

LSE Volunteers

Celebrating volunteering and
fundraising at LSE in 2015-16



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 epitomise this.

The 2015-16 academic year has seen 1,000s of hours donated and many 1,000s 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 means to them.

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



David Coles
LSE Volunteer Coordinator



James Wurr
RAG President 2015-16



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 the Student 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 of LSE's engagement with the charity sector and is the hub of volunteering on campus. Each year we help 1,000s of students donate 1,000s of hours to good causes locally, nationally and internationally. Our vision is one where the LSE community makes a sustained and valued contribution to society through volunteering.

In 2015-16 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 and more than 700 attending our volunteering fairs. LSE students have completed a tremendous range of roles that include mentoring, campaigning, fundraising, marketing, research and many more. We continued our one-off programme with events taking place at community centres, St Ethelburga's Peace Centre and at Ham House where we wrapped over 1,000 Christmas presents in a single day!

Interest from charities recruiting LSE students as volunteers has continued to grow and we've promoted opportunities from almost 400 charities this year. All of them have offered exciting opportunities that enable LSE students to make a difference. As always 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.

One of the most exciting developments has been Reachout Research, in conjunction with colleagues across LSE and the LSESU. The project aims to connect postgraduate students who are looking for dissertation topics with charities who are looking for research to be carried out. We've seen a big uptake from charities and students alike.

Student Volunteering Week 2016 was our biggest ever, with 17 events taking place. This included one-off volunteering, a different charity doing recruitment on campus each day and the first ever Charity Insight Day that the LSESU Amnesty and Animal Rights societies led on organising. We are particularly pleased with our continued relationship with LSESU RAG and our brilliant joint fundraising and volunteering night in conjunction with The Funding Network during RAG Week 2016.

The 2015-16 academic year has been incredibly exciting and we are really looking forward to building on these successes next year.





Emily Hooker

General Course

Volunteer with GoodGym

GoodGym helps people get fit by doing good. They're a group of runners that combine regular exercise with helping their communities.

"GoodGym is a group of runners aiming to get fit by doing good deeds in the community. I first got involved with GoodGym during Student Volunteering Week at a one-off volunteering opportunity put on by the LSE Volunteer Centre. The event involved running 5K to The Avenues Youth Centre, helping paint a few walls and running back to the start. I was so impressed by the organisation and the people I met that I decided to become a full member of GoodGym. I now volunteer with them twice a week and am training with them for the Hackney Half Marathon to raise money for charity. Through GoodGym I've been able to take part in a variety of volunteer projects across London, including visiting an isolated older person once a week. It's great to be able to become more involved in the wider London community and meet people from different backgrounds all committed to volunteering.

Before volunteering with GoodGym, I didn't think I had the time to make volunteering a regular part of my life. Being a student and working on the side meant that there was always an excuse not to get involved, but the LSE Volunteer Centre and GoodGym made it possible for me to give back to the community in a meaningful way while getting in shape and having a great time in the process!"



"It's great to be able to become more involved in the wider London community and meet people from different backgrounds all committed to volunteering."

Emily Hooker



Harrison Balisteri

General Course

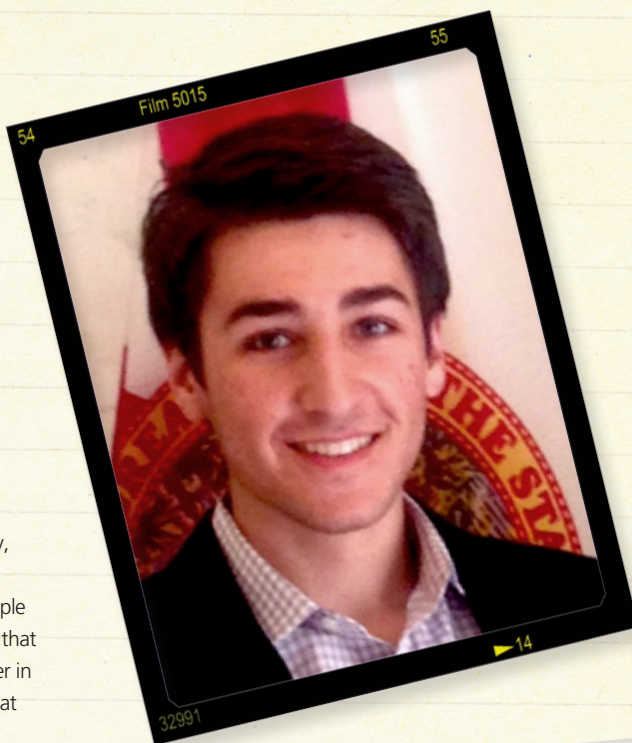
Volunteer at The Hackney Pirates

The Hackney Pirates is an enterprising charity working to develop the literacy, confidence and perseverance of young people in Hackney, so that they achieve both in school and in the world beyond. They know that young people sometimes need some extra help to achieve their full potential. They believe that providing support outside of school can really help young people to do better in the classroom, while also developing their broader skills. They also believe that learning should be a great adventure!

"The Hackney Pirates has given me the exciting opportunity to work children in an area in which I am particularly passionate – writing. As part of the 'crew', volunteers not only help their Young Pirates with one-on-one reading but we also work on term projects that see these Young Pirates writing creatively and subsequently being published. The pirate ship themed space, dynamic crew, and this unique approach contribute to The Hackney Pirates' amazing success in inspiring young people and improving their literacy. It shows them that reading, and writing, are truly adventures! I feel like I am making a meaningful impact in Young Pirates' lives, and I plan to take the concept back with me to the US when I return to Georgetown after my year abroad on the General Course."

"The Hackney Pirates has given me the exciting opportunity to work children in an area in which I am particularly passionate – writing. I feel like I am making a meaningful impact in young pirates' lives."

Harrison Balisteri





SPIRES

Prerna Bakshi

LLB in Laws

Spires Gardening Project Coordinator Volunteer

Spires is a South London based charity that helps hundreds of homeless and disadvantaged people all year round. They work 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.

"I started volunteering at the Spires Centre in October 2015. Upon starting my second year at LSE I knew I wanted to broaden my range of experiences, and when I came across the opportunity of a Gardening Project at Spires I immediately wanted to find out more. I never had access to a garden growing up, and this seemed like a great way to get involved with something new!

At Spires I have worked with the Volunteer Coordinator and other volunteers to initiate a weekly gardening project, which has the aim of redeveloping the garden at the Spire Centre that has previously been unused. Over the past couple of months, we have planted daffodil bulbs, and cleared much of the garden to make it usable for planting seeds that we hope to grow in the winter, and cultivated some indoor plants too. Now we are setting up a greenhouse which will allow us to grow a wider range of herbs and vegetables that can hopefully be incorporated into cooking projects.

One of the great things about gardening with Spires is being able to witness the results of our efforts in the garden, and being able to see the progress that has been made since the beginning of the project. Currently in the process of recruiting more volunteers, I am excited to see how the gardening project at Spires will grow!"



"I never had access to a garden growing up, and this seemed like a great way to get involved with something new!"

Prerna Bakshi



Ruihan Liu

LLB in Laws

Volunteer at Crisis at Christmas

"Crisis is a charitable organisation that provides shelters for homeless people during Christmas and volunteering at its Women's Centre was probably the best decision I made during the holidays.

I arrived at the shelter at 10pm on Christmas Eve, and was immediately overwhelmed by how organised the shelter was. I was given a name tag, briefed by two senior volunteers, and given a schedule on what I needed to do during the night.

The tasks were simple; guarding the doors to guests' bedrooms, manning the reception, making coffee for, understandably, tired volunteers. But the experience was by no means dull. I talked to amazing people, volunteers and guests alike, and their stories shed light on a world that I did not know existed before.

The night went by surprisingly fast. Soon a new batch of fresh-looking volunteers came to replace us at 7am. As much as this experience gave me a new perspective on volunteering, what surprised me the most was the volunteers. I expected them to be like me, people who didn't have a home to go back to on Christmas Eve. Instead, most of the volunteers I talked to had happy families, but they chose to spend the night taking care of homeless women because, well, 'the guests need us more'."



"I talked to amazing people, volunteers and guests alike, and their stories shed light on a world that I did not know existed before."

Ruihan Liu



**Development
in Action**

Isobel Wilson-Cleary
Vice Chair
Development in Action

Development in Action (DiA) is a youth-led, volunteer-run charity. DiA works to engage young people in global issues and promote global citizenship among young people in the UK.

Isobel Wilson-Cleary, DiA's Vice Chair, says: "As a volunteer-run charity, the work we do could not happen without the dedication and support of our volunteer committee, youth workshop leaders and those participating in our India Programme. LSE students have contributed a lot to the committee since they joined last year and they are increasingly taking on greater responsibility within their teams. Becky is using her experience of volunteering with us in India last summer to inform how we run our 2016 India programme.

Through the LSE Volunteer Centre we continually find enthusiastic and proactive young people who are motivated by our mission and eager to use their skills to shape the work we do. DiA volunteers have gone into a wide range of careers in the UK and overseas – politics, international development, journalism and the third sector and alumni are often keen to share how volunteering with us helped them get there."

Becky Rose, BSc Economics 2017, says: "Volunteering with DiA in India gave me a brilliant introduction to the world of international development. DiA's emphasis on sustainable development work with their long-term partners stood out for me. My placement gave me insight into a new culture, and I was trusted with a lot of responsibility – my summer in Udaipur was an unforgettable experience. I joined the committee to share my experiences of what I learnt in India and also because of how friendly and proactive everyone involved is. It has made me think more about the many opportunities the UK third sector has to offer too."



"Through the LSE Volunteer Centre we continually find enthusiastic and proactive young people who are motivated by our mission and eager to use their skills to shape the work we do."

Isobel Wilson-Cleary, DiA



Lucy Goodwill
Volunteer Development Manager
IntoUniversity

IntoUniversity is an award-winning education charity, supporting young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to raise their aspirations and achieve their full potential.

Lucy Goodwill, Volunteer Development Manager, says: "We have worked with the LSE Volunteer Centre for many years now to engage university students as volunteers, working with and supporting our young people in a range of roles.

We never fail to be impressed by the hard work and passion that LSE students bring to our organisation. This academic year has seen an amazing 34 LSE students volunteering with us, with the majority taking part in our mentoring scheme, providing one-to-one support to a student aged 10-17. Additionally, a group of LSE volunteers ran two Buddy Days on campus, designing and delivering a university themed workshop for year 8s, whilst several students have regularly supported our after-school Academic Support Programme which runs weekly in our education centres across London.

The impact that student volunteers make to our work is invaluable; without their tireless enthusiasm and dedication so much of what we do would not be possible. Student volunteers help to bring university to life for our students, showing them around their campuses, answering questions and providing opportunities for young people to get a taste of university subjects and societies. The wealth and breadth of insight, passion and skills students bring to our work is truly incredible.

We really treasure our relationship with LSE and are so grateful for their support this year. We look forward to continuing our partnership and involving even more LSE students in our work moving forward into 2016-17!"



"We never fail to be impressed by the hard work and passion that LSE students bring to our organisation."

Lucy Goodwill, IntoUniversity

population
matters

Simon Ross
Chief Executive
Population Matters

Population Matters is a membership charity that addresses population size and its effect on environmental sustainability. We see population growth as a major contributor to environmental degradation, resource depletion and other problems. To address these, we conduct research, inform the public and advocate improved family planning, better sex education and women's empowerment, which together yield smaller and thus more sustainable families.

Simon Ross, Chief Executive, says: "A campaigning charity like ours has a broad range of activities, from advocacy and research to public education and campaigning to member recruitment and fundraising. LSE volunteers collaborate with our staff across all of these areas, contributing their enthusiasm, ideas and initiative. They are naturally particularly effective in outreach to universities and schools but can contribute to managing events, preparing briefings, operating social media accounts and coming up with ways of improving how we work. As a charity, we are used to working with volunteers and they can take on significant responsibilities. LSE volunteers help us do more than we could otherwise do."

*"LSE volunteers help us do more than
we could otherwise do."*

Simon Ross, Population Matters





Jo Winsloe Slater Volunteer Manager St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, based in Bishopsgate, helps people build relationships across divisions of conflict, culture and religion.

Jo Winsloe Slater, Volunteer Manager, says: "When we were first approached to invite student volunteers from LSE, we had no idea what a fruitful, transformative and deeply enjoyable experience it would be. St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is visited by hundreds of people every year for a wide range of events bringing people together for workshops and training, for dialogue and public conversations.

We have a strong ethos of hospitality and have truly unique and beautiful gathering spaces that are enjoyed by all who use them. The Centre is also a Grade I listed building and has a secret oasis of a courtyard garden, all of which requires ongoing care and attention. We were therefore delighted when LSE volunteers braved rain and muddiness and joined us to tidy up, pot up and clear up the garden in the autumn so it would be ready to flourish the following spring. We were then delighted when even more students came in October to help refresh the paintwork in our entrance hall and reception areas.

The volunteers were brilliant. They worked so hard and completed in a day what would have taken us days of work and disruption to the centre. It was beautifully organised and coordinated by the LSE Volunteer Centre, we simply supplied refreshments and equipment. This is a brilliant concept, deeply appreciated by us and all our visitors."



Elina Seimanidou a recent LSE graduate says: "After completing my MSc in September, I wanted to spend my time not only on job applications, but also on doing something meaningful and fun. Browsing LSE CareerHub, I came across the one-off volunteer opportunities and this was exactly what I was looking for: contribute to a good cause, meet people, short-term commitment and happy moments. My first experience as an LSE volunteer was the courtyard transformation challenge. Planting olive trees and wheeling soil across central London sounds impossible, but we made it possible! Londoners can now enjoy the smells and view of a beautiful garden in the middle of the City."

"When we were first approached to invite student volunteers from LSE, we had no idea what a fruitful, transformative and deeply enjoyable experience it would be."

Jo Winsloe Slater, St Ethelburga's

Raising and Giving

RAG is the fundraising arm of the Students' Union at LSE and we spend each year facilitating fundraising on campus through our own events and society collaborations. RAG's three charities of the year are voted for by the student body and we run a wide range of events and challenges in aid of them. Over the last three years, RAG has really established itself as one of the best societies on campus, directly engaging with over 5,000 students this academic year.

There have been a few key highlights this year, beginning with the annual "RAG Pack" Welcome Week club nights where 1,800 students descended on four top London nightclubs to raise over £23,000 for our chosen charities. We've also hosted the most successful RAG Week in the history of student fundraising where 2,400 students in 34 clubs and societies supported 29 charities, raising £17,322 in the process. RAG has also seen growing numbers in its challenge events with 70 people taking part in RAG Gets Lost and over 40 students taking on international challenges this summer.

However, the most impressive part of the year has been the huge number of societies and clubs which have got involved in student fundraising and volunteering. Notable examples have been the Hockey Club raising over £2,000 for Great Ormond Street, Drama's 24 Hour Play and ISOC's incredible Annual Charity Week.

Our aim is to instil the charity spirit in students from the minute they set foot in university so they continue it into their lives beyond LSE. RAG has had an incredibly successful year and I really hope that next year's committee continues this success into the future.

James Wurr, RAG President

su.rag@lse.ac.uk • [Twitter: @LSESURAG](https://twitter.com/LSESURAG) • [Facebook.com/LSESURAG](https://facebook.com/LSESURAG)



Charities



Farm Africa

Farm Africa is RAG's International Charity of the Year 2015-16. It aims to end hunger for good, working with some of eastern Africa's poorest farmers. They help the farmers earn a good living from the land so that they can provide for their families and educate their children. By providing material and training, Farm Africa helps African farmers help themselves.

Just £350 could help take a family in Africa out of hunger and poverty for good. Thus we are extremely proud to say that through successful bucket collections, and internal challenges such as "Jailbreak", RAG has raised approximately £15,870 for Farm Africa so far this year!

St. Mungo's Broadway

St. Mungo's Broadway is RAG's Local Charity of the Year 2015-16. St. Mungo's Broadway's vision is that everyone has a place to call home and can fulfill their hopes and ambitions. In London, they provide a bed for 1,900 people every night, supporting a further 25,000 people each year through their specialist healthcare, training and employment teams to help homeless people recover from their experiences.

Through a Harvest Tin Collection in October 2015 RAG managed to completely fill a large supermarket trolley with tinned goods.

Papyrus

Papyrus is RAG's National Charity of the Year 2015-16. It's dedicated to the prevention of young suicide. Papyrus contributes to the relief of suicide by providing prevention training, confidential support through HOPELineUK, campaigning and influencing national policy, and empowering and training young people to lead suicide prevention activities in their own communities.

RAG managed to effectively raise its awareness by choosing it as the charity for our "RAG GETS LOST" internal challenge which raised over £4,800. Overall we have now raised £14,435 for them.

"RAG is a fantastic part of my university experience. In an individualistic environment in terms of learning at LSE, RAG not only has all the social benefits of a society, it also has a fantastic social benefit for a variety of causes."

Niall Healy,
2nd Year Undergraduate Student

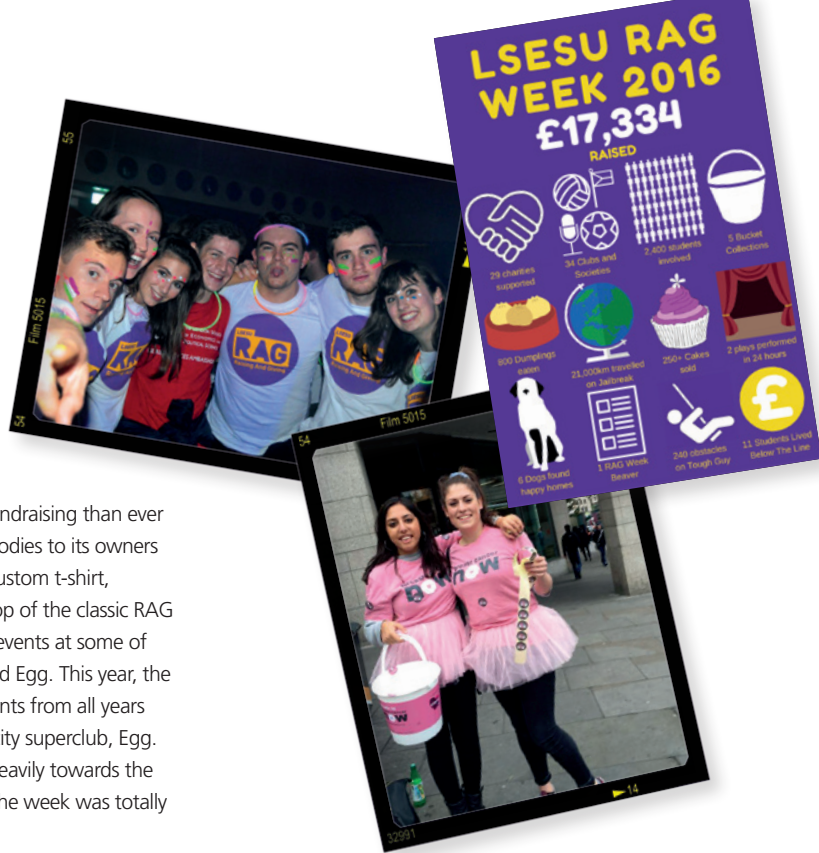
Events

Freshers

With more people, bigger events and higher charitable fundraising than ever before, the RAG Pack 2016 was huge. It offered more goodies to its owners than previous years with the introduction of a tote bag, custom t-shirt, Northbank shop discount card and sweets. This was on top of the classic RAG Band which gave its wearers access to four LSE-exclusive events at some of Europe's best clubs including Saucy, Fabric, Shaka Zulu and Egg. This year, the week was rounded off by the RAG Rave which saw students from all years dance away to R&B, House, and Disco in the 1,600-capacity superclub, Egg. It was officially RAG biggest ever event and contributed heavily towards the week £24,000 total, a 75 per cent increase on last year. The week was totally exhausting, hugely challenging and incredibly exciting!

RAG Week 2016

This year's RAG Week was a huge success – we raised in total £17,334 which is the biggest in LSE RAG Week history as well as the largest for any RAG society in the country! With events varying from bucket collections to street fairs to puppy therapy, there was something for anyone who wanted to participate! We had over 2,400 students get involved in the week, including 34 Clubs and Societies running events alongside the events organised by RAG. Our Clubs and Societies were extremely ambitious this year. Notably, Drama Society wrote, rehearsed and performed a play in 24 hours, Rowing took on the challenge of rowing the distance from London to Paris, the Athletics and Running Club completed a 24 hour running relay, we had Netball take on the Mens FC and Rugby Clubs in a charity netball match and 11 students took on the challenge of living under £1 a day for the week. These alongside many more events were what made us reach this amazing goal!



Bucket collections

This year RAG has participated in six bucket collections, which have raised almost £8,000 in total! The bucket collections have enabled more students to get involved in RAG and fundraising, with over 30 students taking part over the year. Our most successful collection was for Breast Cancer Now on Breast Cancer Awareness Day that raised over £2,000 and brought a vibrant presence to Charing Cross station. Public embarrassment in fancy dress, including pink tutus, wigs and even being dressed as a toilet (for WaterAid collection) is all worth it for the cause and certainly gets commuters' attention! We even managed to make it to London Snapchat Story promoting LSESU RAG to smartphones across London!

"RAG to me means being empowered to let off a confetti cannon, dress as a toilet during rush hour for World Toilet Day and pester Sadiq Khan at a bucket collection."

George Burton, 3rd Year Undergraduate Student

Challenges

RAG jail break and RAG gets lost

In the prickling cold morning of 14 November, LSESU RAG took 56 brave participants – some dressed as Minions, others dressed as hotdogs – over 180km away to Cromer, challenging them to hitchhike back to LSE with nothing more than their ingenuity, grit, and hastily-drawn cardboard signs. With donations collected online from friends and family drawn to the adventures (and sometimes plight) of our participants and in person collections, they managed to raise over £4,800 for the national charity Papyrus and their fight to prevent youth suicide. With Jailbreak RAG let 15 teams out of their “prisons” at LSE. 36 hours later they traversed the globe reaching Lyon, Bucharest, Malaga, Hamburg, Berlin, Vienna, Amsterdam, Aberdeen, Milan, Bangkok and more. Collectively they raised over £5,100 pounds for Farm Africa and covered 21,000km, or enough to circumnavigate half the globe!

Tough guy

Further on in the year, 21 participants went into the brutal Tough Guy assault course, tested by the barbed wire, wooden barricades, and freezing water. Raising over £2,000 pounds for the AU Charity of the Year, Street Games, Tough Guy is truly RAG's most hardcore challenge.



External challenges

This year RAG partnered with four amazing charities to provide four amazing international challenges: Morocco Trek, Kilimanjaro Trek, London to Paris Cycle, and Amsterdam Marathon. Participants are now halfway through their fundraising efforts and looking forward to riding a camel across the scenic deserts outside Marrakesh, summiting the tallest free-standing peak in the world, cycling across the Channel, and running a marathon, all for charity!



"RAG provides me with opportunities to give something back to the community. It's special because RAG does it in ways that I would not be able to find myself, like the Kilimanjaro Challenge or the hitch-hikes."

Valentin Wiesner, 1st Year Undergraduate Student

lse.ac.uk/volunteercentre