

Addressing the Issues: charities & challenges

There is some scepticism about charity challenges and at the motivations of those who undertake them, their place within charity fundraising and their impact on communities around the world.

Problem 1

Charity challenges are just a means of getting funding for adventures. They are only done for personal reasons to gain personal benefits.

Yes, there are personal benefits to charity challenges. The physical achievement is primarily an intensely personal one. Furthermore, they can involve travelling through beautiful landscapes and visiting exotic tourist destinations. Participants complete their challenges having had an experience of a lifetime and done something they will never forget. However, all of the personal rewards rely upon sacrifices – of everyday priorities and commitments, of time to train and fundraise, of energy and pain to complete the challenge.

Moreover, you can see that these are underpinned by an overwhelming sense of achieving something worthwhile.

If challenges have not been hard and have been predominantly “fun”, then this may rest on the conscience of the participant for picking an undemanding challenge. But with the right information and advice this will not happen, and dedication and endurance will be exchanged for support and sponsorship.

Problem 2

Charity challenges do not engage with the charity or the cause in any other way than a functional one. The charity is a final and unfelt addition to a personal challenge.

This is a common issue, but not one that needs to continue. This guide promotes examples of best practice because the most rewarding and successful aspect of undertaking a challenge is the positive charitable results that it produces. These results are multiplied if you have an emotional attachment to your cause and when this passion becomes reflected in

everything that you do for your charity. This relationship, which can develop during the course of a challenge project, can last a lifetime and yield profound and long-lasting mutual benefits. More and more charities, operators and participants are making the work of the charity an integral part of challenges.

Participants in Norwood challenges (seen here) raising money for the charity's work with disabled and disadvantaged members of Jewish communities, are accompanied by some of the disabled service users that their efforts are supporting. This has huge mutual benefits, offering the disabled young people a chance to participate in a very rewarding inclusive team experience. At the same time, the fundraising participants can develop a close relationship with these service users and with the cause as a whole.

➔ "It's hard work and I have to get really fit, but I love being able to meet new people, make new friends and see some amazing scenery in different parts of the world."

Julian Primhok, a resident at Norwood's Ravenswood Village

➔ "The final leg of the challenges are always amazing, when the whole group gets together and sets off towards the finish. Then we have a huge party, where we can mix and have fun."

Philip Lee, Ravenswood resident

➔ "Being able to meet and spend time with some of the young disabled people from the Ravenswood Village made a huge impression on me - I will never forget the whole experience."

Norwood Challenge Participant



Residents and staff from Norwood's Ravenswood Village on a cycling challenge through Israel in 2004.