

**Community Action Group First quarter report
A report by the CAG Chair – Christoph Aymanns**

Continuing Activities

Through out the first term and the soup run initiative of CAG has provided sandwiches and hot drinks to, on average, 50 homeless on Sunday nights. The activities also continued during the Christmas break apart from Christmas week itself where the homeless charity Crisis had organised a large scale event for the homeless community in London.

Membership

The Community Action Group currently has 21 members; each membership is at £ 3.50. In order to raise the expected £ 100 in membership fees we will still need to get nine more memberships. Whilst the total number of official members is relatively small the real number of volunteers we can draw upon is larger (approximately 40 volunteers). Many of our regular volunteers are either not members of the IC Union or have not been willing to pay the membership fee. The Community Action Group cannot and would not want to put sanctions on to these individuals as we appreciate their effort as volunteers and do not want to discourage them from contributing to our activities. The relatively large number of non Union volunteers is due to a cooperation with a young professionals network of the Rotary club, so called Rotaract. On average 8 ± 3 volunteers come to the soup run. This satisfies our basic requirement in order to smoothly execute the soup run. More volunteers are of course always appreciated. An upper limit to the number of participating volunteers is set however by the number of seats in the Union mini bus we use.

Funding & Finances

For the academic year 2008/2009 Citi has been secured as Club Sponsor, supporting CAG with a total of £500. Furthermore IC Trust has agreed to support us with another £ 500 in order to improve our catering equipment. This, together with the IC Union grant, will be sufficient to sustain the soup run initiative of the Community Action Group.

By increasing the amount of food donations received and by diversifying our Sponsors (cooperation with Prêt, Eat, Wholefoods) CAG managed to reduce the cost per run as it has no longer been necessary to make sandwiches ourselves. The main expenditure remains the mini bus hire.

New and planned activities

CAG is currently starting, together with the UK based charity FoodWorks (www.foodworksuk.org) a new volunteering initiative at Imperial College. The idea for this initiative is simple. Food retailers throw out millions of tons of edible food every year due to supply overstock. The aim is to redirect this food so it can be used to cook nutritious meals for people in the local community that do not have access to it for a variety of reasons, such as lack of income, access or knowledge of healthy nutrition. The result? People's health benefits from better food, food waste is reduced, and volunteers get the satisfaction that they have helped improve their local community!

Imperial volunteers will be involved in the cooking and delivery of the meals. Four students will be project leaders and deal with issues such as fund raising, volunteer coordination, marketing and communication as well as food supply coordination. The entire initiative will receive advice and technical support from the FoodWorks UK. They will also provide the funding to start up the project at Imperial.

In several very productive meetings with the IC Union president and DPEW other potential community activities have been identified.

CAG will continue to work on preparing and eventually carrying out these additional activities in order to diversify our engagement and bring CAG back to what it was originally meant to be.