

Bank of America

Can you tell us a little bit about your organisation?

Bank of America is a multinational investment bank and financial services company based in the US, with central hubs across London, Paris, Frankfurt and Dublin.

At Bank of America, we have a clear purpose to help make financial lives better through the power of every connection. We fulfil this purpose through our commitment to responsible growth, which includes a focus on environmental, social and governance (ESG) leadership. Integrated across our business — our ESG focus reflects our values, ensures we are holding ourselves accountable, presents tremendous business opportunity, and enables us to create shared success with our clients and communities.

What inspired your organisation to start working with Inspiring the Future?

A cornerstone of our ESG strategy is driving social and economic mobility, enabling young people to gain key skills and experience to transition into sustained employment. Combining our financial capital and our employees' skills, we aim to deliver the tools, knowledge, support and inspiration that will nurture talent and help individuals succeed, irrespective of their background.

How long has your organisation worked with Inspiring the Future?

Bank of America has been lead corporate supporter of Inspiring the Future since 2011 and founding corporate partner of Inspiring Women. The Inspiring Women campaign tackles gender stereotypes in career aspirations for girls by connecting schools to thousands of female volunteers from all sectors.

What difference does your organisation want to make for young people through volunteering with Inspiring the Future and Inspiring Women?

We believe that an individual's post code should not define their economic wellbeing nor their educational attainment, yet many young people face serious barriers to entering the world of professional services. We want to help show young people some of the potential career opportunities available to them.

Inspiring the Future offers young people meaningful interactions with professionals, where they can ask questions and gain a deeper understanding of the roles within a business and the routes into a career in the financial services sector. The diversity of our employees and an inclusive work environment makes us stronger. Diversity and inclusion are critical to developing our company sustainably and are vital to how we drive responsible growth.

We have a long history of supporting women and our strategy, programmes and actions are guided by an ambition to be part of a broader solution for gender equality, contributing to the advancement of women both within our workforce and in society as a whole.

What has been the best part about working with the charity?

Our partnership with the charity is long-standing; in 2021 we will reach 10 years of working together and through that partnership we have been able to achieve great things for young people.

We have been privileged to be a part of the charity's journey, supporting them to meet major milestones, including: a million interactions with young people and 55,000 volunteers on their platform and presenting their research at the world economic forum in 2018.

What Inspiring the Future events and activities has your organisation taken part in?

We have an active pool of approximately 1000 volunteers from our business. Each year they volunteer their time and skills in their local schools with young people through Inspiring the Future. We also host events across our offices in London, Chester, Camberley and Bromley where local secondary students come into our offices for Careers Insights sessions. In 2018, 620 young people attended careers insights sessions at our offices with our employees helping more than 600 young people gain careers insights.

Our organisation understands the need and impact of good governance in schools and for that reason we also support the Inspiring Governance programme. We hosted the Inspiring Governance launch in 2016 and have supported over 30 of our employees across the UK to become school governors in their local state schools. Our commitment to Inspiring the Future saw us fund and facilitate the expansion of Inspiring the Future to Ireland and sponsorship of the momentous 10th anniversary event.

What do your people say about volunteering with Inspiring the Future?

Kirti Jeram from Global Technology & Operations covering EMEA said "I believe being able to share my journey is really important as most of the children I interact with through Inspiring the Future, are from similar backgrounds as me and I want to show that with hard work and dedication anything is possible."

Describe Inspiring the Future in five words

Innovative solutions addressing economic mobility.

How has your organisation benefited from volunteering with Inspiring the Future? Please give examples to skills, knowledge and behaviour.

Bank of America is proud to support our employees' passion and commitment to volunteering and one of the ways we can play a role in helping to address community issues is by connecting our employees to opportunities which enable them to volunteer their time, knowledge and skills to help advance economic and social progress, while also helping employees develop skills such as leadership and team building.

Volunteering as a school governor provides an opportunity to develop tangible professional skills and board level experience. It can also rebalance perspectives, Ian Ferguson, Chairman of Corporate & Investment Banking for the UK & Ireland said about being a school governor "I have had a remarkable experience that has genuinely opened my eyes to aspects of society, the economy, and politics that I would not have believed possible."

Who or what inspires your organisation today and what is the reason?

What would you like the power to do? At Bank of America, we ask this question to all those we serve. It is at the core of how we live our values, deliver our purpose and achieve responsible growth. By asking this question, we continue to learn what matters most to our clients, employees, shareholders and the communities in which we operate. It helps us start a conversation centered on our commitment to use our capabilities to help those we serve be successful. Because we recognise that we can only be successful when the individuals, companies, communities and employees we serve are able to reach their vision of success.

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