

LSE Volunteers

Celebrating volunteering and fundraising at LSE in 2016-17



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 students demonstrate this by volunteering and fundraising.

The 2016-17 academic year has seen ten thousands of hours donated and pounds fundraised for UK registered charities, working in the UK and overseas. We asked some of our incredible students and the inspirational charities they work 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 Centre Manager



David Zhao
RAG President 2016-17



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 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 thousands of students donate tens of thousands 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 2016-17 we have seen a huge amount of interest from students who want to get involved in volunteering with over 6,000 signing up to our newsletter. We ran the biggest ever volunteer fair at LSE with 47 charities and 535 students attending. LSE students have completed a huge range of roles that include mentoring, campaigning, fundraising, marketing, research and many more. We also continued our one-off programme with events taking place at community centres, Greenwich Ecology Park and Ham House in Richmond amongst others.

Interest from charities recruiting LSE students as volunteers has continued to grow and we've promoted opportunities from over 400 charities this year, welcoming many of them on to campus through our new programme, Charity Tuesdays. All of them have offered exciting opportunities that allow LSE students to make a difference. As always we have 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 know students are busy and we want to make volunteering as easy as possible. One of the most exciting parts of the year has been our #JustOneHour campaign, launched during Student Volunteering Week 2017. Led by our wonderful team of Student Volunteering Ambassadors we have collated a database of opportunities that take one hour or less. We created an inspiring video, which has been watched over 10,000 times, to encourage the LSE community to pledge just one hour to make a difference.

We're also proud of the work we've done to support the #StopOrphanTrips campaign, led by the Better Volunteering Better Care Network. We launched a pledge saying that no universities should advertise volunteering opportunities in orphanages and many institutions have joined us. Our work on this has been highlighted on BBC Radio 4's *Today* Programme, the BBC World News and *The Daily Telegraph*.

The 2016-17 academic year has been incredibly exciting and we are really looking forward to building on these successes next year.





Tazeen Dhanani
MSc in Human Rights
Refugee Support Volunteer
The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network (TERN)

TERN is a social enterprise aimed at challenging perceptions of the refugee population within wider society by demonstrating that refugees represent a positive, dynamic, diverse, and entrepreneurially driven segment of society. TERN supports refugees in realising their ambitions of starting a business. TERN's model is differentiated from the traditional NGO as it looks to establish a commercially viable approach to ensure long-term sustainability by providing expert advice, mentorship and access to business networks and investment.

"Before arriving in London to start my MSc in Human Rights, I knew I wanted to get involved with refugee issues in the UK. When I learned about TERN, I quickly gravitated towards its business model of helping refugees be self-sustainable. At TERN, I joined a small working group that strategises approaches to attract more female refugee applicants to participate in TERN's programme. While we encourage all refugees to participate in the programme, the working group has established an outreach campaign aimed at female refugee entrepreneurs in particular because women often have the added weights of dealing with childcare and household matters on top of cultural and linguistic barriers.

By providing the information, resources, and expertise to support female refugees who have an interest in starting their own enterprises, I know that I'm helping to set up the foundations for women to empower themselves and establish the channels to support their families and communities. It is encouraging to see our efforts pay off, as TERN welcomed a new cohort of female refugee entrepreneurs in January. I volunteer at TERN because I am passionate about empowering women to improve their lives. Our efforts can lead to ripple effects that positively impact communities and future generations, and that, for me, is the best feeling of all."



"I volunteer at TERN because I am passionate about empowering women to improve their lives."

Tazeen Dhanani



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Chloe Russell BSc in Government LSE Peer Supporter

LSE Peer Support provides student-led, informal and confidential assistance to all LSE students who would like some emotional support, help and reassurance. Around 20 undergraduates and postgraduates are trained each year by the LSE Student Counselling Service in a multitude of issues.

"This time last year I was thinking about my application to be a Peer Supporter. Although I thought the scheme would involve marketing events, as well as a small element of team work, I didn't really have many expectations of what the role would involve nor the value of the work that Peer Supporters undertake. I have developed so much as a person since participating in the Peer Support scheme. The countless interactions I have had as a Peer Supporter in addition to the, well quite frankly, amazing friendships I have made have led me to become a much more open, honest, empathetic and pragmatic person.

My highlight of the year was the on campus stalls, one of which being LSE Volunteer Centre's #CharityTuesday as well as my involvement in Peer Support's social media accounts. Spending a few hours to speak to different LSE students about how they are doing is so rewarding because I feel like I am making a difference to their day.

Who supports the Peer Supporters? Of course, we support each other. The 2016-17 Carr-Saunders team was made up of fellow Peer Supporters, Grace Natusch, Allan Rogers as well as myself. We have been the dream team and we've stuck together throughout.

My initial motivation for being an LSE Peer Support volunteer was to make LSE a better place. I personally found it difficult to watch people get so stressed out at university; a lot of students prioritise their career and academic worries before looking after themselves. Over the past academic year, I have truly begun to understand that listening is such an immensely important gift you can give to someone – it can really determine their future."



"Spending a few hours to speak to different LSE students about how they are doing is so rewarding because I feel like I am making a difference to their day."

Chloe Russell



Millie Dessent
BSc in International Relations
Careers Coach at Future Frontiers

Future Frontiers believes that all young people can be motivated by their aspirations. To ignite that motivational force, they recruit and train top students to deliver a face-to-face career coaching programme.

“The bus journey to Lilian Baylis Technology School in Vauxhall, where I am a coach for Future Frontiers, is a journey away from LSE. University education is not a given for everybody from every background. The Year 8 pupils here have been affected by government cuts to careers advice, leaving them in limbo about how to achieve future aspirations. However, through volunteering you see them become more positive about their futures. Although you may not see the rewards of your volunteer work immediately, when it starts to show, I can guarantee it will leave you with a big smile and a happy mind.

Through being a careers mentor you foster genuine relationships with your pupils and learn a lot about London, your community and fellow students. I recently joked with my pupil that he was a much truer ‘Londoner’ than myself as I’ve only just moved here. The massive, proud smile I received was honestly heartwarming.

Through volunteering I have gained a greater understanding of the issues facing our society and how, individually, we can address them. Having come from a state comprehensive school I was aware that educational inequality is a big problem in Britain. But it’s not all negative; I also hadn’t met some of the pupils in disadvantaged areas in London and so I was yet to learn that they are just as ambitious, inspired and enthusiastic about their education as me.

I have become more in tune with young people in my local area in London and therefore have a much stronger sense of community in a city that can be too big and isolating. I now understand the city and its people in a more meaningful way.”



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Millie Dessent



Prithvi Shashikant
MSc in Management Science
Mentor at ReachOut

ReachOut is a charity that changes the lives of young people from disadvantaged communities in London and Manchester through one-to-one mentoring. They help young people get a better start in life and go on to achieve future goals.

“Volunteering with ReachOut gave me the chance to develop a wide array of interpersonal and problem solving skills, all while positively influencing children’s lives. I learned that the children benefit tremendously from having mentors and role models in their lives, particularly those that are not privileged enough to have them at home.

One of the most important things I learned at ReachOut was how to take unexpected circumstances in my stride. Sometimes the stars would align, the mentors and mentees would be in perfect sync, and the session was extremely fun and productive. More often than not, something would go wrong; sometimes with little notice. Mentors were late or absent with no notice, challenging the present mentors to work with up to six kids at a time. Mentees arrived in a sour mood, got into fights, and cheated at sports. On days that my mentees were particularly disinterested or non-cooperative, I had to find inventive ways to keep them engaged. I am particularly proud of teaching my mentee the meaning of a tautology during a difficult session in which he remarked ‘I’m bored because I’m bored.’ He didn’t do much of his work that day, but he no longer used redundant statements. After a few months, the kids all showed noticeable improvement in everything from English skills to being fair at sports, which was exhilarating to witness.

To arrive consistently week after week, prepared to have a productive session, is a form of discipline that I was very surprised to find in myself. I have no doubt it will have positive effects on many other aspects of my life.”



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Prithvi Shashikant



Transforming childhood adversity

Conor Dwan

Head of Communications and Marketing Body & Soul

Body & Soul delivers a proven transformational programme for people of all ages who have had adverse childhood experiences.

Conor Dwan, Head of Communications and Marketing says: "Students from LSE have been volunteering at Body & Soul for many years now, and the relationship between our two organisations is hugely important to us. At Body & Soul, we support people of all ages who have experienced childhood adversity, and without student volunteers we simply wouldn't be able to offer our members the level of care and attention we do.

One of the things that makes students from LSE so valuable to us is the fit between the subjects offered by the university and the issues faced by our members on a daily basis: we work with people affected by family disruption, suicidal behaviour and HIV, all of which are associated with social isolation, economic deprivation and a sense of shame. LSE's expertise in the social sciences means that students who volunteer with us have both an interest in and a knowledge of the complexity of these issues. We find that volunteers from LSE are eager to see how their theoretical knowledge of things like immigration, poverty and social mobility applies to the lives of individuals. Their time spent here is therefore enriching for them in their educational development and beneficial for us.

We are based in Clerkenwell so we are local to the main LSE campus. This proximity means volunteers from LSE often have a deeper understanding of the local ecology and the challenges presented by our Central London environment than volunteers who travel from further afield. We are a community-based charity, so it's important to us that we engage with our neighbours to try to make life better in the corner of London we occupy, and we're lucky to have the support of both students and staff at LSE."



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Conor Dwan, Body & Soul



Temi Mwale

Founder

The 4Front Project

The 4Front Project is a youth-led social enterprise on a mission to empower young people and communities to improve their lives while understanding and reducing serious youth violence and the systemic conditions that cause it.

Temi Mwale, founder of The 4Front Project and LSE student says: "This academic year, we delivered LegalEase, a legal awareness programme aiming to help young people analyse the social issues that affect them using a legal lens. We taught students criminal liability and how the law deals with violence enabling us to start important discussions about violence in society. Young people learnt about topics such as joint enterprise and knife and gun crime, then developed short films to raise awareness about these issues to other young people. We were able to make the law more accessible to more than 650 14-15 year olds and worked closely with 75 who were excluded or at risk of exclusion.

We would not have been able to deliver this impactful work without the 20+ university student volunteers. We are very proud to say that 16 of them are studying at LSE. We are grateful that students volunteered more than 500 hours of their time to this project. LSE volunteers have the determination, passion, enthusiasm and commitment necessary to make every project a success. We hope to build on this relationship with the School and take on more LSE volunteers in the future."

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Temi Mwale, The 4Front Project





Women's Network for Development
and Educational Resources

Olivia Darby

Director of Policy and Campaigns The Wonder Foundation

Wonder works to empower vulnerable communities worldwide through education. We partner with local projects around the world that primarily support women and girls, acting as a stimulus to end poverty and improve wellbeing across families and communities. In practice, this means helping school children, health workers and others in need to get the training and skills required to lift themselves, their families and their communities out of poverty for good.

Olivia Darby, Director of Policy and Campaigns says: "Working with LSE volunteers is always an enriching experience for us as we learn so much from them! As a small charity seeking to empower vulnerable women and girls through education we achieve so much more through the work and dedication of our volunteers. Due to the diversity of LSE students we are also able to engage people originally from the countries where we are working. Having this local knowledge, for example from Kazakh, Nigerian, Filipino or Peruvian students, has allowed us to better serve our partners in those countries.

LSE students have undertaken research, written policy documents, designed graphics, helped us to organise awareness events and fundraised. They have particularly helped us in our work to build solidarity with refugees in the UK, contributing to our report *Women Breaking the English Barrier* that was launched in the Houses of Parliament, our *A Refugee Like Me* project and the creation of films. LSE students' enthusiasm for our work and their support for each other has been inspiring and we look forward to continuing to work together with the professional and reflective LSE Volunteer Centre team."



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Olivia Darby, Wonder



Jennie Jeffery
Project Coordinator
Young Funding Network

YFN holds live crowdfunding events that bring young people together to have fun and help make the world a better place.

Jennie Jeffery, YFN Project Coordinator says: "This January we were lucky enough to work with the LSE Volunteer Centre for the fourth year running to host an event supporting early-stage social enterprises led by young people. Four LSE student volunteers helped to make this event the success that it was – we raised more than £4,000 and over 20 attendees offered to help the organisations pitching with non-monetary support too, so it was a great evening for getting people involved in volunteering as well as raising money.

LSE volunteers work with us to do everything from selecting projects to sourcing great entertainment, and we couldn't hold the event without them. Having the opportunity to work with LSE volunteers is quite an experience for a small organisation like ours – it's not easy to find such dynamic individuals ready to pitch in. We're a team of five so we really need volunteers who can take the initiative and get on with things. That means that by volunteering with us, students get hands-on experience of many aspects of event management and gain valuable skills to add to their CV – anything from marketing to public speaking. LSE students are a bright bunch, and we can be confident that they'll contribute in a meaningful way to our work. We're very much looking forward to working with more LSE volunteers next year!"



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Jennie Jeffery, Young Funding Network

Raising and Giving

David Zhao

RAG President 2016-17

BSc in Government and Economics

LSESU RAG is the fundraising arm of the Students' Union and we excel at unconventional fundraising. From international hitch-hikes to bringing puppies onto campus, every year we innovate in our quest to fundraise for our three Charities of the Year, as chosen by the entire student body in Michaelmas Term. As by far the largest and one of the most active societies at LSE, RAG gets involved with thousands of students every year through its campus wide-events and challenges along with numerous society collaborations. This year especially has been an eventful year for RAG. Term started with a bang in Welcome Week with the "RAG Pack" club nights raising over £31,000 for our chosen charities, and we engaged with over 2,000 students. Throughout the year over 150 people have taken part in internal and external challenges that have sent them to places as far as Stockholm and Warsaw, and commit to incredible feats like cycling 300 miles from Budapest to Zagreb. "RAG Gets LOST" saw over 50 students participate and over £4,500 raised for Real Action's goal to ensure the right to read for every child. Finally, RAG Week once again saw massive collaboration with societies and clubs on campus with standouts of the week including the Rowing Club's collective row to Brussels and the Drama Society's 24 hour play.



Julia Lawson-Johns

RAG President elect

BSc in Geography with Economics

For me, volunteering is one of the most important things you can get involved in at LSE. Better still is the number of volunteer opportunities available to us. Besides the Volunteer Centre, RAG offers an array of volunteer opportunities in aid of our three chosen charities. The definition of volunteering at RAG is wonderfully broad. Whether it's shaking a bucket outside Charing Cross Station in a tutu or hitch-hiking across Europe, donating time and effort to charitable causes is a great way to spend your spare time. Not only is it a fantastic way to make friends, have new experiences and find something to put down on your CV, but studies have consistently lauded the mental and physical health benefits of volunteering. The sense of connectedness after donating your time to a worthwhile cause has long been shown to ward off feelings of loneliness and depression and more recent studies have shown regular volunteering can lower blood pressure and increase life expectancy in the long run.

Speaking from experience, the sense of pride, achievement and socialness after spending two hours fundraising outside a tube station during the morning rush hour truly sets you up for an enjoyable, positive and productive day. Given this inside knowledge, my aim next year as RAG president is to ensure every student who steps on campus is exposed to RAG either through its events, hitch-hikes, charitable competitions, bucket collections or external challenges.

My involvement in RAG since day one of university has contributed massively to my overall LSE experience and I am looking forward to giving fellow students the same opportunity.

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Charities of the Year

Real Action

Real Action is LSESU RAG's Local Charity of the Year 2016-17. It's an educational charity best known for the outstanding achievement of the children they teach during their Butterfly classes in schools. They are guided by their motto "Just teach them, they'll learn" and manage to raise the reading ages by an average of 12 months in 20 hours of Butterfly literacy teaching. Their mission is thus to demonstrate that social and economic disadvantage need not result in educational disadvantage.

We are thrilled to be able to say that though various events including our "RAG Gets Lost" international challenge, we have managed to raise a total of £13,509 for Real Action!



Student Minds

Student Minds is LSESU RAG's National Charity of the Year 2016-17 and it's the UK's student mental health charity. Their vision is for all students to have the knowledge, confidence and skills to look after their own mental health and to be able to support their friends and peers. They carry out a wide range of activities for delivering peer support campaigns, as well as providing in person interventions for direct support. Their main goal is for all universities and health services to recognise positive mental health as a priority for student success.

Through events such as Fresher's Week, RAG Week and especially "Jailbreak" (one of our internal challenges) we have raised a total of £11,474, which we look forward to increasing with our last events towards the end of the year.



AMAR Foundation

AMAR Foundation is LSESU RAG's International Charity of the Year 2016-17. It's an award winning charity that works in the Middle East, building and improving the lives and livelihoods of some of the world's poorest and most disadvantaged people. They focus on three main areas: emergency aid, health care and education. Since 2014 their main focus has been in Iraq and helping more than 3.4 million internally displaced persons (IDPS).

LSESU RAG managed to effectively raise awareness on this fundamental yet overlooked cause via a number of different events raising a total of £11,000 and we are really excited for our last internal challenge – European Hitch-hike – taking place in a few weeks that is dedicated to AMAR Foundation specifically.



Welcome Week (The "RAG Pack")



We started off the year with the RAG Pack featuring the SU band. For the first time ever we put on five epic nights, having over 2,000 LSE students attend them. This meant we had one of the best battle of the halls LSE has seen. The dance off will be forever remembered as a pure master class. This year also had an act, Charlie Sloth, making this year's RAG rave the best attended event for LSESU RAG. Over £31,000 was raised in this record breaking year and we'd like to thank everyone who attended the nights – you made it epic.

RAG Week

It's a good job Carlsberg don't do a RAG Week, because ours would be better! This year we raised more than £10,000, involved hundreds of students, and helped many great causes. The week of events combined old favourites like the five-a-side World Cup, the Nepalese Society Momo stall and puppy therapy with a range of new events. Thanks to all involved – and for getting us the SU award for "Student Fundraising Event of the Year"!

Hitch-hiking Challenges

The 2016-17 hitch-hike programme saw RAG Gets Lost travel to the Isle of Portland in Dorset with 38 participants. The teams raised an incredible £3,579 for Real Action which does vital educational work for disadvantaged young people in London. Jailbreak saw the winning team reach Belarus and £1,573 raised for Student Minds.

RAG Bucket Collections

This year, RAG has participated in five bucket collections for five charities. The bucket collection has reached out to various student groups to get involved in RAG through collaborations with other clubs and societies. Our most innovative collaboration was with the Music Society, playing and singing Christmas carols at Tottenham Court Road station. Other bucket collections constituted of fancy dressing in pink tutus for Breast Cancer Now, and even

dressing as a toilet for WaterAid! This kind of fancy dress is not only great fun for our bucket collectors, but also brings a lot of awareness to the important issues that our charities work towards.

Kilimanjaro Challenge

The Kilimanjaro trek is run by Dig Deep, a charity that works to provide communities in Kenya with clean water, sanitation and training. The LSE team, after a year of fundraising, will be climbing Kili alongside teams from other universities across the country to support the charity's work towards the end of this summer. We have worked alongside Dig Deep through this academic year, first recruiting the team and then supporting fundraising. Although the challenge requires a large fundraising target to be met, this is certainly achievable and will lead us not only to supporting a great cause but to the experience of a lifetime!



Events

London to Paris – (L2P)

In 2016, LSE cycled from London to Paris. 260 miles, three days and 100 students from different universities, £140,000 was raised with every participant raising over £1,000 for Breast Cancer Now. We began our journey in Richmond Park, cycled down to Portsmouth to cross the Channel and then through the scenic routes of France, eventually reaching Paris. It was tough. There was sweat, there were tears, however everyone made it to Paris, with smiles you couldn't wipe off our faces. Just in time for the iconic photo under the Eiffel Tower.

Barcelona Marathon

Taking part in the fundraising process and eventually completing the Barcelona Marathon that RAG offered this year was truly an unforgettable and surreal experience. As a team of nine, we were tasked with raising £1,200 each for Make-A-Wish UK. We managed to reach this goal in several ways from selling donuts and cupcakes to performing bucket collections in Santa outfits at Christmas markets in the freezing cold. British weather may not be ideal for standing around trying to raise money, but the reward of helping children who are suffering made the entire process worthwhile. Once our target was reached, we flew out to picture-perfect Spain where we were welcomed by locals and cheered on by drummers, children and dancers to complete an experience which we will remember for the rest of our lives: the Barcelona Marathon. The moment we crossed the finish line we were overwhelmed with emotion, partly due to pain but mostly because we gave our all to be in this position.

Budapest to Zagreb – (B2Z)

In summer 2017 we are pushing ourselves further. 480km, four days, three countries. Every participant is required to raise £2,000 Breast Cancer Now. We will start our adventure in Budapest and after an evening exploring this amazing city we will rise early, saddle up and start peddling. Day one will see



us cycle towards the stunning Lake Balaton, where we will cool off and spend the night in a hostel overlooking our beautiful surroundings. The stunning scenery continues and on day two we enter Slovenia for a picturesque lunch. Our fourth and final day will see us enter Zagreb as we take on the ascents and enjoy the downhills on our way to Croatia. All our hard work, and everything we have achieved culminates in those final minutes as we reach our finishing point in Zagreb, which we all will.

Machu Picchu Challenge

The Machu Picchu Challenge takes place later this year and 15 students have been tasked with raising £3,000 each. The money raised goes to Action Against Hunger, a great charity who help malnourished children all over the world. In August we will embark on our challenge, trekking in the Andes for seven days at high altitude before reaching Machu Picchu itself. Fundraising throughout the year is a challenge in itself but greatly rewarding and we can't wait for the trip this summer. It's been a great way to meet people and raise some money for an awesome cause.



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