

2.1 Evaluation methodology

The conference is being evaluated on three levels:

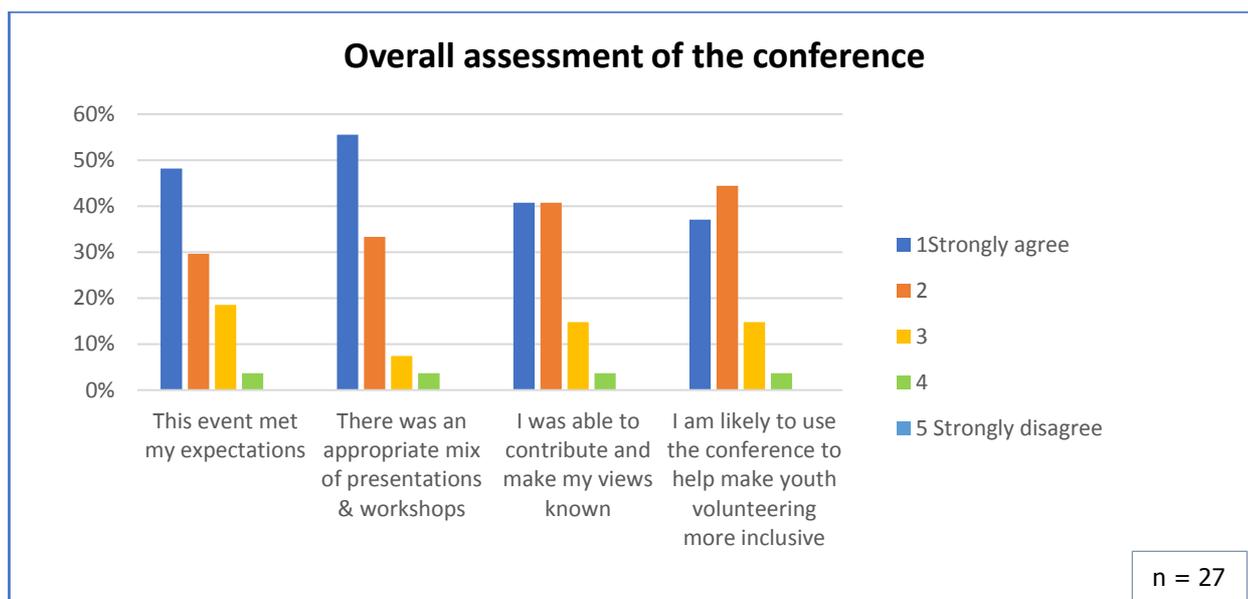
- **Informal feedback** – based on anecdotal comments received by Volunteer Scotland from partner organisations and delegates. This has been very positive. The main areas highlighted for improvement of future events include:
 - More time – for the presentations, workshops, Q&A, and open space session – basically more time for virtually everything in the conference.
 - Better briefing for the workshop facilitators – achieving a balance between sharing the experience of their own organisation(s) and discussion with delegates to work up the ‘Development Proposition’.
 - Improved linkage between the workshops and the open space session. The latter ran out of time.
- **Evaluation forms** – completed by the delegates at the end of the conference. This was a simple one-page evaluation sheet with three closed questions and two open questions. The 27 responses evidence form the main evidence base for this report.
- **‘From words to action’** – tracking the longer-term impact of the conference in terms of:
 - Follow-through on the ‘Development Propositions’. Volunteer Scotland is working closely with Young Scot to ensure that the Propositions and wider findings from the conference are fed into the work of the Youth VIP Team; and
 - Volunteer Scotland will be liaising with partners to support possible bilateral/multi-lateral initiatives which flow from the event.

This latter evaluation assessment will be the true test of the performance of the conference as it will measure the extent to which it has met its goals. The impact evidence will be collected over the period Oct – Dec 2018 and reported on separately.

2.2 Overall assessment of the event

Delegates’ overall assessment was very positive in terms of meeting their expectations; having an appropriate mix of presentations and workshops; and providing the opportunity for them to engage and make their views known – see graph and table below.

Most importantly, respondents thought they were likely to use the conference to help make youth volunteering more inclusive. 81% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with this statement (response options 1 and 2).



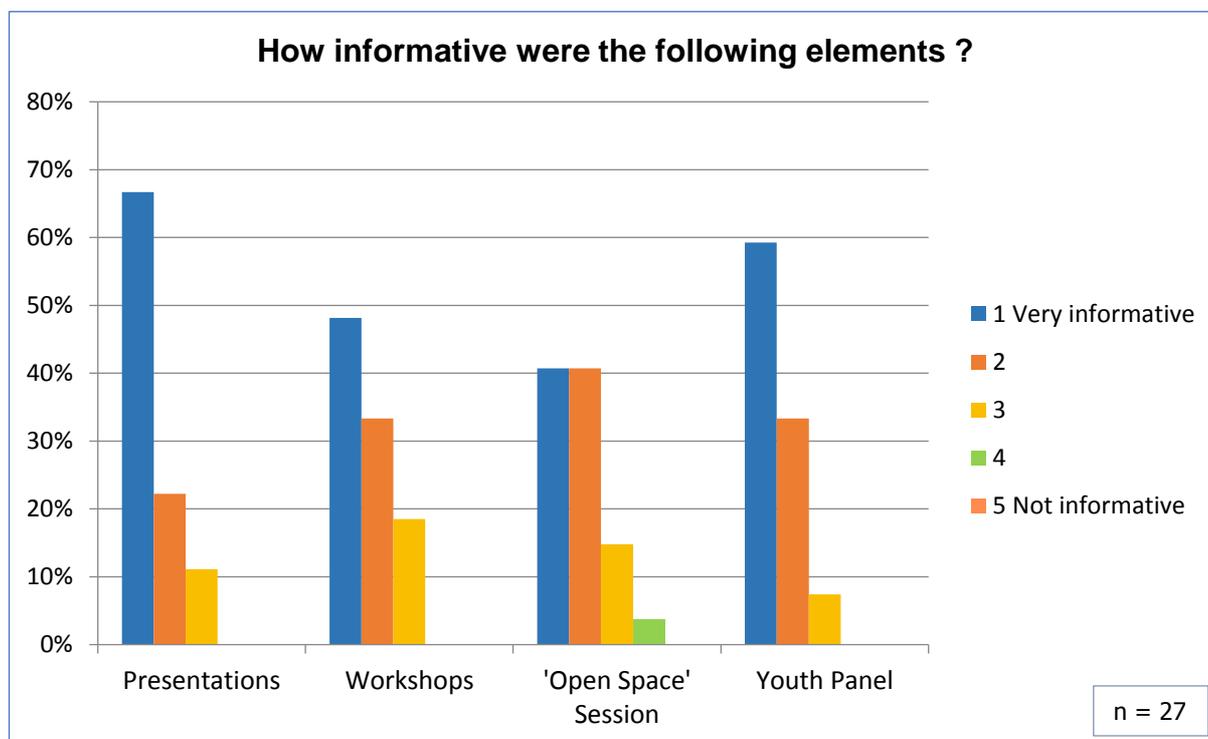
	1 Strongly agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly disagree
This event met my expectations (n = 27)	48%	30%	19%	4%	0%
There was an appropriate mix of presentations & workshops (n = 27)	56%	33%	7%	4%	0%
I was able to contribute and make my views known (n = 27)	41%	41%	15%	4%	0%
I am likely to use the conference to help make youth volunteering more inclusive (n = 27)	37%	44%	15%	4%	0%

Delegate feedback includes:

- “The event more than met my expectations”
- “Great day – many new useful connections made...”

2.3 How informative was the conference?

The presentations and the youth panel were rated the most informative elements of the conference. However, the findings for workshops and open space sessions were also very strong with 81% and 82% respectively rating them as either ‘very informative’ or ‘informative’ (response options 1 and 2).



	1 Very informative	2	3	4	5 Not informative
Presentations (n = 27)	67%	22%	11%	0%	0%
Workshops (n = 27)	48%	33%	19%	0%	0%
'Open Space' Session (n = 27)	41%	41%	15%	4%	0%
Youth Panel (n = 27)	59%	33%	7%	0%	0%

In response to the open question on which aspects of the conference delegates enjoyed most, the Youth Panel was the most frequently cited:

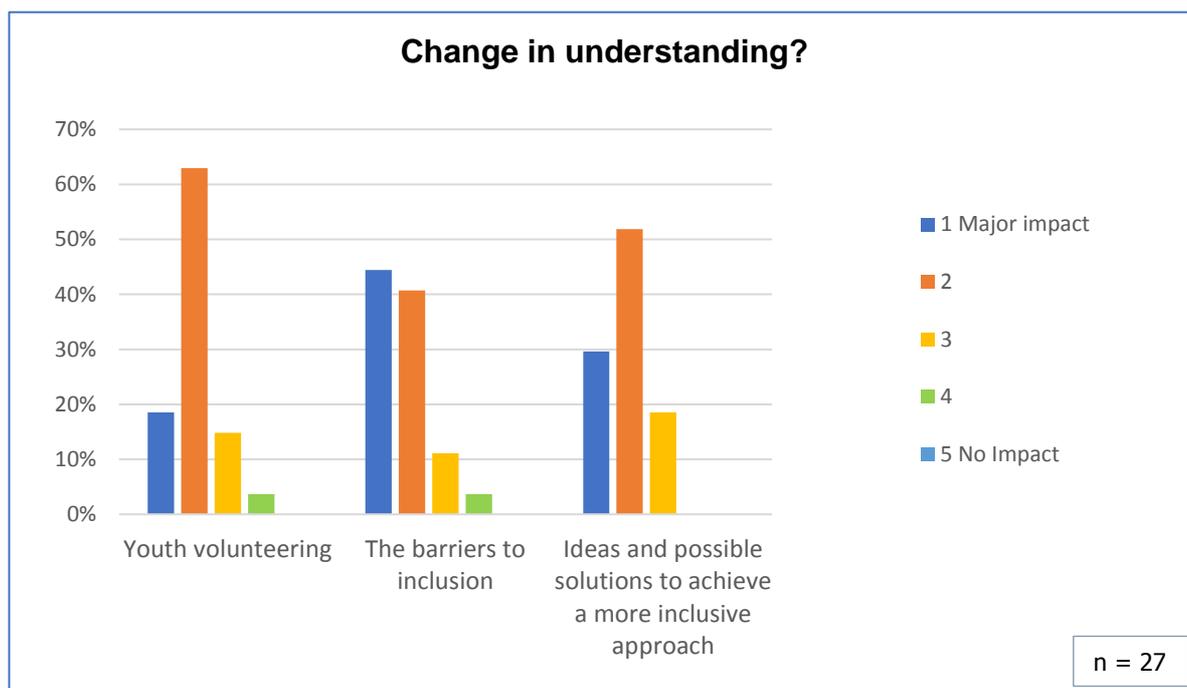
- “This event more than met my expectations and the youth panel were inspirational”
- “The youth panel was great - really inspiring and informative in equal measures”

The presentations were also valued highly:

- “PSYV - talk - brilliant interview.”

2.4 Change in understanding?

The last set of closed questions explored the extent to which delegates’ understanding of specific themes had changed. The greatest impact was on respondents’ understanding of the ‘barriers to inclusion’ with 85% rating the event as having ‘major impact’ or ‘impact’ (response options 1 and 2). Changed understanding of youth volunteering and solutions to achieve inclusion were also very positive.



	1 Major impact	2	3	4	5 No Impact
Youth volunteering (n = 27)	19%	63%	15%	4%	0%
The barriers to inclusion (n = 27)	44%	41%	11%	4%	0%
Ideas and possible solutions to achieve a more inclusive approach (n = 27)	30%	52%	19%	0%	0%

Feedback included:

- “I took ideas from the workshops.”
- “Mind changing”
- “Much to mull over and action”

2.5 What worked and what didn't

Based on feedback from the open questions delegates highlighted the pros and cons of the conference as follows:

What worked

Positive feedback was given on the following:

Conference elements	No. of positive comments
Youth panel	11
Workshops	6
Presentations	5
Youth volunteer involvement	5
Open space and Development Propositions	4

Examples of feedback included:

- PEEK - workshop - lots of positive discussion!
- PSYV - talk - brilliant interview
- Youth VIP team eloquent and mind changing YP!
- The discussion around PhD on barriers to volunteering
- Networking with others
- Hearing from the youth panel around their view and benefits of volunteering
- Lots of great discussion; great input by the young people

A full list of delegates' comments is presented in the Appendix

What didn't

The following issues were raised by delegates relating to the conference programme and timings:

- The lack of time for the workshops and open space session was the biggest issue.
- This compromised the amount of time for discussion and interaction.
- Some delegates would also have liked more time to explore in greater depth the experiences of the workshop facilitators.

In addition, there were two conference management issues identified:

- The gallery workshop rooms were quite noisy, and delegates struggled to hear all the discussion.
- The number of delegates was lower than planned (c. 85 rather than 100). Furthermore, the Tolbooth venue could have managed a larger number. The clear lesson is that for free events you need to overbook by a significant margin.

Again, the full list of delegates' comments is presented in the Appendix.

3. Conclusion and next steps

3.1 Indicators of success

Based on both informal feedback from partners and through the evaluation survey, the conference is widely regarded as a success. It has delivered against the conference’s three key objectives:

Conference objective	Evidence
<p>Understand the barriers to volunteering facing young people, specifically those who are disadvantaged and suffering exclusion from society</p>	<p>85% of delegates responding to the survey said that the conference had a ‘major impact’ or ‘impact’ on their understanding of the barriers to inclusion affecting young people and volunteering.</p>
<p>Identify solutions for how these barriers can be overcome – from the policy level to practical measures</p>	<p>82% of delegates responding to the survey said that the conference had a ‘major impact’ or ‘impact’ on their understanding of possible ideas and solutions to achieve a more inclusive approach.</p> <p>81% of delegates thought they were likely to use the conference to help make youth volunteering more inclusive.</p> <p>The conference also identified 8 ‘Development Propositions’ – see further detail in section 3.2 below.</p>
<p>Engage young people in this process and provide a platform for ongoing youth engagement in 2018 and beyond.</p>	<p>Youth engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-design – 3 Communic18 team members and 4 Youth VIP team members helped to co-design the conference • Co-delivery – 4 Youth VIP team members, 2 youth volunteers from Project Scotland and 2 youth volunteers from PEEK helped to deliver the conference • Post-conference follow-up: Volunteer Scotland is working with Young Scot and the Youth VIP team to ensure the conference outputs are factored into their research and analysis. The Youth VIP team will submit their recommendations to the Scottish Government early in 2019 so that they can be embedded in the overarching National Volunteering Outcomes Framework and its rollout. (Note: The Framework is currently under development with a planned completion date of March 2019).

3.2 Development propositions

In terms of practical actions and ‘next steps’ the conference identified 8 Development Propositions which were voted on by delegates. The ‘top three’ were discussed in the open space session – see table below.

The 8 Propositions have been shared with the Youth VIP team and they are being considered as part of their wider remit reviewing the future of youth volunteering in Scotland.

Development propositions	No. of delegate votes
1. Local youth engagement worker Centrally funded, leading conversations with young people, engage local groups in their local community (Kelly)	5.5
2. Community mapping and engagement initiative Building relationships with orgs, organisations sharing experiences (Davie)	6
3. Centralised travel expenses One stop shop access to bus cards, available expenses for young people (Davie)	28
4. Statutory fund for youth volunteer coordinator Protected role for a youth coordinator resource to provide stability for young volunteers (Bethany)	11.5
5. Take volunteering seriously Recognise the value within employers, job centre and others (Bethany)	9
6. Improved youth volunteering through community engagement Lack of centralised access to volunteering opportunities, VIOs cross-promote, taster sessions (Michael)	10
7. Co-design youth volunteering for under 16s Co-design opportunities in schools, centrally promote and access through youth ambassadors and online space (Michael)	28
8. Normalise volunteering Start younger, focus more generally on importance of soft skills, improve perception of volunteering (Kelly)	21

3.3 Lessons learned

In terms of lessons learned there are a few practical recommendations to consider in the planning and delivery of conference events of this nature:

- De-clutter the programme – don’t be too ambitious in trying to pack too much into the programme
- Give more time to the ‘creative’ elements – both the workshops and open space session would have benefited from more time
- Overbook for free conferences – the number of call-offs/no-shows are significant. One suggestion to consider is taking credit card details for a penalty payment which would be due on any ‘no-shows’.

On the positive, one of the key lessons for Volunteer Scotland was the major impact you can generate through co-design and co-production with young people. Their contribution was widely regarded as the stand-out element of the conference – plenary speeches, youth panel and Q&A.

The other key positive was the enhanced relationships we have developed with our partner organisations.



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Appendix – Delegates’ comments

Q.4 Aspects you enjoyed the most?
Barriers to inclusion
Young people's input panel
This event more than met my expectations and the youth panel were inspirational, I also took ideas from the workshops
Youth panel discussion
Workshops and panel, and information networking!
Police Presentation Workshops
Youth Panel and workshop
Open Session
Young Volunteer involvement
PEEK - workshop - lots of positive discussion! PSYV - talk - brilliant interview, Youth VIP team eloquent and mind changing YP!
The input of the young people
The range of speakers
Lots of great discussion; great input by the young people
Open discussions
Brainstorming for development propositions
The discussion around PhD on barriers to volunteering, networking with others, hearing from the youth panel around their view and benefits of volunteering
Great day - many new useful connections made, much to mull over and action
Presentations, involvement of youth VIP team and panel with Cab Sec
The youth panel of Aileen Campbell
Open Session
The youth panel was great - really inspiring and informative in equal measures

Note: a range of additional comments have been suppressed to respect the wishes of the respondents.

Q.5 Aspects you would improve for the future?
More time for Q & A
More time for Workshops & discussion on smaller group, Specific input from org or topic on volunteering for 20 - 25 year olds who are hard to reach
Include more organisations who have not managed to include the under 18/16's in volunteering opportunities
Great to understand details of organisations Work in workshops 1 & 3 but not enough time left for propositions
I think there was too much squeezed into one day. Workshops were good, but very difficult to hear from 3 presenters. More time for discussion
More time?
None - Excellent
Workshop leaders / facilitators: 2 had lots of discussion, but 2 talked at participants
More young people in attendance
Speakers / Presentations were quite short - wanted to hear more
Room set up - Gallery areas were too noisy
Workshops
Open space session - did not get into any depth of clarity
More interactive sessions
There seems to be a non-joined up natural discussion

Note: a range of additional comments have been suppressed to respect the wishes of the respondents