



How to run a community impact project

Community impact has always been at the heart of Scouting and not only helps local residents but also Scouts themselves. Here's how to run a successful local project

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Since Baden-Powell started the Scout Movement back in 1907, community impact has been at the heart of Scouting. The first experimental camp at Brownsea Island was a community impact project in itself; a merging of boys from different backgrounds and social classes.

Today, Scouting continues to make a positive impact on societies and a big impact on our world. As a worldwide

movement of 40 million strong, we have the potential to make a huge impact on other people's lives and on future generations.

The World Organisation of Scout Movement's mission is to make the world a better place and this exemplifies everything that Scouting strives to be and do. And everything that you do locally contributes to the bigger picture.

Community impact projects, like those launched through A Million Hands, not only help people in need in the community, they also have a huge impact on the Scouts themselves.

A community impact project led by young people helps them to develop skills vital for employment, such as organisational, communication, leadership and teamwork skills. It will also develop their emotional



Making an impact at a local level begins with understanding your community's needs

intelligence; increasing their empathy with and understanding of people different to themselves.

And it doesn't have to be complicated, it simply has to have a positive impact on the community you are trying to help. Below are five steps you should follow when carrying out a community impact project locally with your Scouts.

1. Understand what your community needs

The most important thing to think about when embarking on a community impact project is what the community actually needs. Often, we have preconceived ideas about what is needed without fully understanding what the issues are.

Be open-minded and talk to people locally, such as those who work in the public sector and decision makers in your community. Consider inviting a local councillor or other representative

to your sectional meeting so that you and your young people can better understand the community's need.

Doing a community mapping activity with your young people can also be a really nice way to start thinking about what and who is local to you. It can be easily adapted for different age groups.

For Beaver Scouts, start by looking at their immediate community – ask them what they know about where they live. For Explorers and Scout Network, broaden this out to think about the international community and more complex issues.

Doing community mapping activities can also help when working towards badges such as the World Challenge Awards and the Local Knowledge Activity Badges. The A Million Hands resources (amillionhands.org.uk/resource) contain guidance on carrying out a community mapping activity.

Once your young people have assessed the need, they can dig deeper into the issue and start to think about how they can make a difference to their community. This will help them understand what they are trying to achieve before getting started.

2. Plan your action

It's important that young people take the lead when planning a community impact project. Consider who will do what, and delegate different parts of the planning to ensure that the work is spread out fairly. This is great practice for Explorer Scouts and Scout Network members, who will also be developing these skills through planning towards requirements for their top awards.

For younger sections, the planning will be more of a challenge. Although they won't necessarily be able to do things without some help, they can start to develop these important skills with the support of leaders and parents.





Working with people from within your community will ensure your project has an even greater impact

Consider having a different Lodge or Six take the lead on different parts of the planning with an adult supporting them. The adult is then responsible for that part of the plan. You could also have Lodge Leaders or Sixers take the lead by shadowing leaders.

When planning their action, your Scouts will need to consider the following things:

- How will it make a difference?
- What are the timescales?/How long will it take?
- Is the project going to cost anything? If yes, then how much?
- Who needs to be involved? Are there any key, influential people in the community or VIPs who could help support your cause?
- Are there any rules or regulations you need to be aware of?
- Is the impact sustainable?
- How will you check if the project has been successful?

Look at other projects for inspiration. Although you will want to tailor what you do to the specific need in your community, other projects can give you ideas. And remember, to make a real impact, it's important to work closely with people in the community.

3. Take action

Go out there and make a genuine difference! This is what Scouting is all about; helping others, making friends and having adventures. Remember to record anything you learn along the way, including things you would do differently next time, and log your actions at amillionhands.org.uk to help inspire others and share best practice.

4. Reflect, learn and do more

After the project, it's a good idea to reflect on how it went and to think about what you could do in the future to continue to have a positive impact on your community. Are you going to continue working on the same issue?

How can you challenge yourself and your young people to do even more next time? What new skills for life have you and your young people learnt?

5. Tell the world and celebrate

It's really important that we shout about what we do. Not only will it attract more people to our movement, it will help spread positivity and inspire others to make a difference in their communities too. Get in touch with your local Media Development Manager to help you tell the world about your amazing work.

And don't forget to be proud and celebrate. You have worked hard and made a difference! Reinforcing this with your young people will motivate them to want to do more to help people in their community. 🌟

Don't forget to get involved in your issue's Big Moment this spring. Visit amillionhands.org.uk/bigmoment.