

# STUDENT HUBS: OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Our programmes run on a double benefit model, where both students and communities have to benefit as a result of our programmes.

During our Covid-19 delivery, we saw this benefit in action like never before. Volunteering allows students to make connections, to work together and to respond quickly to local need.

This is how we responded from March and we're excited to continue delivering this response in the 2020-21 academic year.

In converting our programmes, we had to examine how they could make the most impact. In some cases, this meant the programme changed, but our impact remained strong.

## Social Innovation Programme (SIP):

The SIP is a 6-8 week student consultancy programme which provides new solutions for charities and social enterprises through client briefs. We ran additional Hub cycles of the programme, and offered training and support in facilitating these programmes virtually for both our students and community partners. Watch an example of our [Kingston Hub SIP showcase here!](#)

## Schools Plus:

Schools Plus recruits student volunteers to run tutoring and clubs at primary and secondary schools, and local colleges, with the aim to tackle educational disadvantage. We asked students to create resources, videos, and volunteer to tutor pupils virtually over the summer.

## Branch Up:

Branch Up provides free Saturday activity days for children referred to us by social services and/or schools. Our Southampton Hub staff delivered activity packs to for our pupils in collaboration with the University of Southampton and continued activity days in the summer, running days with a reduced amount of children so young people had the same opportunity.

## Active:

Active sees student volunteers run sport activities for 7-14 year olds. We ran a social media campaign called Challenge Accepted to encourage students in April to engage in sport and activity during lockdown.

## For students

We asked students to contribute what they could, whether that was getting involved in programmes, creating resources or taking part in our campaigns. Our message to students was "your community needs you".

Students responded enthusiastically: they wanted to give back; to use their lockdown time to help; and were aware of the issues impacting their university communities.

Students stepped up to support and we were proud to bring students together, providing a platform during this difficult time.

## For the community

Covid-19 has meant closer collaboration with our partners than ever before.

We allowed our Hub communities (in Bristol, Cambridge, Kingston, Southampton and Winchester) to steer our delivery across the spring and summer, listening to what community partners needed and acting accordingly to adapt our programmes.

Because of this community-first approach, students and community partners benefitted, and we were able to respond quickly and efficiently to meet community need.

### HOW DOES SIP HELP THE COMMUNITY?

- 1 Provides a new perspective, as they gain an insight into university students research and opinions.
- 2 Adds more support to finding an effective solution to a real-life challenge they are facing.
- 3 Provides an opportunity for students to integrate into the community and become more embedded into Winchester culture.

Let's help #buildcommunity and work in teams on SIP to find innovative solutions to challenges that came in response to COVID-19

An example of one of our Covid-19 programme adverts for students.

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We saw incredible impact from our students and community partners during this time. This is some of the comments they had about our delivery and their experience of virtual volunteering.

## For students

"I am a Social Policy student so I am particularly aware of educational disparities within the community and I wanted to find some volunteering experience that addressed this. Volunteering with Schools Plus has been a highlight of my student experience and during these uncertain times the effects of closing schools will have a significantly greater impact on the educational attainment of disadvantaged students than their more privileged counterparts, it therefore seemed right to continue offering any help I could."

Schools Plus Virtual student, Bristol Hub

"Many thanks for all your hard work in delivering this fantastic programme online, it has been a pleasure and who knows, this might be the future! I personally found the technology worked remarkably well and the recording feature useful for those who can't make it or just for revision. That and the resources will be useful in the future, not only for this project."

Engage for Change student, Cambridge Hub

"The primary reason I [wanted] to participate in this activity is that it would enable me to positively utilize the lockdown experience and allow me to apply the skills I have learnt at university in a real world context. Working with these charities and institutions would give me an opportunity to work within a non-academic context and give back to the community in the process. In this time of social distancing, it would provide the chance to widen the network of people with whom I interact."

SIP student in our extra Covid-19 response cycle, Winchester Hub

"I am really impressed with how well Kingston Hub organised the Social Innovation Programme [during lockdown], especially because it is the first time that it's done remotely, from the interview, assessment centre to the training sessions and the mock presentations. They offered an opportunity to gain work experience, while contributing and making a positive difference in the Kingston community. By running this programme remotely, I have discovered and learned how to use new tools and platforms, in particular Miro Board and Slack, which enhanced my project management skills and will be useful in my future. Moreover, I feel highly motivated to work on this particular problem, as it is a highly relevant."

SIP student, Kingston Hub

## For the community

"[The activity packs] will be a brilliant little project for [our pupils] to work from at home to finish the year off. Many of our [pupils] are really disadvantaged so the fact that you can give them the bits they need will totally make it accessible to those who would normally miss out."

Community partner from a secondary school working with Southampton Hub

"[The students as part of Impact Labs have] just been so passionate about their work connecting with families who have been through difficult times and are currently struggling because most are shielding. So, it's an increasingly isolating time for families and to be part of this project at this moment was quite special actually. So, I would like to thank the team for how empathetically they dealt with that ... It's been actually really helpful for us to have this lull in time where we can just step back and reflect and I think you've helped us do that. To really capture and define what the difference is that UF makes to families and how can we do more. So, thank you."

Cambridge Rare Disease Network, community partner for Impact Labs