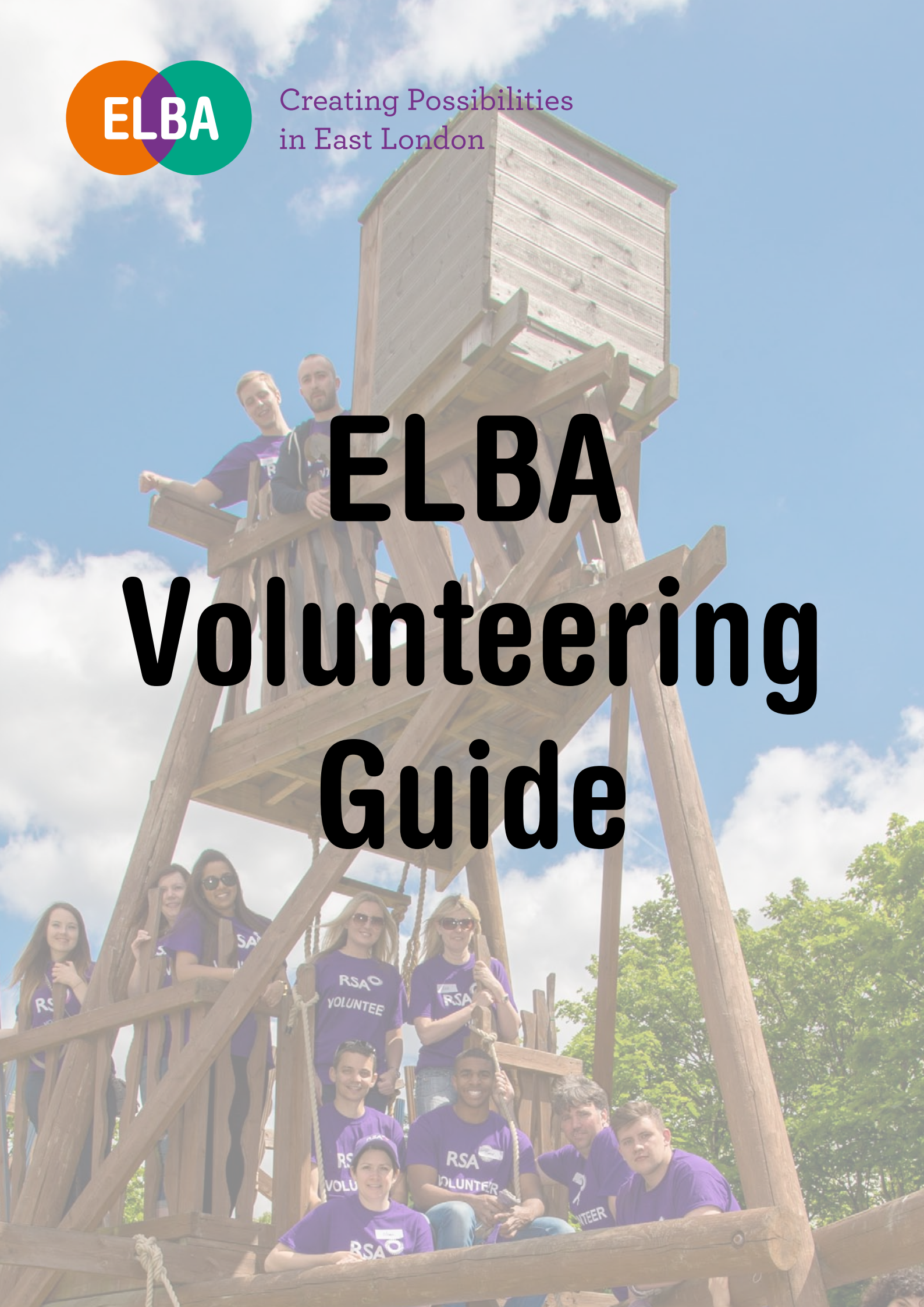




Creating Possibilities
in East London

ELBA Volunteering Guide





This guide is intended to help businesses that are relatively new to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Community Investment to design and implement a volunteering strategy. The guide promotes greater awareness of the different aspects of employee volunteering, and serves as a resource kit by offering practical ideas on how your company can establish and implement an effective volunteering strategy.

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Part 1. Introduction to Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a practice whereby companies embed social and environmental concerns into their everyday business operations and in their interaction with wider stakeholders on a voluntary basis.

Community Investment is one aspect of CSR and refers to businesses contributing to the community and environment whether financially and/or providing in-kind support and/or human resources (such as time and skills) to meet the needs of communities. Over recent years, companies have increasingly recognised the need to play an active role in their local community in order to have a positive impact on the area in which they operate and to gain respect as a good corporate citizen.

Part 2. What is employee volunteering?



Employee volunteering is when a company supports and encourages direct staff involvement in the community. The company sets out to actively promote, encourage and recognise volunteering through its CSR programmes.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) has shown that in 2013/14, between 40-41% of people in the UK in employment have formally volunteered at least once a year¹. Also, approximately 70% of FTSE 100 companies have an employer supported volunteering programme².

Employee volunteering has increased over the years. 81% of companies now base their employee

programmes on core business functions versus 31% in 1992³. It has almost become the norm for large companies to adopt a volunteer strategy.

BENEFITS TO COMPANIES

Raising company profile

Taking part in CSR activities can help increase the reputation of the company. CSR programmes help build relationships with external stakeholders and demonstrate to the public (customers and clients) that the company has a high level of interest in the community.

Consumers now expect companies to have a strong CSR programme. Tim Mohin, director of CSR for Advanced Micro Devices states according to the 2011 'Pulse Survey', 40% of a company's reputation is determined by a company's CSR programme⁴.

Improving relationships with the local community through regeneration also helps to bridge barriers and create an understanding of your company's objectives.

Encouraging diversity

Given their location, in close proximity to diverse and culturally strong areas, the City and Canary Wharf business districts are in an excellent position to reach out to Black and Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities through community outreach programmes. Employees from all business levels may want to share mutual experiences with the community and give back the kind of support they received themselves. Therefore a company diversity programme will be an easier way and a first step for employees to reach out.

BENEFITS TO EMPLOYEES

Staff recruitment and retention

Volunteering gives employees an opportunity for personal development and a chance to experience achievement and the sense of giving back to the community.

An employee volunteering programme, integrated with the business plan, is a helpful factor in staff recruitment in a competitive and changing market. A growing number of young graduates have participated in volunteering and may wish to build on this throughout their career. Not only does this attract diverse and experienced employees, but also young graduates who wish to work for ethical and socially responsible companies. A study conducted on the impacts of employee volunteering at Barclays Bank showed

that the desire to become involved in the community increased with the frequency of involvement⁵. This demonstrates that staff who are keen on volunteering would prefer a company that has built programmes that they could get involved in.

Staff development

Employee volunteering can offer the company a cost effective addition to the staff development agenda. Personal development plans can include types of volunteering to enhance competencies. Typical examples are problem solving, creative thinking, communication, time management and priority setting. This provides a low-cost method of training for employees.

A 2010 YouGov survey of 1,000 employers found that 96% of managers believe that workplace skills can be gained from volunteering and 57% of managers surveyed felt that skills gained from volunteering can help fill gaps in the workplace⁶.



Teamwork

Employee volunteers will always be networking and working within teams, whether with local residents, school-children, partner organisations or volunteers from other companies. This helps to break down internal barriers and enables them to work effectively in teams. In most companies all volunteers are seen as equals, be it the CEO or a graduate trainee.

Part 3: Different types of employee volunteering

The act of volunteering can take place in a number of ways, such as:

Coaching and mentoring

These are one-to-one, confidential partnerships between a charity partner and a corporate volunteer that focus on the developmental needs of the community. The interactions can be a mixture of coaching, listening, offering a sounding board and acting as a critical friend, or mentoring and sharing business skills, knowledge and experience with a community partner. These are usually time-limited (six to nine months is typical) and often correspond with a major task or a project within the community organisation.



Becoming a Trustee

One effective way to support charities and build their capacity is by bringing business skills and expertise from corporate volunteers to join the boards or management committees of charities. ELBA has been providing chairs and trustees to local community organisations for many years through its long-established Board Builders programme.

Individual volunteering

Volunteers can engage in offering short-term support on a number of areas that a community partner might find beneficial such as business planning, the law, finance, IT, marketing, property, HR and customer service. Support can range from one-off interventions to a longer-term commitment such as support with developing a business plan, advice on setting up financial reporting systems and help with a new database.

Group Volunteering

Employees can share their skills as a group, for example, through CV development, mock interview practice, networking and presentation skills.



Team Challenge practical support

A Team Challenge involves a group of employee volunteers undertaking practical work for a community organisation, typically over one day. For example: weeding and planting in a local park or painting a community centre. They can also involve an interactive element such as running an afternoon tea session with a group of older people or inspiring young people to learn a sport.

Team Challenges can make a noticeable improvement to your organisation's immediate environment, can raise the company's profile in the local community and get different staff groups working together.

Charitable giving

Cash donations are not a prerequisite for employee volunteering. However, if a company charity programme exists then charitable projects actively supported by employees could be given favourable consideration. Apart from charitable donations, other forms of community investments include match funding and sponsorship.

The Charities Aid Foundation (CAF, www.cafonline.org) can provide support with setting up a charitable giving programme. CAF is a leading expert on the charitable sector with their own well-established funding programme⁷.

Part 4: Setting up an employee volunteering programme

OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Fully discuss what the purpose of your CSR programme is to be and clearly identify ways it will benefit the company.

Also, as around 40% of adult employees in the UK take part in volunteering, it is likely that some of your employees will already be taking part in activities outside work. Therefore, it is important to carry out staff research and find out what kind of volunteering employees support and enjoy already and this information should help in the planning and design of your CSR programme.

COSTING AND BUDGETS

Before setting up an employee volunteering programme, here are some areas that need to be considered regarding budgeting:

Staff time

The biggest expense is the payroll cost of the individual who takes on the internal co-ordination role. This may be full-time, part-time or form part of an existing role depending on the size of the company.

Publicity materials

Publicity materials, including printed and digital, will need to be considered but much will depend on the availability of in-company facilities. Funding will also need to be considered to promote and celebrate employee volunteering.

Volunteer expenses

A sum should be set aside for transport and other costs such as food. For company-sponsored volunteering during evenings, any company policy regarding working late, such as taxis home, should apply equally to voluntary work.

Team Challenges

You should set aside a budget for paying expenses for Team Challenges covering such things as materials required for the activities. Offering to pay expenses to the charities and community partners will enable smaller organisations to take part and will also cement good working relationships and increase the

likelihood of furthering your company's involvement.

Membership of Broker Agencies

Charities such as ELBA provide expert advisers to help guide the company on the best community partners to work with, who have been through a due diligence check, and what exactly are the key needs in the local area.



SECURE BUY-IN FROM THE TOP

It is important to attract the support of the CEO, Managing Partner or equivalent to ensure the wider management structure buys in. This will ensure that all managers encourage employees to volunteer, without it your programme will be short-lived.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Employee volunteering is usually the responsibility of either Corporate Social Responsibility, Community Affairs or Human Resources; sometimes jointly. In other cases it may reside in the CEO or Chair's office. In the interest of good practice, responsibility for volunteering should be at a senior executive level. Furthermore, a dedicated person should be named to manage the programme, typically as part of a larger role, which may include other aspects of corporate community investment.

CEO, Managing Partner or equivalent should be responsible for championing the employee volunteering programme within all business units. This person should also approve policy and business plans, periodically review progress towards targets and communicate top management enthusiasm for the initiative from time to time.

The Board or Management Team should be responsible for supporting the programme by providing opportunities for presentations to their

management committees from time to time within their regular meeting agenda.

The employee Volunteering Co-ordinator plays an important role in encouraging sustained involvement and easing the logistics of voluntary assignments. The roles usually include:

- Promoting the programme to employees at all levels
- Planning and participating in induction events to promote the programme to new joiners
- Linking to websites from the company webpage
- Liaising with broker partners to oversee activities
- Supporting and guiding employee volunteers
- Being aware of Health and Safety, insurance and risk issues
- Monitoring and evaluating the programme
- Celebrating programme successes

WRITE UP A VOLUNTEERING POLICY

Writing a volunteer policy will demonstrate to all employees that the volunteering programme has the backing of senior management and is highly valued, whilst ensuring that employees understand the procedures involved. A volunteer strategy should have a place in the company's broader business plan.

As a guide, your company's volunteering policy may wish to cover the following:

- A general statement on your company's commitment to employee volunteering including reasons why
- Guidelines on paid time that can be spent on structured volunteering activities
- Guidelines on in-kind contributions
- Guidelines on company donations
- Guidelines on the budget for team challenges
- A statement on how projects are selected
- Benefits of volunteering to individuals, the local community and the company
- Volunteer expenses



INSIGHT TOURS

'Insight Tours' are designed to get staff out of the office and showcase the issues faced by local communities and the work of charities to address them. Tours are a good way of engaging staff, developing community relationships and assessing ways to meet community and business needs.

Part 5: Communications

INTERNAL

Getting the message across to employees

It is important to find a hook to grab the attention of employees. This can be done by announcing volunteering activities regularly via all-staff emails, company intranet, staff notice boards, signing up to the ELBA newsletter to receive volunteering information every month and updating the CSR page on the company website. In addition, it is helpful to hold events where guest speakers are invited to discuss the issues faced by communities and to share volunteering opportunities.



CSR themes

Having a designated community investment themed day, week or month where volunteering and charitable giving is promoted internally is a good way of building support. Organising guest community speakers, workplace visits by representatives of community groups (such as students, youth clubs or sports organisations) or Team Challenges during this period further helps to promote volunteering.

Including information in company materials

All employee handbooks and recruitment brochures should prominently refer to the employee volunteer scheme, which should also be referenced in the introduction. Similarly, this

information should also be included in employee handbooks and reiterated in employee/graduate induction meetings.

Employee volunteer schemes should ideally feature in annual reports, company magazines and newspapers. Another way to ensure the effectiveness of the scheme is to set up an online volunteering portal whereby volunteers can check how many hours they have contributed and what awards they have won (if applicable). By checking progress, this tool acts as an incentive to volunteer as it gives them a sense of achievement, but can also assist the company in systematically tracking and reporting on employee volunteering.

EXTERNAL

Annual reports

Companies are required by law to publish their total UK charitable donations. Many companies take this opportunity to inform the public through annual reports/financial statements of the partnerships and activities their staff support.

Social Media

Social media is an unprecedented platform to advertise volunteering at the click of a button. Social media has a wide reach and can take the form of LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and other platforms. For example, Twitter is a fast, effective way to reach large numbers of people by creating a unique hashtag, which creates a trend and can spread to other social media outlets. Also, creating an environment in which those who have volunteered already can use social media to nominate colleagues to take part can be a good way of promoting volunteering. Employees are often keen to volunteer if their colleagues are involved too.

By sharing stories and case studies about volunteers' experiences, employees are given a spotlight on their achievements which can encourage them to take part in other volunteering activities.



Part 6: Measuring impact and evaluation

ELBA can help support companies with the evaluation of volunteer activity including reports highlighting the number of volunteers placed, the nature of the activities and the hours invested.

ELBA recommends that its members look at the London Benchmarking Group (LBG) website for information on setting up its own monitoring processes. LBG consists of leading international corporations who have come together to manage, measure and report on their involvement in the community⁸.

Part 7: How can ELBA help?

More than 50% of employers prefer to use a broker to help them identify volunteering opportunities and community partners⁹.

ELBA is the leading social regeneration charity in east London. ELBA has over 26 years'

experience of acting as a broker connecting business volunteers with local community organisations in east London and beyond, making community investment easier, more effective and more rewarding. ELBA operates in three teams, Community, Education and Employment and helps corporate partners to innovate, collaborate and think differently about how they give back. The results are diverse and innovative, with a hugely positive impact on the community.

ELBA provides brokerage services such as:

- Advice on CSR strategies
- Support to identify opportunities for volunteers that suit their interests and skills
- Due diligence on all organisations where volunteers are placed
- Advice on communicating with volunteers
- Follow up, monitoring and support with evaluation of involvement
- Regular posting of volunteering opportunities
- Opportunity to sign up to the ELBA newsletter that provides project updates, information on new members and links to further volunteering opportunities
- Networking opportunities with other corporate partners



Case studies

CASE STUDY 1: VOLUNTEERING WITH ELBA - AN INSIGHT FROM BARCLAYS' JONATHAN LONGHAUGH



Name, title, company: Jonathan Longhaugh, Vice President, Barclays

What does your job involve? I work in structural reform - our team works to deliver a tailored Barclays structure for the new regulatory landscape that meets the needs of our stakeholders.

Where did you volunteer? Barclays has a close partnership with ELBA so I try to get involved in an event every month or so - I have not quite worked with all of the ELBA schools, but close! Most of the events are with the Buxton School, Rokeby School and Kingsford School - impressive students.

Why did you choose to volunteer? I think my life would look different if I did not have so many people who have volunteered, and continue to volunteer, their time and energy to help me. I live in east London, I love the area and the community - working with ELBA helps me to feel a deeper connection with it. I really enjoy working with students because their capacity to absorb, adapt and execute is incredible and pretty inspiring.

What has been your 'golden moment' whilst volunteering? It is a few years off, but it will be when students who I have met at some of the skills based volunteering sessions are sitting across the table from me as colleagues - then again, I am getting older so it is probably not as far away as I think!

How would you encourage your colleagues to get involved? Does 'email them' count as an answer? Seriously though, ELBA does most of the heavy lifting; there is a great demand within our organisation to participate in activities that they partner on - most events are oversubscribed shortly after they are scheduled so 'email' is actually a fairly effective medium.

Case studies

CASE STUDY 2: WORKING WITH ELBA - AN INSIGHT FROM EVERGREEN ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND



Name, title, company: Pat Macintosh, Finance/Play Leader, Evergreen Adventure Playground

Tell us about your Charity: Our charity is an open-access adventure playground which provides play and leisure activities to all children aged 5-15 years regardless of ability, ethnicity and socio-economic status. We are open all year round providing free, stimulating, sporty, arty, play and leisure. We also provide support workers for children with a disability to ensure they have the same play opportunities as their non-disabled peers.

What does your job involve? A big part of the job is looking for and applying for grants to help us keep our much needed and used service going and monitoring the project to ensure we give thorough feedback and insight to all our funders. Along with my colleague, Arnold, we make sure the play site is attractive to children, well-funded and with enough sessional staff to work alongside us during the hours the children are here.

Why is corporate volunteering important to your charity? The playground is situated in just under an acre of land with a garden where there are two ponds, a vegetable patch and various plants and trees. In the playground we have a forest area, large play structures and a covered football/sports area. We have lots of trees, grass and plants and try to keep the playground a natural, exciting environment for the children. We also have a purpose built play building with various rooms for different activities. All this has to be maintained with only two full-time staff. This on top of all the administration and office work keeps us extremely busy! It is through the help of corporate volunteers that we are able to keep on top of all the maintenance needed.

How has ELBA supported your organisation? ELBA has been a fantastic help to the playground. Without the help of ELBA, organising corporate volunteer days, the playground wouldn't be as well maintained and open five days a week for the children. We would have to close some days to allow the two staff members to keep on top of all the work which would leave the children with nowhere to go and this in turn leads to bored children and young people and antisocial behaviour occurring in the surrounding area.

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