

Give & Gain Day 2016

Activity idea: Inspiring social action among young people

In partnership with



Give & Gain Day

Business in the Community's Give & Gain Day is the only global day of employee volunteering. Now in its ninth year, it will see thousands of people from hundreds of companies volunteering on 20 May 2016.

Give & Gain Day is a celebration of the incredible power of employee volunteering. Businesses are driven by legions of skilled and experienced staff - community organisations, social enterprises, and schools can benefit from their support. By getting unprecedented numbers of people out volunteering across the UK and internationally, we're championing the talent and energy found in business and the role it can play in helping communities prosper.

Give & Gain Day is an opportunity for us all to celebrate what business volunteers can achieve.

The #iwill campaign

#iwill is a national campaign that aims to make social action part of life for as many 10 to 20 year-olds as possible by the year 2020. Through collaboration and partnership it is spreading the word about the benefits of youth social action, working to embed it in the journey of young people and create fresh opportunities for participation. The campaign is being coordinated by the charity Step Up To Serve.

Social action is defined as '*practical action in the service of others that creates positive change*'. The benefit is to the young people themselves AND the communities in which they live.

Step Up To Serve's goal is that 60% of 10-20 year-olds are taking part in social action by the year 2020. This will be achieved by inspiring leaders from across society to create fresh opportunities for them to take part. Reaching this goal will mean an additional 1.5 million young people across the UK will be making a contribution to their communities.

How you can inspire social action through volunteering

It's important that young people, in every community, feel connected to the issues around them and empowered to make a positive change. This short pack gives examples of activities that can be run as part of Give & Gain Day to help build the skills young people need to take practical action in their communities.

The pack focuses on enhancing three key skills areas: **idea generation**, **team work** and **communications**. These three areas are at the heart of social action and are skills that young people often need most help in exploring and developing.

The activities concentrate on encouraging dialogue with young people in a fun environment, allowing them to reflect on the lessons learnt. They are suitable for young people aged between 10 and 17. So whether you are painting a mural and looking for opportunities to do so over a lunch break, or planning a day of more interactive sessions, please talk to the youth organisation or school that you are working with to gauge which activities are most suitable.

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Also be sure to let the young people you're working with know that taking part in social action is a great way of gaining a wide range of skills such as communications and problem-solving. There is also evidence confirming that participation enhances things like empathy and a sense of community. All of these are attributes that employers value so tell your group not to forget about their social action when they start thinking about getting a job.

After Give & Gain Day

If the young people you've been working with are keen to continue their social action there are lots of options. They can use their new found skills to develop their own social action project or they can get involved with organisations that provide opportunities to make a difference - here are few examples:

Duke of Edinburgh's Award - www.dofe.org

Girl Guides - girlguiding.org.uk

National Citizen Service - www.ncsyes.co.uk

Scouts - www.scouts.org.uk

vInspired - www.vinspired.com

You can find more useful resources and guidance to help make your Give & Gain Day a success [here](#).

And don't forget to tell us about it by signing up at www.giveandgainday.org.uk

Business in the Community can help you organise your activity for a small administration fee. If you would like to find out more about the projects we offer please contact your regional representative found [here](#).

Activities

Idea generation



Introduction

The ability to generate ideas that can be used to meet community challenges or creatively raise awareness of issues is an important skill for young people. As well as the activities there are some useful techniques and initial introductions that volunteers can talk to young people about and that will help them improve their idea generation.

- **Brainstorm warm up:** In order to get everyone in the right frame of mind draw a black splodge on a flip chart and ask people to shout out what they see. Answers will get more and more creative as the exercise continues – ball of wool, a black hole, a freckle etc...
- **Rules of engagement:** It's important to explain what a brainstorm is and the rules that people need to follow, so set these out clearly and make sure people adhere to them. Rules include: not talking over other people, respecting all ideas, writing all ideas down.
- **An introduction to mind mapping:** take some example mind maps along with you, or get them up on Google Images. Then on a white board create your own as ideas are generated.

Activities

A walking brainstorm

There is a temptation to sit in a room and discuss community problems and potential solutions. Instead, get out and explore. You might also want to consider taking a few hours to do the brainstorm with the young people before your volunteering day to help shape what you do on Give & Gain Day. You can then turn up on 20 May already having a good idea of what the community challenges are and what the group wants to focus on.

Time: 60-90 mins

Materials:

- Clip boards
- Paper
- Pens/pencils

Making it happen:

1. Split into groups of 4-5 people, with one volunteer per group
2. Each group take a different route around the area. Go out for 20-30 minutes
3. Meet back at the venue at a designated time and discuss as a larger group what everyone found.
4. Build a mind map as you go along
5. Once the local issues have been identified, choose one and ask for solutions on how to improve the situation.

Useful tip

Before starting, and if working with under 16-year-olds, make sure that the teachers/youth workers can come with you.

Dragon's Den

The familiar Dragon's Den format where the volunteers act as mentors and judges to the young people. Groups are asked to come up with a solution to a community issue and to think about how they would create a campaign around it to communicate it to the rest of the community.

Time: 60-90 mins

Materials:

- Flipchart paper
- Pens
- Small prizes

Making it happen:

1. Based on previous discussions with the young people, settle on an issue that everyone will focus on
2. Split into groups of 3-4 people
3. Tell groups that they have 30-40 minutes to come up with a practical solution to the issue, a name for their campaign/programme, ideas on how they will get people involved.
4. Volunteers should circulate around the groups, prompting discussion and encouraging quieter people to contribute
5. Once the time is up, give the groups 5 minutes to decide who will do what in the pitch
6. Give each group 5 minutes to pitch their idea to a panel of volunteers
7. Once you've heard all the pitches, decide on a winner and award them a prize

Useful tips and ideas

- Depending on the group, you may need to give them examples of the kind of solutions and 'campaign' you're looking for – try to keep the examples as local as you can, good examples can be found amongst road safety, anti-littering, and healthy lifestyle campaigns.
- If your company is running the activity in more than one school, could you get the winners from each school together after Give & Gain Day to compete?

Communications



Introduction

Communication is more than being able to talk with confidence, for young people in particular it's also about being able to be clear and accurate with what they're saying, as well as actively listening to others. The activities below help build these skills and raise a participant's awareness of just how important they are.

Activities

Articulate

Articulate is a classic game of speed with an emphasis on clarity of expression. It's a really fun game to use as a warm up and should be familiar to many people.

Timing: 20 mins

Materials:

- Collection of random words written on small pieces of paper
- Jars or containers to put the pieces of paper in
- A stop watch or egg timer
- Bags of sweets

Making it happen:

1. Split into groups of 2-3
2. Each group needs a collection of words in a jar
3. On the word 'go' the person nominated to begin picks a piece of paper out of the jar and describes it to their group. They can't use the word or any words derived from it e.g. when describing football a person can't say "a sport played by a footballer" but they could say "the sport played by Lionel Messi".
4. The nominated individual has to see how many words they get through in the space of a

minute.

5. When the minute is over shout 'stop' and people should swap roles.
6. Go around the groups and ask for their total. Whoever wins, gets a prize

Simultaneous conversation

This activity is all about focussing on what people are saying in a deliberately challenging environment. It's important that the point is made that good communicators listen more than they speak, so that when they do speak they can say things that are most relevant to the people listening.

Timing: 20 mins

Making it happen:

1. Have the group break off into groups of three.
2. Place one of the three in the centre and the remaining two will be to either side.
3. Give one person on the outside a mundane topic, and the other a different mundane topic like cutting the grass or doing the laundry.
4. Instruct the people on the outside to talk nonstop about their topic to the middle person.
5. The middle person must try to maintain both conversations as best they can. *Important note:* Ensure when the person in the middle is addressing one conversation, he/she turn toward that person.
6. Continue for a minute or two and place a new member of the three in the middle.

This exercise demonstrates communication on many different levels. Initially, the person in the middle will experience sensory overload, but, after 20 seconds or so will settle into a groove. They will learn that they are much better listeners than they thought. The people on the sides will also learn that they know a lot more about pointless topics than they previously thought.

Useful tip:

Illustrate the most important point by asking the speakers on the side how they felt when the person in the middle turned away from them. Likely you will get answers like "ignored," "insignificant," "hurt" or "angry". These were conversations about insignificant topics - imagine how one would feel if they were talking about something important.

Team work



Introduction

For young people to affect change in their local community, whether it be through volunteering or campaigning, team work is absolutely essential. The activities suggested here are designed to get people communicating with each other effectively, problem solving collaboratively, and bonding as a team around a common challenge.

Choose the activity you think is most appropriate for the age and size of group you are volunteering with. Also consider the space you have available as well as if any of the people taking part have a disability. If possible, it's a good idea to try the activities with your group of volunteers first before trying to explain it to the young people so you're confident you know what you're doing.

Activities

Egg drop

Participants will work as part of a team with volunteers to solve a design problem –Protect an egg falling from a height from smashing when it hits the ground!

Increasing the accuracy of the drop, minimizing the weight of the protective device and minimizing the number of components in the protective device are all factors in determining the success of the project. The egg must be accessible, so the structure must be built so that the egg can be easily removed, checked, and/or replaced.

Timing: 90 mins

Materials:

- Plastic sheeting to cover floor
- Paper towels for cleanup
- Variety of building materials: Hard-shell containers (cardboard, boxes, plastic yoghurt containers, etc), Soft padding (bubble wrap, Styrofoam, foam, tissue paper, etc)
- Scissors
- Tape
- Rubber bands
- 1 egg per group
- Rulers - for measuring size of package
- Paper & pencils to record results and draw designs
- Water balloons for prototypes

Making it happen:

1. Select a test site and determine the drop height.
2. Have the participants individually draw their own designs
3. Have participants join groups of 2-3 (with at least one volunteer) and compare their individual designs, then develop a team design, noting where compromises were made
4. Have students build a prototype of their designs using a crash test dummy (small water balloon) and test (preferably in a location other than the planned location for the final test)
5. The performance of the prototypes should be evaluated to determine what changes need to be made to the design
6. Repair/rebuild the projects, incorporating the lessons learned during the test.
7. The final projects should contain the eggs
8. Perform the final test. While one team member drops the project, the other member should be on the ground observing and taking notes on the project's performance
9. Have someone time the drop from the moment the project is released till when it hits the ground. The teams whose eggs survive the first drop may repeat the test so that all team members get a chance to drop their projects

Useful tips:

Most groups will tend towards similar designs. Depending on the skill level of the groups and time allowed for the project, adding additional restrictions can challenge the students to develop more creative ideas. Below are three suggestions to increase the difficulty:

- Award a prize based on the lightest structure to successfully protect the egg
- Award a prize to the project with the slowest impact speed to encourage effective parachutes
- Award a prize to the project with the highest survivable impact speed, to encourage designs not involving a parachute
- Assign a cost to the materials and give the teams a limited budget. The costs should be assigned to limit the teams' accessibility to all of the available materials
- Begin the project by randomly giving a single category of supplies to each team (ie, team 1 has all the plastic bags, team 2 has all the cardboard, etc). Each team is now a "nation" with its own natural resources. The teams must then bargain with other teams for materials to build their own designs.

River crossing

The aim of this challenge is to get groups safely across the river. However, they cannot touch the 'water' and must use the rafts (cardboard squares) to cross. Rafts must be in contact with a human at all times or they will be swept away with the current.

Timing: 20 mins

Materials:

- Rope or masking tape for the river banks
- Cardboard squares or paper – enough for half the group to have one each

Making it happen:

1. Create an imaginary river by marking two river banks with rope or masking tape. Make it wide enough (20-25') to be a challenge for your group to get from one side to the other.
2. Distribute squares of cardboard (1'x1' squares) to half of the group. Alternatively, you can use sheets of standard letter sized paper.
3. Once the crossing has begun, the leader must remove any cardboard squares that are swept away by the current.
4. Unfortunately the 'river' is also filled with crocodiles and if any team member touches the water they incur a crocodile penalty i.e. 'lose a leg' and they must complete the river crossing hopping on one foot.
5. The first attempt at crossing is usually hilarious to watch. Let the teams go a second time to build on lessons learned from the first crossing.

Helpful tips

Here are a few variations to try:

- Cardboard squares can only go forward. They cannot move backwards.
- No one can finish the crossing until everyone has left the starting "bank" of the river.

Remember to discuss:

- What worked? What didn't work?
- Who provided leadership?
- How did you work together as a team?
- Was communication good or not?
- Did the group support one another?
- Did you learn anything from this activity?

Source:

<http://insight.typepad.co.uk/insight/2009/01/team-builders-more-than-icebreakers.html>

Helium stick

This is a fun game involving co-ordinated movement along a line of people. The group has to work together so that a stick is not dropped but is lowered safely to the ground.

Timing: 15 mins

Materials:

- Sticks (garden canes are a good idea) – enough for each team (teams of 3-4 people)

Making it happen:

1. Each team should line up in two rows, with each row facing the other.
2. Place the stick on their extended index fingers which should be at the same height, so that the stick is horizontal and everyone is touching it.
3. The challenge is for the teams to lower their stick to the ground first without pinching the stick, and with everyone continually touching it.

Helpful tips

- This challenge is easier said than done! Quite often you will find that the stick 'floats' upwards, rather than moving downwards, hence the name of the game!
- For younger children, the patience and slowness of movement required to successfully lower the stick to the ground may be difficult, so a time limit may have to apply, along with a judgement call if neither team has succeeded.

Source:

<http://www.youthgroupgames.co.uk/team-building-games.html>