

LSE Volunteers

Celebrating volunteering and
fundraising at LSE in 2014-15



Volunteer Centre



Introduction

We are delighted to be celebrating volunteering and fundraising at LSE. There is a strong tradition of social awareness and engaging with the wider community at LSE and when students volunteer and fundraise they demonstrate this.

The 2014-15 academic year has seen thousands of hours donated and many thousands of pounds raised for UK registered charities, working in the UK and overseas. We asked some of our students and the charities they worked with about what volunteering and fundraising has meant for them.

We hope you enjoy reading about it as much as we enjoyed making it happen.



David Coles
LSE Volunteer Coordinator



Katie Budd
RAG President 2014-15



LSE Volunteer Pledge

The London School of Economics and Political Science pledges to encourage volunteering amongst its students. The Volunteer Centre at LSE Careers and Students' Union will continue to work in partnership to further develop student volunteering as an integral part of student life.

Volunteering offers benefits to our students and the local community in line with the school's values and commitments. By volunteering students can engage with the wider world, support the environment and gain new skills to compete in a rapidly changing job market.

Volunteering

LSE Volunteer Centre

The LSE Volunteer Centre is at the forefront on LSE's engagement with the charity sector and is the hub of volunteering on campus. Each year we help thousands of students donate thousands of hours to good causes locally, nationally and internationally.

In 2014-15 we have seen a huge amount of interest from students who want to get involved in volunteering with over 4,000 signing up to our newsletter. LSE students have completed a range of roles that include mentoring, campaigning, fundraising, marketing, research and many others! We launched our one-off programme with events taking place at community centres, the SS Robin and at the Tower of London dismantling poppies, amongst others.

Interest from charities recruiting LSE students as volunteers has never been higher and we've promoted opportunities from over 300 organisations this year. We've also welcomed over 100 charities on campus, a new record for us. All of them have been offering exciting opportunities that allow LSE students to make a difference. We've had fantastic feedback from the organisations we work with about their relationship with the Volunteer Centre and the quality of work completed by LSE students, something the School should be very proud of.

We are particularly pleased with our continued relationship with LSESU RAG and our brilliant joint fundraising and volunteering night in conjunction with The Youth Funding Network during Student Volunteering Week. We raised over £4,000 and secured many volunteering pledges for three small charities.

The 2014-15 academic year has been incredibly exciting and we are really looking forward to building on these successes next year.





David Thorp Chair KickStart Ghana

KickStart Ghana is a UK and Ghanaian registered charity/NGO. Our vision is one where the people of Ghana can fulfil their potential and have every opportunity to succeed. Our mission is to enhance the sporting and educational opportunities available to the people of Ghana.

We do this by investing in sport and education through grants, financial assistance for individuals and recruiting skilled international and local volunteers to work on our projects and learn from each other. We're passionate about the positive effects that sport and education can have on individuals and communities.

David Thorp, KickStart Ghana's Chair says, "Volunteers are absolutely essential to the running of our charity. Ruth Taylor, an LSE Human Rights student, has been volunteering for KickStart Ghana for several years but over the last 12 months has taken on much more responsibility. She led our volunteers in Ghana for 10 weeks last summer and has since become a trustee of the charity, leading on our monitoring and evaluation. Her impact has been huge and she is a credit to LSE. We look forward to working with her and the LSE Volunteer Centre for many more years."

Ruth says, "I volunteer as a trustee for KickStart Ghana because it gives me the opportunity to feed in to the strategic development of a charity I care about (and it's great fun!). Having volunteered in Ghana myself back in 2010, I love having the chance to stay connected to the country and getting to see first-hand the charity continue to develop year on year. I'd recommend becoming a trustee to any LSE student."



"Volunteering is a fantastic way to pick up skills, gain new experiences and, of course, make a difference. KickStart Ghana volunteers have gone on to do a wide range of careers and they feed back to us how important their volunteering was in helping them."

David Thorp, Chair, KickStart Ghana



Bonnie Chiu
Co-Founder and Director
Lensational
MSc International Relations

Lensational is a social enterprise which aims to empower women in developing countries economically and emotionally through equipping them with digital cameras and photography training.

Bonnie, a Lensational Co-Founder and LSE student says, "When I came to LSE, I expected that I would gain new insights from interacting with over 50 nationalities in my Masters programme. That for me was extremely fruitful. What I did not expect is that I was able to expand my social enterprise to the UK – the global leader of the social enterprise sector. This is all thanks to the staff at the LSE for their guidance and encouragement. Through the LSE Volunteer Centre I was able to conduct photography workshops for at-risk women in partnership with Spires. And this is why upon my graduation, I was endorsed for the Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur Visa and the school has continued to help me in my entrepreneurship endeavours. In the past 5 months, my organisation Lensational has been able to expand to a team of 10 – all from different nationalities, and we also raised £5,000 and were featured by the *Guardian*!"

"Through the LSE Volunteer Centre I was able to conduct photography workshops for at-risk women in partnership with Spires."

Bonnie Chiu, Lensational





Charlotte Milner-Barry
Membership Coordinator
The Funding Network

The Youth Funding Network (YTFN) runs pioneering live crowdfunding events where young people give their pounds, passion and power to raise critical seed funding for student led solutions to everyday problems. Working with the LSE Volunteer Centre and LSESU RAG YTFN events at LSE are run by a dynamic group of fantastic student volunteers who do everything from selecting the projects that pitch, to finding the best entertainment campus has to offer! We have now run two events at LSE, involving 150 people, and raising almost £10,000. We are delighted that LSE will be YTFN's flagship partner for the next two years!

Past projects have included LSE student Bonnie Chiu who set up Lensational, a charity that empowers women in Pakistan through photography. She said, "The best thing about pitching at YTFN at LSE is that it feels like home. Raising funds is one of the scariest things I have ever done, but thanks to YTFN @ LSE, I surprised myself by raising £1,200 on a single night!"

*"We are delighted that LSE will be YTFN's
flagship partner for the next two years."*

Charlotte Milner-Barry, The Funding Network





SPIRES

Rebecca Sunter

Spires

Volunteer Coordinator

Spires is a South London based charity that helps hundreds of homeless and disadvantaged people all year round. It aims to improve the quality of life of people who are homeless, insecurely housed, unemployed or suffering from the effects of poverty, mental ill health and loneliness.

Spires works to achieve its aims through the provision of a wide range of day centre services. Service users access Spires for a range of reasons; for breakfast and hot lunch, clothing, showers, companionship, advice and support from knowledgeable staff regarding housing, substance misuse and benefits. They work with a number of external agencies and are able to refer service users to services which are relevant to their personal circumstances.

"Over the past few years we have recruited many student volunteers from LSE and this year has been no different. One in particular, Alex Talbot, has done some excellent work and was recently awarded the 'Volunteer of the Month' award. I met Alex at the LSE Volunteering Fair in October 2014 and was blown away by his enthusiasm and drive to learn from the start. A great asset to our team; he is really passionate about volunteering here as we are his local homeless charity."

Rebecca Sunter, Spires





Ben Leblique
MSc Development Studies
Researcher for The Book Bus

I was first introduced to the Book Bus when I ventured down to the LSE's International Development Volunteering Fair earlier this year. I was looking for volunteering work that would complement my masters course, and offer me an insight into how international development projects function in practice. Amidst all the other charities and NGOs, the Book Bus caught my eye because its mission to provide children in underfunded schools with reading material was so simple, and yet so compelling. The experience so far has been extremely positive and very hands-on – for the most part I have been busy researching potential audiences for the charity's international volunteering programme. Working with the rest of the team in the Book Bus' cosy office in Hackney has been an absolute pleasure, and I can only hope to make a positive contribution to the great work already being done at the charity.

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Ben Leblique, Researcher





Laura Price
BSc in Government
Volunteer with FoodCycle as Hub Leader

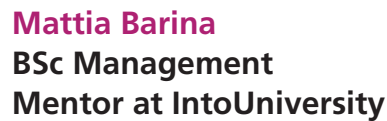
I began volunteering with FoodCycle LSE at the end of my first year and immediately I was hooked. Before I started volunteering with FoodCycle, I knew hardly anything about food waste or food poverty but when I saw how much food we were picking up for our cooking sessions that would have otherwise been thrown away and how grateful the guests were to have a hot nutritious meal, the link between these two issues really struck me. What I love about FoodCycle is that it's an opportunity to spend time with those in society who are often ignored or forgotten about in the midst of our busy lives. As a university student, you can sometimes feel cut off from the outside world FoodCycle is all about uniting the community – our volunteers and guests all sit down to eat together, and people from different walks of life end up enjoying a meal and conversation with one another.

Having fallen in love with the project, I wanted to become more involved and so I became a hub leader last summer. Hub leaders are an essential part of running a hub successfully and are responsible not just for leading cooking sessions but also do behind the scenes work involving fundraising for our hub, co-ordinating volunteers, managing relationships with food donors, PR and communications. The training for becoming a hub leader is fantastic. I've gained a food safety certificate, learnt heaps about cooking and have developed a variety of project management skills that I will carry with me into the future. I have made so a great number of friends through being a part of the hub team I have also found my confidence has improved immensely. I really look forward to the sessions, to see how happy it makes our guests and the great team work that is involved. It gives you this buzz which lasts through the whole week and has really inspired me to get involved with more community projects.

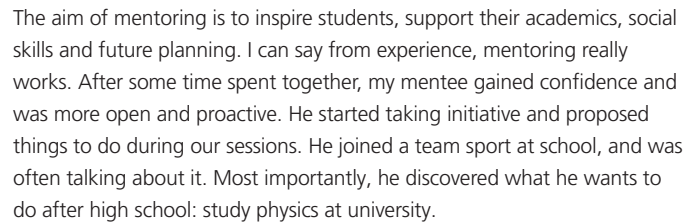


"I began volunteering with FoodCycle LSE at the end of my first year and immediately I was hooked."

Laura Price, Hub Leader



When you walk into an IntoUniversity centre you will see volunteers and members of staff doing all sorts of things with the children: teaching them about careers, reading a story, playing four in a row, surfing on the web, or acting some funny skit. This type of environment is ideal for a child's talents to flourish. What I truly enjoyed during my time as a mentor was to see how gifted children are. Often in our university life, as well as when doing paid work, we are focused mostly on ourselves. How can I get the best grades? How can I get to the top? Mentoring does the exact opposite: it shifts our focus towards someone else, and I think this really puts our own life into perspective.



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Tamara Broier **MSc Health, Community and Development** **Volunteer with the Wonder Foundation**

When looking for volunteering opportunities I wanted to find a place where I could gain experience and put into practice knowledge acquired through my Masters degree from LSE. Volunteering with the Wonder Foundation (WF) has proven to be a great choice.

The Wonder Foundation is an educational charity that aims to improve the all-round well-being of vulnerable communities around the world, through increased access to education, healthcare, economic and personal development tools. WF partners with local projects which focus on transforming the lives of women and children, through local knowledge meeting local needs.

Taking into account my background in the healthcare sector, the staff at Wonder provided a supportive, motivating and friendly environment where I was encouraged to use my skills and knowledge and to apply them to some very interesting projects. I helped conduct a feasibility study into establishing a professional education programme for healthcare staff in Africa, worked on a qualitative study in collaboration with a London-based WF partner and presented some of the findings at an advocacy event promoting the reduction of health inequalities in London.

Volunteering at WF enabled me to gain new, invaluable experience. I was also able to discover how and where I most enjoy using and building my skills and knowledge, enabling me to confidently seek future opportunities in the industry.



"The staff at the Wonder Foundation provided a supportive, motivating and friendly environment where I was encouraged to use my skills and knowledge."

Tamara Broier, Community and Development Volunteer

Raising and Giving

RAG is the fundraising arm of the students' union at LSE and we spend each year raising as much money as possible for charity! The charities are voted for by the student body and we run a wide range of events and challenges in aid of them. We also act as a support network for all fundraising on campus, be that by societies, clubs, groups or individuals across campus. In recent years, RAG has become a central part of the LSE student experience. We began this year selling the "RAG band", an exclusive ticket which got freshers into four club nights over freshers' week and made over £14,000 for our charities. In February, RAG Week saw loads of societies getting involved and helping us hold special events, from the Drama Society's 24 hour play, the Northern Society's pie eating contest and a new and improved RAG Refreshers Ball, to raise more money than ever before. We've also seen hundreds of students participate in our challenges, from Kilimanjaro and Atlas Mountain treks, to domestic and international hitch hikes, to Tough Guy, to our brand new Jailbreak! That's not to mention all the one-off charitable activities we facilitate, such as our recent on-campus drive for stem cell donation. Essentially, RAG is inescapable at LSE, and that's the way we like it! Our aim is to instil the charity spirit in students from the minute they step foot at university. This way, we hope that students will take the fundraising ethos into their futures beyond LSE, into their careers and into their daily lives.

Katie Budd – RAG President 2014-15



Left: Katie Budd, current RAG President with next year's RAG President, James Wurr.



Below: The RAG Committee with the first and second year wider exec at the RAG Refreshers Ball.



Fresher's RAG Band



Rag's Three Charities

Spires

Spires is a small, homelessness charity based in South London and is RAG's local charity for 2014-15. Their aim is to be the best support they can in helping people move from lives of distress, isolation and insecurity to a future of greater isolation and hope. Spire offers a day centre for people in crisis and provide food, clothing, showers and healthcare as well as supporting peoples long term needs through an advice and referral system.

RAG has been fortunate enough to visit the Spire day centre this year, allowing students to meet some of the staff, volunteers and clients who benefit from the support offered by the charity. The jailbreak this year was in aid of Spire, with over 30 students participating in a 36 hour race to get as far away from London as possible!

War Child

War Child is RAG's International Charity for 2014-15 and was also chosen as the LSESU Athletics Union charity of the year. War Child provides support for some of the most vulnerable children and their families, whose lives have been torn apart by war. Working in locations around the world from Afghanistan to Syria, War Child create safe spaces for children to escape danger, help get children back into school or informal education, equip young people with vocational skills to earn a sustainable income and help children to get their voices heard.

War Child visited LSE during the RAG charity week and encouraged students to sign up to their petitions and campaigns and recruited people to volunteer at music festivals during the summer. The Athletics Union have also run multiple events in conjunction with RAG such as the Men's Working Rugby Group waxing their legs and shaving their heads as well as a Men's Football vs Women's netball charity match!





IntoUniversity

IntoUniversity is RAG's National charity for 2014-15. IntoUniversity work across the UK to provide local learning centres which help children and young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds. The learning centres run specialised programmes which are designed to help young people to attain their chosen aspiration, whether that is a place at university, an apprenticeship or a specific job. In 2013-14 over 18,000 young people benefited from IntoUniversity's programmes and in 2012 77 per cent of their school leavers progressed into higher education.

Several of RAG's events have been specifically linked to IntoUniversity such as Tough Guy, a sponsored 10km run with over 250 obstacles, and multiple LSE students regularly volunteer at their learning centres. IntoUniversity visited LSE during RAG charity week and it was great to see LSE students engaging with the charity.

A word from next year's RAG President, James Wurr

When I joined RAG in as Hitchhike Officer in first year, I never thought I would be leading the charity wing of the Students' Union just two years later. As the next RAG President, I feel that I have a lot to live up to. I really do owe a huge amount to the last two Presidents, Nona and Katie, who not only took me under their wings and taught me the ropes but also helped put RAG into the strong position which it stands today. That being said I am so excited for the coming year and to put my own personal stamp on RAG. RAG is one of the most rewarding societies to be a part of on campus and next year I want to encourage as many students as possible to engage with charity fundraising and volunteering at LSE. We already run a wide programme of challenges including a Jailbreak, Hitchhike and Tough Guy and our RAG Band on Fresher's Week never fails to disappoint. We can add to this impressive programme by engaging more with our fantastic societies, other London University RAG's and introducing new challenges such as attempting a World Record on campus. Hopefully, this will allow us to raise over £100,000 for our three student chosen charities next year.





"I'm the newest and honorary member of the RAG family. And RAG is just that: a family. We work together on everything, from helping to save lives with Delete Blood Cancer to helping raise money for a new shower block for the homeless in London by selling candy canes. We do hitches too, where you meet amazing people and build lasting friendships and memories. Everyone should be a part of RAG."

Richard Atkins, 1st Year



"I joined RAG because I was looking for a society at LSE that wasn't a sport and wasn't too career focused. It has turned out to be one of the best things I've done in my fresher's year. RAG has been a hoot and a half, not least because everything we do is for good causes. #noRAGrets."

Riam Mistry, 1st Year

"Taking part in RAG's hitchhike to Budapest was undoubtedly one of the best things I've done during my time at LSE. Spending 15 hours in service stations, and becoming so desperate to get out of Paris that we resorted to asking police officers for lifts, might not sound like much fun, but the experience overall was unforgettable in the best of ways. I became even closer to two good friends – there's nothing like a good 3am service station heart to heart – had the opportunity to take selfies with the Eiffel tower, frolic in the Austrian hills, spend three memorable days in the beautiful city of Budapest, and meet some wonderfully generous people along the way. Beyond Hitch, joining the RAG wider exec has helped me meet so many amazing people, feel more of a sense of belonging to LSE as a whole, do a sponsored bungee jump, and so much more. I have made friends for life, and sleeping on service station floors aside, I wouldn't have it any other way. RAG love <3."

Rhiannon Clapham, 2nd Year



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