

Community First Yorkshire

December 2022



My experience

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- Founder & Director of

Transformations
Leeds

- 20 years experience working with international students
- Had 20 gap year volunteers from 10 different countries

Our current team



5 Nationalities: American, Kenyan, Ecuadorian,
Chinese & British.
Includes 3 voluntary workers (interns) from overseas



*Open: Mon, Thurs & Fri
7.30am - 2.30pm
Wed 12pm - 2.30pm*



 Edit Cover Photo



Real Hope Cafe

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 Ad Centre

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How is volunteering understood in different cultures?

British culture is...



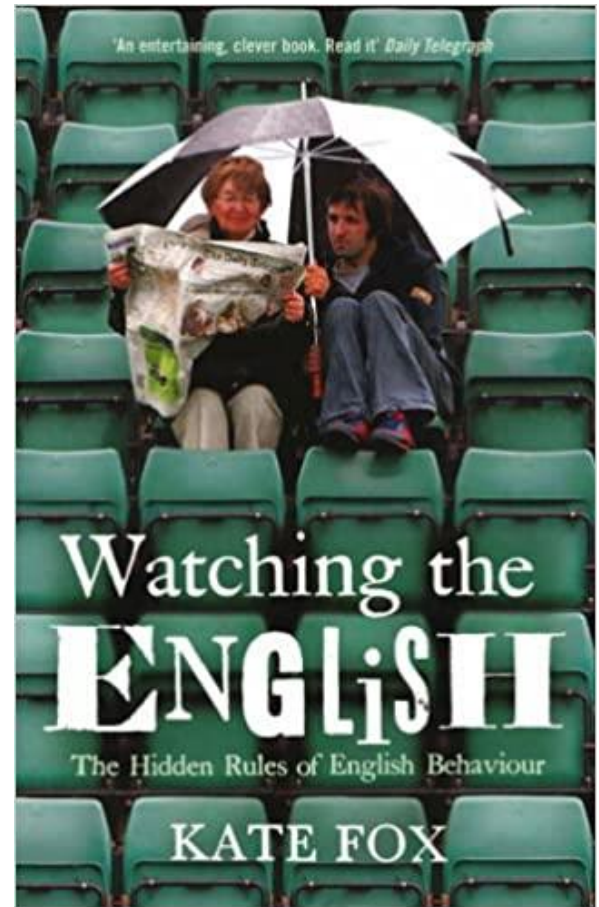
"task orientated" (Lanier)
"highly individualistic" (Hofstede)

So a) we downplay social interaction

“the average Englishman will assiduously avoid social interaction ... unless certain props and facilitators are available to help the process along.”



“By focusing on the detail of the game’s rules and rituals, we can pretend that the game itself is really the point, and the social contact a mere incidental side-effect”



b) We formalise 'helping' as volunteering, often seeing it as



A task: "Supporting a charity or cause"
Individual: "boosting skills"

Many cultures are...



relationship orientated
group orientated or collectivist

So a) many like the social interaction that comes with helping people



help someone they know
help the group

b) 'helping' is universal but might not be called volunteering

“Whilst socio-cultural norms and behaviours such as altruism, charity, obligation and solidarity may be expressed differently across countries, cultures and religions, their existence is nevertheless universal”
(Butcher and Einolf 2017; Salamon et al. 2017).

Kenyan Culture

“In Kenyan Churches, volunteering is viewed as service to God and thus by labelling it ‘volunteering’, it takes the focus away from God and gives credit to the individual. Therefore, the term volunteering is frowned upon”



Kenyan Culture

"It is very common to help others regardless of whether you have the skills or not. This is because the most important thing is to ensure people are happy. I think volunteering is labelled as helping each other out. Relationships are the most important thing in my culture"



Mexican Culture

“Mexicans will often refer to it [volunteering] in language that better reflects their cultural ethos of solidarity: What they mention instead is the word “colaboración” (collaboration), which has a similar meaning . . . Very seldom do people refer to these kind of actions as “volunteer activity” or as “voluntary actions”.



To help recruit people from different cultures view your volunteering opportunity through 'relational' eyes

- **What are the opportunities to make friends through volunteering?**
- **How might it help become part of the community?**
- **Describe who and how people will be helped by the volunteering.**
- **Consider informal routes to volunteering**

What are the advantages/benefits of involving volunteers from the different cultures?

Different networks often brilliant recruiters



Highly skilled



Different knowledge



Can ask brilliant questions



Make the most of difference



Practical and cultural considerations of involving migrants, refugees and international students as volunteers

10 years ago I'd have told you do this don't do that but...



"Love covers a multitude of sins"

The Bible 1 Peter 4:8



People know when you care

A photograph of two young women in the foreground, both laughing heartily. The woman on the left has long brown hair and wears red-rimmed glasses and a light blue sweater; she is holding a grey mug. The woman on the right has long black hair and wears dark-rimmed glasses and a dark blue patterned top. They are in a brightly lit indoor space, possibly a community center or school hallway, with other people blurred in the background. A green exit sign is visible on the wall behind them.

“The volunteers really care about me like I was one of their family members”

Would you feel welcome to join?



Would you feel welcome to join?



Accessibility = Welcome = Caring

Accessibility

- Language issues
- Where do you advertise
- Don't assume transport (cost, familiarity)
- Location
- Training
- Ask



Welcome

Find out...

- Eat everything?
- Mode communication
- Show interest
- Involve



Caring

Might need...

- Not to assume, explain
- Help with practical life issues (GPs)
- Cultural mentoring



Summary

- **View volunteering through relational eyes**
- **Value the difference that each volunteer brings**
- **Love covers over a multitude of sins**
- **Accessibility = Welcome = Caring**



**Resources list
available via email**

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leeds.org.uk