

service generation a step-change in youth social action

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November 2013

SERVICE GENERATION: A STEP-CHANGE IN YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Any errors and omissions remain ours alone.

Jonathan Birdwell
Carl Miller

FOREWORD

In June 2012 the Prime Minister asked us:

How can Government, business, the voluntary and education sectors work together to support young people to engage in social action between the ages of 10 and 20?

We have defined social action as *practical action in the service of others* – of *double benefit* to young people themselves and the community. The campaign is particularly focused on young people between the ages of 10 and 20; we recognise that young people can and are engaging in social action from an earlier age and hope that their social action journey will create a habit for life well into adulthood.

Meaningful social action is shown to increase the empathy and societal awareness amongst young people contributing to positive outcomes including increased civic participation; better engagement in education; improved employability; reduced crime levels; and enhanced health and wellbeing. We know that social action builds skills that are valued by employers, such as optimism, determination and emotional intelligence.

To achieve these outcomes the Campaign has consulted on and agreed a set of principles for quality youth action that it should be **challenging; youth-led**; have a positive **social impact**; allow **progression** to other programmes; be **embedded** to develop a habit for life; and be **reflective** in how young people recognise their achievements.

Our interim report on November 2012 recommended:

- An easy to navigate ‘service journey’ starting earlier and increasing in challenge;
- Scaling up programmes which work and filling gaps in provision;

- Embedding the habit in the educational experience for all in school, college and university, and encouraging business and Higher Education to build it into entry requirements;
- Promoting and celebrating success by sponsoring social action ambassadors to encourage others to get involved;
- Achieving a long-term vision and an all-party agreement to develop an independent initiative to take this forward to 2020.

Step Up To Serve, launched on 21 November 2013, is a cross-sector national campaign to increase the number of young people taking part in social action across the UK. The Campaign matters as we are currently failing to maximise the energy, talent, commitment and potential of 8.4 million young people in the UK aged 10-20, who could make a huge contribution to their communities.

We need to recognise more readily that they are a generation that matters for the future and their service to others will strengthen society as well as improving their own lives and opportunities. Educators and employers recognise the potential of youth social action to help improve the educational outcomes for young people as well as build the skills they need to be successful in the workplace.

Therefore the campaign has concentrated on galvanising cross sector and cross party support to unlock the opportunities for young people to participate. The goal now is to double the number of young people taking part in social action from the current estimate of 29 per cent to over 50 per cent by 2020. That's around an additional 1.7 million young people engaging in social action for the first time.

The campaign aims to do this by mobilising the support of organisations right across society. The strategy includes a programme of work over the next 7 years. This work falls into five strands which are: to **develop understanding** of the benefits of youth social action and practice across the UK; to **stimulate more opportunities** both by supporting others to expand current programmes and develop new ones; to **ensure quality** by working with the sectors to measure and understand what is most meaningful and effective; to **promote engagement** and stimulate demand from more young people to get

involved in social action; to **engage and influence** across UK society to create the right conditions for youth social action to be supported and recognised.

In order for this campaign to be successful, we recognise the immense importance of understanding more about young people's participation in social action, the benefits to young people themselves and the communities they serve, what high quality social action looks like in practice as well as young people's attitudes towards social action.

We commissioned Demos to extend their June 2013 report *The State of the Service Nation* to increase our understanding of what is already known and what the campaign should seek to find out with partners over the next 7 years. We welcome the recommendations of *Service Generation: A step-change in youth social action* that more and better data and evidence is needed going forward to achieve the campaign's vision to further unlock the potential of youth social action in the UK.

Dame Julia Cleverdon

Amanda Jordan OBE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of the Step Up To Serve campaign is to achieve over 50 per cent of British young people between the ages of 10 and 20 taking part in high quality social action projects by 2020. The Prince of Wales is the Royal Patron and the campaign is supported by all three major political parties, with an aim to make social action a habit of life, something we come to simply expect everyone to take part in. It must be inclusive, with young people of all different backgrounds able to become involved.

Social action is ‘practical action in the service of others’. It benefits the young person taking part and the community that they serve. As such, it can include volunteering, activism, civic participation, community organising, mentoring and fundraising. The best examples of social action conform to six core principles: it has to be challenging; led by young people; socially impactful; progressive towards further social action activities; embedded in young people’s lives; and emphasise reflection about its ultimate purpose and goal.

To make the tradition of service fit for purpose and aspirational to young people now we need to understand who participates, what the barriers are for those who do not, and how social action can help young respond to current social and economic issues. But it’s not just down to the young people. Achieving the campaign’s objectives will require all sectors to help unlock the opportunities for young people to take practical action in the service of others as well as the mobilisation of thousands of adult volunteers.

Why social action is important

Character

Done well, social action can have tremendous benefits for young people. This includes helping to develop civic, moral and performance character skills such as self-discipline, compassion, empathy, resilience and determination, which are in turn linked to overall wellbeing.¹

- Taking young people out of their comfort zone, requiring them to develop and accept responsibility, as well as developing interpersonal relationships between different types of people in the course of volunteering or social action is important to the development of character.
- Recent evaluations of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Girl Guides and NCS (National Citizen Service) in the UK, among others, highlight the role of social action in developing 'character'.²
- A study of over 200 US school-based programmes found that the development of new relationships between students, teachers and mentors were key to positive outcomes and the development of character skills.³

Employability

Social action can also help young people by making them more employable, building skills that are valued by employers such as optimism, determination and emotional intelligence.⁴

The most compelling research to date from the US shows a clear link between volunteering and employability. Based on a 10-year survey, the research finds that volunteers have a 27 per cent higher likelihood of finding a job after being out of work than non-volunteers. The effect was nearly twice as strong for those without school qualifications or from rural communities.⁵

Based on results from social action programmes in Australia and France, campaign team projections suggest that volunteers could be as much as three times more likely to secure full-time employment afterwards.⁶

Community benefits

Whether it's helping to save hedgehogs, doing arts and crafts with elderly people suffering from dementia, or refurbishing social housing to make it habitable again, social action has solid community benefits.

Driven by experience in the US's Cities of Service programme, a focus on the measurement of community impact of social action is beginning to take shape in the UK. Research and case studies show that social action can have a beneficial impact on tackling community

issues like youth unemployment, disaster relief, youth offending and reoffending, house building, hospital patient satisfaction, ageing and loneliness, civic participation and social cohesion.

Establishing the starting point

The best indicators suggest that approximately 25-30 per cent (29 per cent in Table 1 below) of young people take part in formal volunteering with organisations in the past month. We believe that this is the best proxy for current numbers doing social action. This figure comes from the Community Life survey, which currently only applies to England. However, the UK Citizenship survey previously covered England and Wales, and consistently showed formal volunteering rates in the same range.

Similar levels of formal volunteering can be seen in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Data from 2011 in Scotland showed that 28 per cent of males and 32 per cent of females between the ages of 16 and 24 provided unpaid help to organisations and groups in the past year.⁷ Similarly, the Young Life and Times survey reported that 30 per cent of 16 year olds in Northern Ireland reported volunteering formally in the last 12 months.⁸

There is a very limited amount of survey data for the younger age ranges of the campaign (10-15) and further survey work is needed to understand their participation in social action more fully; Table 1 below provides the best indicator.

Canada remains the world leader in youth volunteering, with 58 per cent of 15 to 24 year olds reporting formal volunteering in the past year for an annual average of 130 hours.⁹ This is could be due to the requirement in many Canadian provinces for all high school students to complete a minimum number of hours volunteering: in Ontario, the first province to initiate this, high school students must complete 40 hours of service in order to graduate.¹⁰

However, the UK remains in close second place. In the US, most recent data from 2012 shows 23 per cent of 16 to 24 year olds¹¹ reported formal volunteering in the past year, while in Australia the figure is 27 per cent.¹²

Table 1: Best indicators for establishing a baseline of social action

Age range	Activity / indicator	%	Sample size	Source
11-15	% who had engaged in civic activities <i>in the last 12 months</i>	49%	n=1,666	Home Office, Children and Young Person Boosts to Citizenship Survey (2003) ¹³
16-25	% who participated in formal volunteering <i>at least once in the past month</i>	29% ¹⁴	n=625	Community Life survey (Quarter 3, 2012-13) ¹⁵

The target and how to achieve it

Data from the 2011 Census shows that there are 8.4 million 10 to 20 year olds in the UK.¹⁶ If approximately 25-30 per cent (2.1 to 2.5 million) currently take part in formal volunteering on a *monthly* basis, then that means approximately 1.7 million more young people need to do so by 2020 in order for the Campaign to achieve the 50 per cent target.

Keeping the spirit of London 2012 alive

London 2012 was memorable in large part due to the incredible spirit of volunteering inspired by the Games Makers. The Olympics particularly inspired young people, who made up the biggest proportion of Games Makers at just under a quarter.¹⁷

- There are some indications of an uplift in youth volunteering, which could be connected to the spirit of the Olympics. The Community Life survey shows substantial increases in volunteering rates among 16 to 19 year olds in the past year. In 2012-13, 58 per cent reported annual formal volunteering which was a 16 point increase from 42 per cent in 2010-11.¹⁸ 68 per cent reported annual informal volunteering, which was a 15 point increase from 53 per cent in 2010-11.¹⁹

- The work of Join In – the charity set up to ‘keep the volunteering flame alive after the Games’ – is helping to sustain these increases in volunteering. Analysis conducted by the Institute of Volunteering Research showed that Join In delivered over 100,000 new volunteers into the sports and community sectors across the UK over the summer of 2013.²⁰ There is also evidence that the Join In brand resonates strongly with those under 25. A survey of sports clubs and community groups taking part in Join In 2013, an initiative designed to encourage more volunteering in community sport, shows that under-25s were among the most common demographic attending.²¹
- This suggests that there is significant untapped desire among young people to get involved in social action if it consists of fun, high quality activities presented in the right way. About a third of students and unemployed people said that they haven’t yet volunteered more as a result of the Games but would like to.²² Similarly the Join In/YouGov survey found that 33 per cent of 16-34 year olds were more likely to volunteer, as a result of the Games.²³ A 2010 Ipsos MORI survey of 11-16 year olds found that 91 per cent said that they would like to get involved in at least one type of volunteering activity that was presented to them. Two-thirds of young people said they would volunteer if they could do so with their friends, while 58 per cent said they would if they could try it first to see if they liked it.²⁴

Mapping social action opportunities

For this report, we’ve identified approximately 750 programmes / organisations across sectors that are involved in delivering some form of youth social action, including volunteering, campaigning, fundraising, mentoring, activism or social entrepreneurship. We also present 11 in-depth case studies of social action taking place at various ages, in different settings and with a variety of double benefits.

- The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, Youth United Network and Generation Change, combined, provided approximately 2.1 million young people in the UK in the last year. Based on participation numbers of other young voluntary organisations and youth clubs across the UK, we’ve identified approximately 2.8 million

examples of social action across the youth voluntary sector. This does not necessarily translate to 2.8 million young people, as there may be some overlap with young people taking part in multiple activities, but does begin to substantiate the 25-30 per cent that report regular, formal volunteering.

- Often delivered in partnership with youth sector organisations such as those above, there is a wide diversity of youth social action programmes delivered across the wider voluntary sector (charities like Barnardo's and Cancer Research UK, for example), the public sector (for example, volunteers in hospitals) and businesses (such as O2, Lloyds and British Gas). Further mapping work is needed to understand the scale and specifics of these programmes.
- Educational settings are critical for embedding social action in the curriculum and school ethos, signposting young people to organisations in the voluntary sector, and increasing the breadth of young people who take part. The best schools have social action integrated into the ethos of the school and make efforts to partner with local community and national organisations to offer opportunities to their students.
- The majority of social action opportunities exist for those aged 14 and older. More organisations and businesses need to develop programmes for the younger age range, while primary schools need to be encouraged to develop partnerships with outside community organisations and businesses in order to encourage more innovative social action activities.

Social action on social media

Demos' Centre for the Analysis of Social Media looked at both people's associations and interests on Facebook and discussions and comments on Twitter.

It found that *social media have created new digital spaces significant to social action*. Social media are 'campaign forums': active and vigorous spaces which people use to raise awareness, drive home a point or an issue, pursue additional support and find willing volunteers. Social media are also forums where people discuss social

action more widely – its pros and cons, its importance to them, and its utility and importance to their lives and careers.

The analysis suggested:

Around 340,000 young British Facebook users have an interest related to social action:

- 5 per cent of all British Facebook users aged 13-20 had at least one interest related to social action.
- The specific kind of social action people are interested in differs by age and gender. Females were more interested in volunteering, males in protest and activism.
- Proportionally more Facebook users in Northern Ireland and Scotland were interested in social action than England or Wales
- Despite these differences, there was strong cross-gender, cross-regional and cross-age online interest in social action, especially for volunteering, activism, protest and political campaigns.

Between 7 and 14th November 2013, around 150,000 Tweets were identified as possibly discussing social action, and over 4,000 where there is a high confidence that they did so in order to:

- **Discuss experiences or attitudes toward social action:** 47 per cent of tweets in this category were judged to include some discussion by the twitter user about their views toward charity or voluntary work.
- **Share information and stories about social action:** 25 per cent of these tweets were users sharing stories – usually mainstream media stories – or links to stories with other users, with very little additional commentary.
- **Campaign and raise awareness:** approximately 11 per cent of these tweets were judged to be a way in which individuals were attempting to use Twitter as a form of social action in and of itself.

- **Around 10 per cent of analysed tweets mentioned a specific cause. The top ten causes mentioned were:**
 - international development
 - supporting care workers
 - Children in Need
 - climate change
 - medical work
 - payday loans
 - homelessness
 - animal rights
 - state corruption
 - disaster relief in the Philippines.

Recommendations: research priorities going forward

Social action continues to occur within a context of continuous societal change. Attitudes and priorities towards social action will change, as will the possibilities, opportunities and reasons to do it. The campaign must swim with this current. It must continue to improve, to learn from its mistakes and successes, and to know and reflect the changes in the wider society that it serves.

The core research priorities of the campaign should continue to be:

- Further mapping of social action opportunities across the education, business, wider voluntary and public sectors, for example through an interactive mapping tool such as the one created by Generation Change and available at: <http://www.generationchange.org.uk/social-action-map.html>
- Further research to understand the double benefit of impact to individuals and communities

- Exploring how to apply the principles of high quality social action at different age ranges
- Exploring how best to engage young people in social action across demographics

This report sets out the known participation levels of social action, but more and better data is needed going forward to measure the campaign's success. The Community Life survey run by the Cabinet Office represents the best vehicle to do this.

The campaign is calling on the Cabinet Office to pledge to:

- Shape the questions used to act as a source of data for youth social action participation.
- Invest in a booster to increase the proportion of respondents to the survey aged 16-20.
- Extend the survey to young people aged 10-16 or work in partnership with existing surveys to include the same questions as the Community Life survey for this younger age group.
- Provide analysis on the 10-20 age group on a regular basis.

This would allow for a consistent and robust method of gathering of data across the life of the campaign that would be a very significant contribution to understanding the impact of high quality social action.

To utilise the opportunities presented by social media, we recommend that the campaign:

Use social media for rapid response. Many reasons for social action – from natural disasters to outbreaks of disease – cannot be anticipated. A continuous, real-time digital observatory should be established to spot groundswells in concern or attention in order to allow the campaign to detect them and harness them for social good.

Create a curated social media space where campaign participants can go to meet other social action participants, share their experiences and discuss opportunities to collaborate. This

should be directly supported by the campaign, with incentives for joining, including the provision in the space of new opportunities.

Harness celebrity's digital power. Social media is often dominated by a small number of 'power users' – highly followed, highly engaged celebrities. Two celebrity Tweets accounted for around 15 per cent of the entire Twitter dataset gathered for this paper. Our research shows not only that these individuals have a large audience online, but that this audience are active participants.

Find the social action aspirants online. The research also found that people turn to social media to express a desire to do social action, or an unhappiness that they are not doing more. This research indicates that it would be possible to build technology to be able to reach these individuals, and provide them meaningful pathways to turn their aspirations into concrete action.

CHAPTER 1: WHY SOCIAL ACTION IS IMPORTANT: THE IMPACT

Youth social action is ‘practical action in the service of others’ that has a double benefit; helping both the young person taking part as well as the community. It can include everything from volunteering to political activism, civic participation, community organising, social enterprise and fundraising; and it doesn’t end there.

The Independent Review into youth social action, conducted by Dame Julia Cleverdon and Amanda Jordan OBE, established a set of 6 principles that should underlie high quality social action, following consultation across the youth, voluntary, education, business and faith sectors. Based on these principles, youth social action should be:

- Challenging
- Led by young people themselves
- Socially impactful
- Progressive towards further programmes
- Embedded in young people’s lives
- Emphasise reflection about its ultimate purpose and goal

Social action can have significant benefits for the young people taking part by helping to develop civic, moral and performance character skills that are linked to wellbeing and other positive outcomes. It can also help young people by making them more employable, which is important given current levels of youth unemployment. Social action has benefits for the community as well, as we highlight in our case studies below, whether helping to save hedgehogs, doing arts and crafts with elderly people suffering from dementia, or refurbishing social housing to make it habitable again.

Benefits to young people

The current generation of young people faces a challenging future. Youth unemployment remains stubbornly high. In the new ‘hourglass

economy’, with jobs clustered at the top and the bottom of the labour market, competition for ‘good’ jobs is set to increase. At the same time, young people can seize the opportunity to start a new business or venture themselves more easily than ever before. While the opportunities are there for young people to forge their own path, they have less guidance and support than previous generations. This places a higher premium on adaptable and flexible skills and qualities, including determination, problem-solving, resilience and compassion. Programmes and activities that teach these skills are now more important than ever.

It is also argued that young people are disillusioned with traditional politics. They are the age group least likely to vote and they show very low levels of trust in government, political parties, politicians or the political process.²⁵ Yet, this appears less to do with apathy than frustration: research from the US shows that the current generation of young people are more likely than previous generations to believe they need to take responsibility for global problems.²⁶ However, raised in an ‘on-demand culture’, younger generations are impatient for change and want to see real progress on social problems quickly. To tackle these issues successfully, the next generation needs to have strong ‘character’ virtues and skills. Taking part in high quality social action consistently from ages 10 to 20 can help to build character and prepare young people for the challenges they will inevitably face.

Building skills and character

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Values based at the University of Birmingham is one of the leading centres in the world for researching and understanding ‘character’ virtues. They define character in four ways:

- **Civic character virtues:** Character virtues and skills necessary for engaged and responsible citizenship.
 - E.g. Service, citizenship, volunteering

- **Moral character virtues:** Character habits that enable us to respond well to situations in any area of experience.
 - E.g. Courage, self-discipline, compassion, gratitude, justice, humility, honesty

- **Performance character virtues:** Behavioural skills and psychological capacities that – while they can be used for both good and bad ends – enable us to put our character habits into practice.
 - E.g. Resilience, determination, creativity
- **Good sense (a meta-virtue):** Knowing what to want and what not to want when the demands of two or more virtues collide.

There is a large body of research that shows a correlation between character capabilities and improved educational outcomes. Variables such as self-reliance, responsibility, and social maturity are positively related to academic success.²⁷

Although it's important to bear in mind the cultural differences between the UK and the US, findings from some US programmes could be relevant to the UK context. For example, findings from meta-analysis of over 200 USA school-based programs demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behaviour, and academic performance that reflected an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement.²⁸

Their analysis found that character qualities such as self-regulation, perseverance and 'love of learning' all closely predicted school success as well as important wellbeing outcomes - perspective, gratitude, hope and teamwork. Indeed, some studies have shown that character capabilities are almost as predictive of educational attainment as cognitive skills.²⁹³⁰ Strong character capabilities are also associated with labour market outcomes and life chances more generally.³¹³² Indeed, analysis of longitudinal surveys suggests that character capabilities are far more predictive of children's life chances (earnings, likelihood to be anti-social, academic attainment, and so on) today than they were few decades ago.³³

While parenting and education are important to developing these character skills, participating in various forms of social action can also have an impact. The ability to commit to long term projects – for example, a volunteering scheme or social action project – requires character skills like self-discipline, compassion, resilience and determination and is more likely to lead to better overall well being.³⁴

Regular volunteering is also linked with the moral character virtues above, and this in turn relates to greater happiness and a longer and happier life.³⁵ Evidence from the interim evaluation of NCS showed improvements in terms of civic character virtues. For example, 77 per cent of participants said that following NCS they were more likely to help out locally.³⁶

The 2011 Ofsted report, *Choosing to Volunteer*, found that the great majority of young people thought that volunteering had helped them to develop important skills and attributes such as advocacy, team working, motivation and resilience. Others reflected on their developing sense of responsibility and service to others.³⁷ Further research has shown that consistent and recurring participation in extra-curricular activities can promote educational attainment and lower rates of school dropout, whilst boosting interpersonal competence and personal aspiration.³⁸

Research from 1,848 young people who have completed the Duke of Edinburgh's Award found improved character skills. The ability to stick at tasks until they're complete, increased resilience and becoming a more responsible person were all cited by 84 per cent of young people and 92 per cent of Leaders as a benefit of doing their DofE.³⁹ Research from Girl Guides also shows participants – both young people and adult volunteers – feeling as if they've gained character skills. Eighty seven per cent of members reported that volunteering with Girl guiding enabled them to make a positive difference to their community, with 82-83 per cent of adult volunteers citing increased confidence and leadership skills.⁴⁰

In addition to the challenging elements of these kinds of programmes – taking young people out of their comfort zone and requiring them to develop and accept responsibility – some studies suggest that the interpersonal relationships developed between different types of people in the course of volunteering or social action is important to the development of character. Interestingly, the study of over 200 USA school-based programmes cited above found that the development of relationships between students, teachers and mentors they wouldn't have otherwise had relationships with appeared to be key to positive outcomes and the development of character skills. Over 70

per cent of nearly 200 programme alumni interviewed said that they had developed close relationships with teachers and mentors, while 80 per cent reported the same with respect to students they would not have otherwise met. Similar results were found in other studies, demonstrating that the group activity of youth social action work creates the types of interpersonal connections that are seen as critical to stronger personal development.⁴¹

Employability

According to the latest CBI Education and Skills survey, 55 per cent of businesses say school leavers lack the key attributes and skills needed to succeed in the workplace, including self-management (54 per cent) and problem solving (41 per cent). Over a third (35 per cent) of businesses also complained about young people's poor attitude to work.⁴²

By helping to develop these skills and attitudes, there is now strong evidence that participating in social action can make young people more employable. Again, bearing in mind the cultural differences between the US and the UK, the most compelling research to date from the US shows a clear link between volunteering and employability. Based on a 10-year survey, the research finds that volunteers have a 27 per cent higher likelihood than non-volunteers of finding a job after being out of work.

The effect was nearly twice as strong for those without school qualifications or from rural communities.⁴³ This is very likely because many of the skills needed for effective volunteering are exactly the same skills that employers are looking for: commitment, resilience, team working and leadership. It also helps to make connections with people you wouldn't otherwise come into contact with which can lead to discovery of new job opportunities or even consideration of different careers.

Due to this combination of skills development and increasing social networks, recent research shows that 4 per cent of young people who had experienced four or more employer engagement youth activities

were not in education, employment and training (NEET), compared with 26 per cent with no experience of employer engagement.⁴⁴

Benefits to the community

The research base for the community benefits of social action is less developed due to inevitable methodological issues. However, there are a number of indications that social action activities can have significant benefits to communities.

The in-depth case studies we profile below show a number of community benefits, including:

- Raising awareness on animal welfare issues (campaign to save the hedgehog)
- Improved patient trust and satisfaction (King's College Hospital volunteers)
- Support and entertainment for elderly people with dementia through games, dancing and arts and crafts (Get Involved Luton)
- Supporting young people at risk in deprived estates in Birmingham (Urban Devotion)
- Refurbishing social housing to make it habitable again whilst providing skills and connections to young people in the area (Build-it programme)

In the US, the Corporation for National and Community Service has undertaken research to understand the benefit of volunteering to communities. According to the CNCS, Americans have volunteered a total of 7.9 billion hours, which has an estimated economic value of approximately \$171 billion. The value of volunteering is particularly noted by CNCS in the fields of natural disaster responses, assisting in homeless shelters, home repairs and building, environmental cleanup and work with veterans. In the areas of home repairs, AmeriCorps members working with Habitat for Humanity engaged with 1 million volunteers to construct over 10,000 homes since 1994.⁴⁵

Unemployment

Youth unemployment not only impacts on the individuals who can't find a job, but also on society as a whole when it reaches a certain level. The latest unemployment figures show that 1 out of 5 UK youth between 16 and 24 years old are currently unemployed,⁴⁶ which costs the public approximately £160,600 for each over the course of their life time. This is because young men who are NEET between 16 and 18 are 4 times more likely to be unemployed and 5 times more likely to have a criminal record.⁴⁷ Moreover, extended periods of unemployment 'scars' people, with those who experience it likely to earn approximately 12-15 per cent less at the age of 42 than those who didn't experience long periods of unemployment.⁴⁸

The Step Up to Serve Campaign could have a significant impact in helping young people develop employable skills and contacts that lead to jobs. Research from AmeriCorps in the US shows that volunteers had a 27 per cent higher likelihood of finding a job after a period of unemployment than non-volunteers. Evidence from Australia and France is also positive. Full-time employment of Green Corps Australia participants increased from 6 per cent to 28 per cent throughout the programme. Similarly, full time employment of France's *Service Civique* alumni increased threefold from 10 per cent to 29 per cent, compared to only a 68 per cent increase in a sociologically similar control group.⁴⁹ Based on these results, it has been projected that those who volunteer are generally 3 times as likely to secure full-time employment afterwards.⁵⁰

Civic participation

Youth participation in politics in the UK (including voting) is the lowest out of all the EU countries, at only 60 per cent.⁵¹ Participation in electoral politics is highly related to the country's civic culture. Participation in volunteering and social action increases a young person's likelihood of engaging in electoral politics, of engaging in their local community, and in feeling an overall sense of responsibility for others. Alumni of City Year and AmeriCorps in the US have higher rates of political efficacy and civic engagement than their peers.⁵² Alumni of France's *Service Civique* are more than twice as likely as their peers to agree "most people can be trustworthy" (43 per cent vs. 17 per cent), almost half as likely to say they didn't feel at home in

France (31 per cent vs. 59 per cent) and more likely to feel they can change things (76 per cent vs. 56 per cent).⁵³ Evaluation of Free the Children alumni found that 90 per cent feel a greater sense of responsibility for other members of society and social justice and 88 per cent go on to volunteers for 150 hours per year on average.⁵⁴ Participants in AmeriCorps are more likely to volunteer regularly (64 per cent vs. 51 per cent) and enter careers in social service (46 per cent vs. 33 per cent) than their peers.⁵⁵

Indeed, early increases in youth social action have already resulted in an increase in a “strong sense of belonging” to Britain.⁵⁶ As highlighted above, the Cabinet Office’s Community Life survey shows a sharp increase in volunteering among 16 to 19 year olds, which is correlated with a similar increase in “strong sense of belonging” to Britain. Both of these increases could be due to the spirit of the Olympics including the Games Makers and the continued work of Join In UK, as well as the introduction of programmes like NCS. For example, in 2011, over 8,000 young people took part in NCS, and in 2012 the programme is expected to treble in size.⁵⁷

Social Cohesion and anti-social behaviour

Social action can possibly improve community cohesion by encouraging the development of relationships between young people from different backgrounds, as well as relationships between young people and adults. Indeed, research shows that higher levels of engagement between adults and young people are associated with lower levels of violence and disorder in the community, lower teen pregnancy rates, improved health and lower levels of obesity among young people, as well as more positive attitudes towards young people among adults⁵⁸. The interim evaluation of NCS shows the potential for social action in this space: 36 per cent of NCS participants who rated their experiences highly said this was because they had developed better relationships with adults⁵⁹. Moreover, 85 per cent of participants agreed that NCS had made them feel more positive towards people from different backgrounds⁶⁰.

Providing young people with social action opportunities can also help to reduce anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour and underage drinking are some of the most commonly cited complaints to police officers. Of a sample of 5,699 people who called the police in

September 2009, 30 per cent cited drunken behaviour and under-age drinking; 29 per cent were concerned about teenagers loitering on the street.⁶¹ ‘Teenagers hanging around’ is the top response when the British Crime Survey asks about local problems.⁶²

Research consistently finds that key risk factors for anti-social behaviour and offending include association with anti-social peers and a lack of participation in purposeful activities.⁶³ Evaluation of NCS suggests that social action not only provides access to purposeful activities, but may also help shift attitudes. The evaluation found that attitudes to anti-social behaviour (ASB) improved more among NCS participants than the comparison group by increasing awareness and understanding of the consequences of this kind of behaviour.⁶⁴

CHAPTER 2: HOW MANY AND WHO TAKES PART – THE NUMBERS

Because the term ‘social action’ is relatively new, it has not been commonly used in national surveys. This makes it difficult to determine precisely how many young people are taking part in ‘social action’. We therefore draw on data measuring ‘volunteering’ and ‘youth volunteering’ as close proxies.

In *the State of the Service Nation*, we argued that the best data comes from the UK Citizenship survey, which measured participation in England and Wales and ran from 2001 to 2011. The Citizenship Survey was replaced in 2011 by the Community Life survey, administered by the Cabinet Office. The 2012-2013 survey was carried out in England only, in homes via face-to-face interviews, spread over three quarters from August 2012 to April 2013, and includes a total sample size of 6,915 interviews. This includes a sample size of 221 16-19 year olds, or 3 per cent of the total sample.

The 2012-2013 Community Life Survey measured the percentage of people in England taking part in *formal* volunteering and *informal* volunteering, in addition to a new measure for social action. While the UK Citizenship survey previously included Wales, and showed similar levels of support, more work is needed to understand participation levels in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The definitions provided for these activities are:

- **Formal volunteering:** Unpaid help given as part of a group, club or organisation to benefits others or the environment.
- **Informal volunteering:** Unpaid help as an individual to people who are not relatives.
- **Social action:** Unpaid help to a community project, event, or activity which local people proactively get together to initiate or support on an unpaid basis.

We argued in *The State of the Service Nation*, that the indicator for ***formal, regular volunteering*** was the best proxy for the high quality type of social action activity that the Campaign aims to deliver.

However, it's important to consider as well the **annual rate** of formal volunteering. This is because high quality social action activities may not necessarily take place at least once a month. For example, NCS is confined to an intensive 4-week period in the summer and thus may not be picked up in a measure of monthly volunteering.

Table 2 below provides the trend over the past ten years for monthly and annual formal volunteering by 16 to 25 year olds. As the data shows, monthly formal volunteering for this age group tends to lie between 24 and 28 per cent, while annual formal volunteering levels have fluctuated between 38 and 44 per cent.

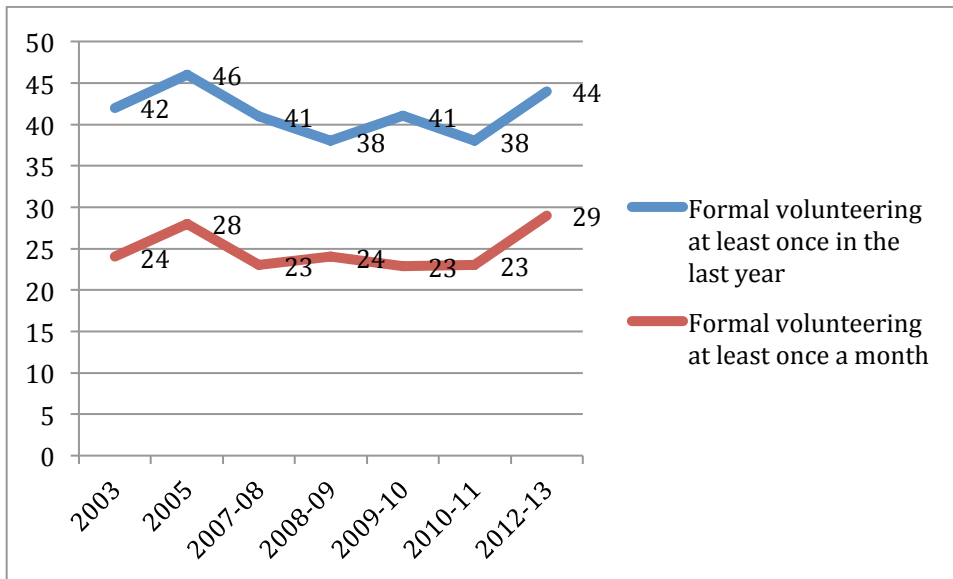
Similar levels of formal volunteering can be seen in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Data from 2011 in Scotland showed that 28 per cent of males and 32 per cent of females between the ages of 16 and 24 provided unpaid help to organisations and groups in the past year.⁶⁵ Similarly, the Young Life and Times survey reported that 30 per cent of 16 year olds in Northern Ireland reported volunteering formally in the last 12 months.⁶⁶

Across England and Wales, rates of formal volunteering experienced a peak in 2005, but then subsequently suffered declines. Importantly, data from the most recent 2012-13 Community Life survey shows rates of formal volunteering rebounding.

Indeed, these were largely driven by substantial increases in the number of young people who reported volunteering. In 2010-11, 42 per cent of 16-19 year olds reported annual formal volunteering (+16 percentage point increase) compared to 58 per cent in 2012-13, while 53 per cent reported annual informal volunteering (+15 percentage point increase) compared to 68 per cent in 2012-13.

It's unclear why the percentage of those volunteering increased so dramatically in the past year. This could be due to anything from the Olympic spirit inspired by London 2012, to the focus on youth unemployment, particularly since the recession. In any case, it's a good point in time for the Campaign to launch and try to build on these positive increases.

Figure 1: Monthly and annual rates of formal volunteering for 16 to 25 year olds in England and Wales from 2003 to 2013



Source: UK Citizenship surveys and 2012-13 Community Life survey

All of the relevant indicators and percentages from the 2012-13 survey are included in Table 2 below.

As for the new measure of social action, the survey found that one in five 16 to 24 year olds reported taking part in the last year, while just under two thirds were aware of social action. As we note below, ‘social action’ in these instances most likely refers to efforts to prevent the closure of services in a local community (e.g. the local library, hospital or leisure centre), which has received more attention in recent years in the face of cuts to public and local services.

Table 2: Most relevant indicators from Quarter 3 (where applicable) / Quarter 4 of Community Life Survey, 2012-13

Activity	Age range	Duration	Percentage
Formal volunteering	16-19 (n=221)	At least once in last year	58 per cent
Formal volunteering	16-25 (n=625)	At least once in last year	44 per cent
Informal volunteering	16-19	At least once in last year	68 per cent
Informal volunteering	16-25	At least once in last year	65 per cent ⁶⁷ / 64 per cent
Formal volunteering	16-25	At least once in last month	29 per cent ⁶⁸ / 28 per cent
Informal volunteering	16-25	At least once in last month	38 per cent ⁶⁹ / 40 per cent
Any volunteering	16-24 (n=520)	At least once in last year	77 per cent ⁷⁰ / 74 per cent
Gave money to charity	16-24	In the last 4 weeks prior to interview	66 per cent ⁷¹ / 65 per cent
Aware of 'social action'	16-24	At least once in last year	63 per cent
Involvement in 'social action'	16-24	At least once in last year	20 per cent

Source: Community Life Survey, 2012-13

Types of activities

While we argue that formal volunteering through an organisation is the best baseline measure for the campaign, it's important to consider the other activities that are included in the definitions of informal volunteering and social action as some of these might also be relevant for an inclusive definition of social action.

As seen in Table 3 below, the activities that make up formal volunteering include, 'organising, helping or fundraising for an activity or event', 'other practical help', 'leading the group/member of committees', and 'giving information/advice/counselling'. The most frequently mentioned informal volunteering activities include, 'giving advice', 'keeping in touch with someone who has difficulty getting out', and 'transporting or escorting someone'. As for 'social action', the most frequently mentioned were 'organising an event or activity

locally', 'trying to stop something happening locally', and 'trying to stop the closure of local service or amenity'.

The difficulty of establishing the baseline for youth social action is thus considering which of these activities below would qualify as 'social action'. While the activities specifically described as 'social action' would count, some of the activities under informal volunteering, such as 'sitting with or providing personal care for someone who is sick or frail' (informal volunteering) could also merit inclusion in the definition and conception of youth social action as provided by the Campaign.

Table 3: Key definitions and activities from the Community Life Survey for formal volunteering, informal volunteering and social action⁷²

Term	Definition	Activities	Percentage volunteering once in last month
Formal volunteering	<i>Unpaid help given as part of a group, club or organisation to benefits others or the environment</i>	Organising or helping run an activity or event	53
		Raising or handling money/taking part in sponsored events	53
		Other practical help	39
		Leading the group/member of committees	37
		Giving information/advice/counselling	31
		Visiting people	26
		Providing transports/driving	26
		Befriending or mentoring people	23
		Secretarial, clerical or admin work	21
		Representing	16
		Campaigning	10
Any other activities	12		

Informal volunteering	<i>Unpaid help as an individual to people who are not relatives</i>	Giving advice	48
		Keeping in touch with someone who has difficulty getting out and about	39
		Transporting or escorting someone (for example to a hospital or on an outing)	35
		Looking after a property or a pet for someone who is away	32
		Doing shopping, collecting pension or paying bills	32
		Baby sitting or caring for children	30
		Writing letter or filling in forms	25
		Cooking, cleaning, laundry, gardening or other routine household jobs	25
		Decorating, or doing any kind of home or car repairs	14
		Representing someone (for example talking to a council department or to a doctor)	8
		Sitting with or providing personal care (e.g. washing, dressing) for someone who is sick or frail	8
		Anything else	6

			Percentage involved once in last 12 months
Social action	<i>Unpaid help to a community project, event, or activity which local people proactively get together to initiate or support on an unpaid basis</i>	Organising a community event such as street party	11
		Trying to stop something happening in local area	8
		Trying to stop closure of local service or amenity	4
		Getting involved in running local services (e.g. childcare, libraries) on a voluntary basis	3
		Setting up a new service or amenity	2
		Taking part in decisions about how the council spends its money	1
		Getting involved in another issue affecting local area	5
Total		Any social action	23

Social action among younger age groups

The majority of national surveys tend to be based on responses from young people 16 and older. This is because parental approval is required before surveying young people below the age of 15. Nonetheless, there are a few sources that we can draw on in order to understand what percentage of those is volunteering or taking part in social action.

Although 10 years old now, the Home Office ‘Children, Young People and their Communities’ report from 2003 presents one of the largest sample sizes of under 16 year olds that we could find. The Children and Young People’s Boosts to the then Home Office Citizenship survey included 1,032 children aged 8-10 years old and 1,666 young people aged 11 to 15 years. The relevant indicators are included in Table 5 below.

We believe that the most relevant statistic for our purposes is the 49 per cent of young people who had engaged in civic activities in the last 12 months. This indicator includes taking part in committees and activities in schools that would count as ‘social action’ – such as the Make a Difference campaign that we highlight as a case study below.

Table 4: Relevant indicators from Home Office Children and Young People Boosts

	Children (8-10)	Young People (11-15)
Political and Civic Participation		
Percentage who discussed the news with others at least once a week	69 per cent	85 per cent
Percentage who would engage in civic activities if they were worried about something	-	67 per cent
Percentage who would vote in general election when they were 18 years old	-	69 per cent
Percentage who believe there should be a way to give young people a voice of politics	-	81 per cent
Social Participation		
Percentage who participated in clubs or groups at their school in the last 12 months	52 per cent	82 per cent
Community Participation		
Percentage given help to a group, club or organization in the last 12 months ⁷³	-	63 per cent
Percentage who had engaged in civic activities in the last 12 months	-	49 per cent
Percentage whose civic activity involved a school or club committee	-	71 per cent (of the 49 per cent who reported engaging in civic activities in last 12 months)
Percentage whose civic activity involved signing a petition	-	37 per cent (of the 49 per cent who reported engaging in civic activities in last 12 months)

Source: Home Office, 'Children, Young People and their Communities', Children and Young People Booster to Citizenship Survey.

Another valuable source is the Ipsos MORI ‘Young People Omnibus: Young People & Volunteering’, in partnership with vInspired, which surveyed 11 to 16 year olds. This survey looks primarily at young people’s interest in being involved in volunteering, as well as specific activities that could be used as social action projects.

The most compelling finding in this survey, which we discuss in the State of the Service Nation report, is the fact that 91 per cent of young people said that they would like to get involved in at least one type of volunteering activity that was presented to them. The survey also highlights some of the barriers to young people’s involvement in volunteering, which can help the Campaign understand which barriers need to be addressed. For example, two thirds of young people said they would volunteer if they could do so with their friends, while 58 per cent said they would if they could try it first to see if they liked it.

Table 5: Relevant indicators from Ipsos MORI survey on ‘Young People Omnibus: Young People & Volunteering’ (2010)

Interest in volunteering	
Percentage who would like to get involved in at least one type of volunteering presented to them	91 per cent
Percentage who would like to volunteer in the area of sports and exercise	51 per cent
Percentage who would like to look after young children	48 per cent
Percentage who would like to teach or help out at music groups, art classes or with other hobbies	47 per cent
Percentage who would like to be involved in volunteering at the Olympics	31 per cent
Percentage who would like to volunteer at a youth or social group	30 per cent
Percentage who would like to do something for the environment or animals	29 per cent
Percentage who would like to help the elderly	27 per cent

Encouraging young people to volunteer	
Percentage who would volunteer if they could do so with their friends	67 per cent
Percentage who would volunteer if they could do so with their families	24 per cent
Percentage who would volunteer if they could try it once to see if they liked it	58 per cent
Percentage who would volunteer if they could do it close to their home	49 per cent
Percentage who would volunteer if they could be in charge of their own volunteering activity	34 per cent
Percentage who would volunteer if they had the routine of volunteering at the same time every week	28 per cent
The best thing about volunteering	
Percentage who think the best thing about volunteering is helping others (altruistic)	35 per cent
Percentage who think the best thing about volunteering is to make a difference to something they care about (altruistic)	12 per cent
Percentage who think the best thing about volunteering is having fun (self-interested factor)	26 per cent
Percentage who think the best thing about volunteering is to learn new skills (self-interested factor)	11 per cent

International Comparisons

The countries most frequently cited with the highest levels of volunteering outside of the UK are typically Canada, the United States, and Australia.

Drawing comparisons between different countries on volunteering rates can be tricky because of the different definitions used. For example, formal volunteering rates in Canada and the US are based on reported volunteering with an organisation in the year previous to the survey's administration. The same is true for Australia, although they

provide a further breakdown on frequency for those who volunteer at least once a week, at least once a fortnight and at least once a month.

Nonetheless, the data suggests that Canada has the highest formal volunteering rate for young people. According to the latest data from the 2010 Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians report, 58 per cent of 15 to 24 year olds reported formal volunteering in the past 12 months.⁷⁴ The median annual volunteer hours in this age range was 50 (or 4 hours a month) while the average annual volunteer hours equalled 130 (10 hours per month).

This compares to most recent figures of 29 per cent of 16 to 24 year olds in the UK in 2013, 23 per cent of 16 to 24 year olds in the US in 2012⁷⁵ and 27 per cent of 18 to 24 year olds in Australia in 2010.⁷⁶ Though it's worth noting that volunteering rates fluctuate across different states in the US, with some like Utah, Maine and Connecticut showing the highest levels of volunteering among 16 to 18 year olds in 2009.⁷⁷

Table 6: Most recent data on formal volunteering rates for the past year for Australia, Canada, UK and US

Country	Age	Indicator	Percentage	Source year
Australia	18-24	Percentage who volunteered with an organisation in the past year	27 per cent	2010
Canada	15-24	Percentage who volunteered with an organisation in the past year with average annual volunteer hours equalling 130 and median equalling 50	58 per cent	2010
United Kingdom	16-25	Percentage who volunteered with an organisation in the past year	44 per cent	2013
United States	16-24	Percentage who volunteered with an organisation in the past year	23 per cent	2012

Measuring the campaign's success going forward

It is essential that the campaign continually monitors its success between now and 2020. Because of the importance of the Community Life survey in considering the current baseline, we argue that the Cabinet Office should pledge to:

- Work in partnership with the Campaign to shape the questions used in the Community Life survey so that it can act as a source of data for youth social action participation.
- Invest in a booster to increase the proportion of respondents to the survey aged 16-20 (currently this age range represents only 4 per cent of total respondents).
- Extend the survey to young people aged 10-16 (applying the same booster) or work in partnership with existing surveys (e.g. Ipsos MORI young people's omnibus) to include the same questions as the Community Life survey for this younger age group.
- Provide analysis for the Campaign focused on the 10-20 age group on a regular basis.

CHAPTER 3 – STRUCTURED SOCIAL ACTION: MAPPING THE TERRAIN

The number of organisations and programmes that provide social action opportunities is vast and diverse. In addition to youth voluntary sector organisations and youth clubs that work exclusively with young people, organisations in the wider voluntary sector, the public sector, schools, colleges and universities and private businesses, all offer opportunities for young people to volunteer and take part in social action activities.

The process of understanding the full range of opportunities available to 10 to 20 year olds in the UK is on-going. In this report, we've undertaken an initial mapping exercise in order to estimate the number of organisations and structured activities currently available. This will be built on and refined over the next year as the Campaign gathers momentum.

In addition to giving an overall account of the spread of opportunities available, we've compiled a series of case studies to highlight what social action can look like at various points during a young person's life, and in various settings. These are interspersed throughout this chapter where relevant. Before highlighting the kind of social action journey that currently exists for British young people, we first present a breakdown of organisations and numbers participating by sector.

How many social action opportunities are there for young people?

For this report, we have identified over 750 organisations, schools and companies that provide volunteering or social action opportunities. We have purposefully tried to be inclusive as possible at this stage, so it's important to note that these organisations are not necessarily undertaking social action as it is defined by the Campaign and the sector as a whole. But they all are in some way working with youth volunteers, or have the capacity to be involved in social action. Our list also includes a number of organisations that are participating in the Cabinet Office pilot trials as part of the campaign.

Our work is not entirely comprehensive or exhaustive. This is because many social action type activities take place at a local level, or in schools in a way that isn't captured and communicated at the national level. There is also a shortage of age-specific data for activities specifically within the age range that is the target of the campaign (10 to 20 years old). Programmes that cover large age ranges such as the Girl Guides (10 to 18) or vInspired (14 to 25) do not include detailed breakdowns of their participation rates.

Nonetheless, our mapping exercise is a beginning to piece together what the actual programmes that young people take part in look like.

Youth volunteering sector

Naturally, the youth voluntary sector is one of the main sites of youth social action. This not only includes organization that work exclusively with young people, like The Scouts, Girl Guides and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, but also the vast networks of youth clubs that stretch across the UK and play a key role in young people's development.

UK Youth, the national network of regional youth association, represents more 5,500 youth clubs and 693,000 young people, and according to its website, has the largest reach of any youth organisation in the UK. Approximately 60 per cent of the young people UK Youth work with are under 16, while the remaining 40 per cent are 16 and over. UK Youth runs a number of programmes with partners in government – for example, delivering NCS – as well as in the private sector, playing a key role in O2's Think Big programme (covered in detail below) and other partnerships with Starbucks on the Youth Action project (which aims to create positive change in local communities) and Microsoft on its IT Youth Hubs project, which aims to equip youth clubs with IT upgrades. Yet, even beyond UK Youth, there lies a vast network of youth clubs that are critical to young people's lives and also critical to the campaign.

For this report, we have identified approximately 60 such organisations, but that most likely barely scratches the surface. Based on the numbers available, we estimate that these organisations provide approximately 2.3 million instances of youth social action across the UK. However, it's important to bear in mind that there may

be a good deal of overlap across these organisations. For example, young people who participate in a UK Youth programme may also work with the British Youth Council, or participate in NCS. One of the hopes of the campaign is to provide better understanding about the progression of individuals through these various organisations.

In terms of total numbers, the three biggest sites of social action within the youth voluntary sector can be found within The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Generation Change and Youth United.

Generation Change is a network of 18 organisations that provide various social action activities to young people across the UK. It includes Ashoka, British Youth Council, City Year, Envision, Fixers, Free the Children, Future Foundations, National Citizen Service, NCVYS, The Scout Association, Student Hubs, The BB Group, The Challenge Network, The Diana Award, UnLtd, Uprising, vInspired and Year Here.

According to a recent mapping exercise, Generation Change organisations provide social action to almost 600,000 young people between the ages of 11 and 25, with these activities taking place in almost 120 postcode areas and 20,000 communities and schools in the UK.

Among Generation Change organisations, London has the most social action opportunities, followed by Birmingham, Cardiff and Coventry. A recent report produced by Generation Changes highlights the top 20 areas of social action across the UK, and is available alongside an interactive online map of opportunities, on the Generation Change website.

Table 7: Age ranges and number estimates of social action programmes run by youth voluntary sector organisations

Age	Number	Organisation / programme
4-25	450,000	Girl Guiding
5 and over	57,508	Youth Scotland
5 – 18	60,000	Boys Brigade
5 – 18	126,000	Girls Brigade
8-17	2,493	Catch 22 – Community Space Challenge
10-14	350,000	Ambition
10-25	600,000	Generation Change partners
12-18	46,000	Army Cadets
12-18	14,000	Sea Cadets
13-17	45,000	Air Cadets
13-18	400	Fire Cadets (Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service)
13-18	4,000	Metropolitan Police Cadets
13-18	99	Lancashire Police Cadets
13-18	180	Sussex Police Cadets
13-25	1,200	Outset
14-17	719	London Youth – Volunteer it Yourself
14-24	300,000	Duke of Edinburgh
12-24	63,888	UK Youth programmes
16-25	11,559	Prince's Trust – Team Programme
16-25	3,000	Gap Medics
16-25	150,000	Community Service Volunteers
17-24	717	Raleigh International
Over 18	8,500	Army Cadets
18-25	2,390	International Citizen Service
18-30	11,075	Prince's Trust – XL programme

Generation Change

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Youth United

The Youth United Network is another cross-organisation body that aims to increase the number of opportunities for volunteering and service provided to young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The organisations within the Youth United network include all of the uniformed organisations who offer a long term programme that includes progression, including The Scouts Association, Girl Guiding, the Air Cadets, the Army Cadet Force, the Sea Cadets, the Fire Cadets, the Boys' Brigade, the Girls' Brigade, the Volunteer Police Cadets and St. John's Ambulance. Additional organisations who deliver programmes to Youth United members include The Prince's Trust, RNLI, Mountain Rescue and BTCV.

Most of the organisations that make up the Youth United Network are included in Table 7 above, though it is worth noting that we were unable to obtain the participation estimates for Fire Cadets and St John Ambulance. The number of young people who take part in The Scouts Association is included within the Generation Change estimate

cited above. According to Rosie Thomas, Interim Director of Youth United, there are approximately 1.5 million instances of young people taking part in the various membership organisations within Youth United, a figure which includes The Scouts Association.

The Scouts Association and Girl Guides are perhaps the most well known youth organisations across the UK, if not the world. These two organisations alone provide work with over 800,000 young people in the UK, from as young as 4-years old up until the age of 25.

The various cadet corps consist of over another 110,000 young people at the very least based on publicly available estimates. Army, Sea and Air cadet programmes consist of primarily adventure-based activities, but may include some aspects that merit their inclusion as social action. Younger fire cadets engage in fire safety awareness activities, including fitting smoke alarms for members of the public, while older cadets work towards a qualification: a BTEC in Fire and Rescue Services in the Community. Similarly, police cadets help with local crime prevention initiatives, stewarding at events (including high profile events such as the London Marathon), and mystery shopper initiatives.

Youth United has taken a particular focus to ensure inclusion into their programmes, with resources targeting young people in disadvantaged backgrounds with funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government. Focusing in ten key areas, Youth United is aiming to set up 400 new groups run by its member organisations, recruit up to 2,700 adult volunteers, and provide over 10,000 places to young people and is currently ahead of forecast and likely to achieve more. One such programme is St. John's Ambulance RISE project, which operates in disadvantaged boroughs with high levels of unemployment and gang violence.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Approximately 300,000 young people between the ages of 14 and 24 every year work towards a Duke of Edinburgh Award. There are nearly 11,000 DofE centres across the UK, which include youth clubs, voluntary organisations, schools, colleges, young offender institutions and businesses. DofE awards include a physical component, developing practical and social skills, volunteering, a residential, and

of course, the expedition. 2012-13 saw record numbers of young people – 218,806 – starting a DofE award. As we saw in the previous chapter, independent research from the University of Northampton shows that the young people who achieve a DofE feel that it has a strong positive impact on them. For example, 74 per cent said that it helped them develop self-esteem, 71 per cent identified improved self-belief and 82 per cent said that it made them want to continue with volunteering and voluntary activities.

More recently, the DofE has developed the capability to deliver DofE awards to young people in young offenders' institutions. Established in 2011, the DofE Youth Justice Award has already seen 1,700 young offenders completing an award. The UK has one of the worst recidivist rates in Europe, with the latest figures showing that 46 per cent of offenders in England and Wales committing a re-offence.⁷⁸ According to the most recent youth custody figures, approximately 1,200 young people under 18 years old are in custody, with a further 1,300 18 year olds in custody.⁷⁹ As the Duke of Edinburgh Youth Justice Award case study highlights below, social action could be an effective approach to reduce recidivism among young offenders.

Case Study: The Duke of Edinburgh's Award work with young offenders

Ages: 14-24

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) is another excellent example of social action designed with a double benefit. It also highlights the impact social action opportunities can have with young people who don't fit the typical profile of volunteers.

David was born and grew up in Hackney. He was continually in trouble at school and by the time he was sixteen was involved in local gangs. At this point he was arrested and sentenced to two years in Feltham Young Offenders Institution. Staff at Feltham noticed that he was a very enthusiastic user of the gym, and offered David and his cellmate Ricardo the chance to do their Bronze DofE.

Learning chess together from scratch, improving their table-tennis skills and volunteering with additional support needs young people who came into the prison to use the gym facilities helped David survive his sentence, and began to change his attitude to life and learning, but the real transformation came when he was released on special licence to do his Bronze expedition. The group went to Dorset – 'For me it was like going abroad,' David explains, 'I'd grown up in Hackney, I'd never seen the sea. I didn't know how beautiful the country could be. I swore I was not going to spend my life going in and out of prison the way I saw so many of the older gang members did'

His volunteering with special needs young people through Feltham's gym helped David get first a placement, then a job with Arsenal's Community Programme. He now works coaching young people in football, and speaking to young people at risk of exclusion and offending about his own experiences. 'If it weren't for the DofE, he says, I'd be back in prison, or dead by now.'

Hundreds of young offenders are currently participating in a DofE Award and over 100 DofE programmes are engaging young offenders. The DofE has been working with the Skills Funding Agency and National Offender Management Service (NOMS) on the rollout of a Virtual Campus platform that will allow young offenders to record their progress online and complete DofE upon release.

In addition to helping young people like David get their life on track, the programme has larger community benefits by helping to reduce reoffending, which is particularly high for young people on short term sentences.

As a result of the programmes, there has been a reported reduction of reoffending rates for young people who have completed an award through prisons such as Feltham, Reading and Aylesbury. The DofE London's work with Feltham prison has seen an impressive impact on the reoffending rate of 173 young offenders aged 15-18. The reoffending rate of those who chose to take part in the DofE was 57% compared to 69% for those who chose not to take part. The reoffending rate for those who achieved their

Bronze DofE award was just 41%. In the last year alone, 34 young offenders have achieved their Bronze award through Reading prison.

In an independent survey of employers by the United Learning Trust, the DofE was rated as the number one accolade on a young person's CV after academic qualifications. By participating in the DofE while serving a sentence, a young offender has the chance to improve their chances of finding work upon release.

Beyond some of these more familiar organisations lies a vast network of local charities that are specifically devoted to working with young people. Most of these are run through local or regional charities, youth clubs and faith-based organisations. One example of a faith-based organisation is Urban Devotion in Birmingham, profiled in the case study box.

Case Study: Urban Devotion Birmingham
Ages: 12 and over

Urban Devotion is a faith-motivated organisation that works to transform the lives of young people in some of Birmingham's most deprived neighbourhoods by encouraging character development amongst young people and professional development in the unemployed. Urban Devotion works to recruit disillusioned youths to various clubs and programmes, and ultimately seeks to inspire them to volunteer and get involved in initiatives that address community issues.

The Junior Warden's Scheme invites children from local primary schools to be trained in responding to community challenges. Previous activities that young children have performed include cleaning graffiti, dealing with the improper disposal of household chemicals and protecting ducklings in a nearby lake.

Birmingham Police have cited the work of Urban Devotion in bringing down the crime rate in a previously notorious hotspot. According to PC Paul Emms from West Midlands Police, *'Urban Devotion provides an opportunity to engage young people who socialise on the streets and are therefore at risk. This, along with other facilities they provide, means that they are an effective partner in preventing crime and anti-social behaviour'*. According to Andy Winmill, an Education and Training Coordinator with Urban Devotion, juvenile crime dropped 47 per cent after the first year of Urban Devotion's existence, though he notes that this is not solely due to the work of Urban Devotion.

Many members of the volunteer army that Urban Devotion rely upon were recruited after initially coming into contact with Urban Devotion's 'Street Level' team. Tom's experience is an excellent example of Urban Devotion's work and the dual benefit

impact they have.

'I met Andy, Sam and Amy when I was 14 and came along to the youth club. I felt that they were good people and I formed a bond with them. I kept coming back because there were people that I knew and I also made new friends. Through Youth Forum and residential trips I got to know what Andy, Sam and Amy did, what they stood for and where their hearts were at. I liked all of this but my head wasn't in that place back then. I went to college and didn't really get on with it but UDB were always there to offer a helping hand and support me in whatever I was doing.

'They even gave me a job through the Jericho Foundation but I messed this up, so it didn't work out. Despite this they consistently supported me even when I went through a low patch.

'That was when things began to change. I thought "what am I doing with my life?" I gained motivation and began to make some good choices. UDB gave me a step up by getting me on a 2-week course where I gained a qualification. This helped me develop a routine and I began volunteering with UDB. They saw that I had regained my confidence and showed belief in me by giving me the opportunity to work for them again. I began mentoring a boy who was struggling at one of the local primary schools. The UDB team encouraged me that I could make a difference. The school liked what I did and asked me to do more. This boy was at risk of being excluded but three months later he's still in school and hasn't been in trouble once.

'Since working for UDB I feel like I've got more sense of what life is about and what I want to achieve in life. I've taken on some of their values. I've realised that things don't tend to just fall in your lap – you have to work for things. It's not about being a millionaire anymore. I want to achieve for myself and grow as a person. That's more rewarding. I feel like I can actually be something. I see people at the top of the food chain – they own their own business and are doing well. They wear a nice shirt and a nice tie. I want to be there but I also want to help people along the way. I just like helping people.' **(Tom's story was originally published in UDB 'Back to School' Newsletter, September 2013)**

Tom now works with Urban Devotion as a mentor and activity leader. According to Urban Devotion staff:

'The key to firmly establishing relationship with him was inviting him to join a Youth Forum which engaged 7 young people as volunteers to serve their peers. Throughout his time with us he has taken part in Community Care Projects, consistently helping him understand that he is part of a community and giving him the opportunity to give something back.'

According to Andy Winmill, the key to having success with young people like Tom is being there for the long-term to provide encouragement and support.

Social Action in the education sector

The education sector is a key site for a large proportion of social action and will continue to play a key role as the campaign moves forward. Schools, colleges and universities can inspire and support young people by creating opportunities within educational settings, signposting students to available opportunities in organisations in the youth, wider voluntary sector and community groups, and by forging links with local community organisations, such as the Citizenship Foundation or London Citizens. Schools must also recognise the value of social action through preparing and empowering teachers and integrating the ethos and opportunities throughout the curriculum. From primary school up to university, they can play a key role in engaging young people who do not currently access social action programmes, helping to increase the quantity and diversity of those who take part.

Many of the programmes that are delivered in partnership with schools include organisations that are covered above in the youth voluntary sector, and below in the wider voluntary sector and business sectors.

The citizenship curriculum begins in primary school. According to a recent Ofsted survey of citizenship education in schools between 2009 and 2012, it was found that citizenship was a strong feature of the curriculum in most of the primary schools visited. The survey concluded that most headteachers ‘identified citizenship as an important vehicle for successfully promoting pupils’ moral, social and cultural development’. It was also found that, in terms of secondary schools, ‘most of the schools visited provided a range of suitable opportunities for pupils to achieve well through active citizenship, through volunteering to support or represent others, or assuming leadership roles to influence change within the school’. However, the survey also noted that ‘fewer [schools] encouraged pupils to a make a difference beyond school’.

There are a number of schools and colleges that have embraced the concept of social action more fully. These institutions have integrated aspects of social action and ‘learning by doing’ throughout the

curriculum, as well as building strong partnerships with outside organisations such as the Citizenship Foundation, NCS, Free the Children and London Citizens. We profile some of these activities in the case studies below.

There are also some academy schools, such as Ark academies, Studio Schools and the Aldridge Foundation are examples of schools that have prioritised social action in how they teach. Baccalaureates also now often include a social action component. For example, the Interdisciplinary Project in the Scottish Baccalaureate must relate to one of five themes, which include employability, enterprise, citizenship, sustainable development and economic development. Students must go above and beyond the curriculum to include aspects of the local community and the contemporary context. The same approach applies to the Community Service component of the International bac and the Independent Project in the Welsh bac.

Recent research from the think tank IPPR provides a picture of what schools with a strong focus on social action could look like. They argue for the concept of ‘Citizen Schools’, which they define as ‘individuals working together in the school and with the local community to effect change’. Citing the American education philosopher John Dewey, the authors argue that academic education alone is not enough to create a fair, equal and virtuous society, and that the culture of ‘democratic debate and action’ must be engrained into how schools operate.

This requires both specific approaches within schools in terms of the curriculum and embedding a democratic culture into the way a school makes decisions, but also ensuring that schools are looking outwards and forging links with other organisations in their communities. Their research profiles four schools with different approaches to citizenship, and the authors conclude with a number of principles that schools, education sector bodies and other community organisations should seek to implement. These principles include embedding ‘active citizenship’ into how citizenship is taught by connecting with key community organisations and local businesses to address social and economic issues in the local community. The authors also recommend schools developing relationships with a community organiser with responsibility for connecting the school to the wider community.

The model for this recommendation can be seen in the work of Citizens UK with partner schools across the country. London Citizens – the London chapter of Citizens UK – has forged partnerships with over 50 primary and secondary schools. One such school, Bethnal Green Academy, is one of the founding members of the Shoreditch Citizens chapter, and their involvement in the City Safe campaign is profiled in a case study box below.

There are also opportunities for social action in FE colleges, universities and even apprenticeships. The Build-it project profiled below is an excellent example of a cross-sector social action project that includes a qualification and apprenticeship like training and structure in the service of refurbishing social housing. At university, there can be a rich array of student societies that actively campaign and fundraise for various social issues. The National Union of Students also runs social action activities for young people at university, such as the ‘I am the Change’ campaign discussed further below.

Wider voluntary sector

In addition to schools and organisations that work exclusively with young people, there are a range of general voluntary sector organisations – such as Barnardo’s, the British Heart Foundation, British Red Cross, Cancer Research UK, Community Service Volunteers, the National Trust, the RSPB and Sue Ryder to name a few – that have volunteering / campaigning programmes that are aimed at young people. Our mapping review uncovered over 130 organisations in the wider voluntary sector that offer volunteering opportunities to young people between the ages of 10 and 20. Among a sample of these organisations who provided estimates of the numbers of young people they work with – seen in Table 8 below – we calculate over 430,000 volunteering opportunities for young people.

While the majority of these programmes are aimed at young people aged 16 and over, Sue Ryder and the Royal Voluntary Service work with 14 year olds, while Barnardo’s student volunteers programmes works with young people as young as 10 years old. Many of these charities have charity shops across the UK, which are primarily staffed by volunteers who often include students. According to most recent

numbers, there are over 213,000 volunteers working in charity shops. Based on a survey undertaken by Demos to be published in an upcoming report, approximately 1 in 5 charity shop volunteers are students.

Table 8: Examples and number estimates of social action programmes sponsored by voluntary sector organisations

Age	Number	Organisation / programme
No minimum age	70,000	National Trust
10 and over	10,000	Barnardo's student volunteers
14 and over	40,000	Royal Voluntary Service
14 and over	11,000	Sue Ryder
16-25	150,000	Community Service volunteers
16 and over	25,000	British Heart Foundation
16 and over	40,000	Cancer Research
18 and over		Royal National Institute of Blind People
18 and over	70,000	London Olympics
18 and over	18,000	RSPB

We also include the work of the charity Join In, which was established after the London Olympics to 'keep the volunteering flame alive after the Games'. Recent research conducted by Join In suggests that Olympics Games Makers were disproportionately young, and there is evidence that the Join In brand resonates strongly with those under 25. A survey of sports clubs and community groups taking part in the Join In summer 2013, an initiative designed to encourage more volunteering in community sport, shows that under 25s were among the most common demographics.⁸⁰

The campaign wants to help tap into the spirit of the Games and the Games Makers and give young people exciting and fun volunteering

opportunities. We present the experience of Join In and one young Games Maker in the case study box below.

Case Study: Join In and the Olympics Games Makers

I have been a keen volunteer since I was about 11, involved with my local youth club and other organisations... When I applied to be a Games Maker at the age of 17 it was a big challenge for me – but on that I was excited to take. It was an amazing, unforgettable experience and it has changed my whole outlook on life.

Since then, I've applied for a job at Manchester United, where I've dreamed about working ever since I was a child...

London 2012 has also inspired me to continue volunteering, including a new post: Event Services Manager with Special Olympics Ulster. It's extremely rewarding. None of this would have been possible if I hadn't been a Games Maker.

Mairéad McMahon (adapted from Join In's Local Heroes Case Studies)

London 2012 was memorable in large part due to the incredible spirit of volunteering inspired by the Games Makers. The Olympics particularly inspired young people, who made up the biggest proportion of Games Makers at just under a quarter.⁸¹

There are some indications that we're seeing a big uplift in youth volunteering as a result of the Olympics. As noted above, the Community Life survey showed substantial increases in volunteering rates among 16 to 19 year olds in the past year, which could be in part due to the Olympics and the continued spirit of volunteering. In 2012-13, 58 per cent reported annual formal volunteering which was a +16 percentage point increase from 42 per cent in 2010-11. 68 per cent reported annual informal volunteering, which was a +15 percentage point increase from 53 per cent in 2010-11.

The work of Join In is helping to sustain these increases in volunteering. Research conducted by the Institute of Volunteering Research showed that Join In delivered over 100,000 new volunteers into the sports and community sectors across the UK over the summer of 2013.⁸² There is also evidence that the Join In brand resonates strongly with those under 25. A survey of sports clubs and community groups taking part in the Join In summer 2013, an initiative designed to encourage more volunteering in community sport, shows that under 25's were among the most common demographics attending. Moreover, a survey of the public found that a third of students and unemployed said that they haven't yet volunteered more as a result of the Games but would like to.⁸³ Similarly the Join In YouGov survey found that 33 per cent of 16-34 year olds reported that as a result of the Games they were more likely to volunteer.⁸⁴

This suggests that there is a huge untapped desire among young people to get involved in social action if it consists of fun, high quality activities presented in the right way.

Public sector

There are also some excellent examples of social action from public sector organisations, including volunteering programmes run by local councils. However, compared to the other sectors that we explored, we were not able to find much information about these programmes.

One of the most frequently cited volunteering programmes – which does come from the public sector – is the King’s College Hospital Youth Volunteers, profiled in the case study box directly below. This programme is often cited as a key example of the double benefit of social action: providing benefits to the volunteers themselves in terms of good feeling and work experience, but also to hospital patients and visitors as seen on higher patient experience and satisfaction scores. Replicating the experience at King’s Hospital College Hospital across the 2,300 hospitals in the UK could have significant benefits.

Case Study: King’s College Hospital Youth Volunteers **Age: 16 years and older**

The King's College Hospital volunteering programme is frequently mentioned as a best practice example of high quality, committed social action that has a clear double benefit.

Launched in 2011, almost 1,000 people now volunteer at King's College Hospital providing practical help to patients and visitors. Just over half (55 per cent) of these volunteers are in the 16-24 age category, with 68 per cent of volunteers being under 30 years of age. The hospital is especially keen to encourage young people from the local area to take part in the scheme.

Their involvement is not taken lightly: participants commit to doing at least three hours a week for a whole year, which enables the hospital to create long-lasting and meaningful roles for them. This particularly appeals to 16-24 year olds, and not just those looking to boost their employment credentials.

" ... I enjoy working with different people and always like to help people. Therefore, I have chosen to volunteer at a hospital because this gives me a great opportunity to meet new people, help patients and visitors, gain experience from working with a team in an organised working environment, as well as to develop my communication skills and learn new things."

Volunteer Applicant, 17 years old

According to the hospital, many of the young people who volunteer are motivated to give something back after they or their families have been treated there. Others are motivated by a desire to contribute to their local community and to use the experience to develop skills, to

further their personal development. Some young volunteers from King's College Hospital go on to study medicine or nursing, or to gain employment in the health and social care sector.

'I believe that volunteering at Kings College Hospital will provide a great opportunity for me to expand my knowledge and achieve a much higher level of transferable skills; such as communication skills. I also believe that it will help me pursue a career as a Paediatric nurse due to the fact that I'll have much more of an understanding about the profession of nursing.'

Haja Sesay, 19 years old

Volunteers can choose from a number of different roles. The Trust has high demand for placements and actively recruits between 65 and 80 volunteers per month through a well evaluated recruitment process.

Ward volunteers seek to make patients' stay more comfortable through conversation, listening, reading to patients, helping with feeding, running errands or escorting patients on short walks. They also help to coordinate activities such as reminiscence and general stimulation for elderly patients, and play activities from those on pediatric wards. Volunteer Hospital Guides work across the hospital giving patients and visitors directions and escorting them to appointments. Outpatient volunteers help make patients' visit to outpatient departments as smooth and comfortable as possible by chatting, listening and helping register arrivals. The new 'Hospital to Home' scheme is an initiative where volunteers work both on busy wards and in the local community by helping patients to settle in at home and supporting them to care for themselves after discharge. The hospital is also launching a Community Health Ambassador programme, which will see volunteers attend events within the local community to promote awareness of a range of public health issues.

'...I enjoy seeing people smile when they have people to talk to as when I volunteered at the old people's home, seeing the smiles on their faces was just amazing and the feeling you get was just wonderful. Just to know you're helping someone even in a small way is great, I think your hospital is the place where I can make that happen again for the patients, people and myself.'

Nadine Murray, 17 years old

The King's Volunteers receive development opportunities and training sessions that enable them to demonstrate the work they have done to potential employers and educators. They also receive day-to-day support from the people leading their teams, as well as pastoral care from the central volunteering team.

They are also partnership schemes with schools. Students at Lambeth College volunteer at the hospital through 'Partnership Challenges' as part of the hospital's programme of work with local businesses and organisations. Students have been involved in designing publicity advertising the sexual health service and in helping with improvements to the hospital food service. The college views the relationship with the hospital as crucial for nurturing desire for and talent in the caring profession at the same time as giving the students a strong sense of civic partnership.

By supporting volunteers to support their patients, King's College Hospital believes patients receive the best possible experience and that volunteers can pursue their own personal goals.

Volunteers have a demonstrably positive impact on patient experience. Those patients who had access to a volunteer scored the Trust on average five points more highly on patient experience surveys than those who did not. Thus the impact that the volunteers make at the hospital cannot be underestimated.

Business sector

Many businesses have a long and rich history of delivering volunteering and social action programmes for young people in the UK. However, awakening more businesses to the possibilities and benefits of social action could reap significant rewards through the development and spread of new and innovative programmes.

As part of our mapping exercise we identified approximately 20 businesses that were engaging in social action. The majority of these programmes work with young people aged 16 and older, though there are some that work with children as young as 5 years old, such as the Co-operative Green Schools Revolution. While clearly not exhaustive, we estimate that programmes run by private businesses reach young people in the tens of thousands. Moreover, many businesses are stepping up to the Campaign's challenge with concrete pledges. For example, British Gas has pledged to support 1,400 young people across the UK with training in energy sustainability, including 1,000 of which will receive access to a 12 month work placement. They've also pledged to their partners to collaborate in order to attract 50,000 10-14 year olds into youth social action by 2016, and to treble the number of volunteering days.

The Lloyds Scholars Programmes, run by Lloyds Banking Group, challenges young people to complete 100 hours of voluntary service in their community in return for university bursaries. Through developing new skills and by attending lectures, workshops and events run by Lloyds Banking Group the programme offers young people an opportunity to improve their employability whilst making a difference to their community.

Many businesses are designing social action programmes that aim to encourage social enterprise and entrepreneurship. For example, PWC supports social entrepreneurs as part of a partnership with the School for Social Entrepreneurs. Participants receive mentoring, private tutoring, bursaries, as well as training programmes helping them to start up their organisations. Starbucks' Youth Action programme provides funding to support youth-led community projects and engage young people in social action enterprises. The programme also provides practical training, including budget and project management, to support the development of these projects. As with the education and wider voluntary sectors, further mapping work is needed to understand the full scale and reach of social action programmes delivered by the business sector in the UK.

Case Study: Think Big
Age: 13-25 years old

'I'm thrilled to get the chance to turn my idea into a reality. I've had this idea for many months, but haven't had the backing to get it off the ground until o2 Think Big stepped in' Jamie Halvorson.

Jamie is about to launch 'Ignited Minds', a social platform for young entrepreneurs which has won the partnership of the Young Scot (a Scottish Youth information portal for 11-26 year olds) after an initial £300 grant from o2.

The Think Big initiative aims to empower young people (aged 13-25) like Jamie who wish to see changes to their communities. Through funding, training and support, Think Big helps young people turn their ideas about how to benefit their community into reality.

By supporting only ideas that are realistically achievable with either £300 or £2500, Think Big fosters a sense of realism in young people to evaluate how viable their ideas are, from conception to implementation. If the £300 project is completed successfully the young person may be invited to apply for the next level, titled 'Think Bigger' in which they receive a further £2500.

Hannah Catmur is currently celebrating her £2,500 grant from o2 for her GetOut! Explorer App, which seeks to inspire children to get outdoors and explore the natural environment. She says she always wanted to "speak to [children] in a language they understood but to use it for positive change". Hannah was awarded her Think Bigger grant following her successful organisation of a family activity day in Bedfordshire with the initial £300.

Over 4,000 projects have been supported so far with 2,869 currently ongoing. These have included 'Act Safe' a theatre production to raise awareness about Sexually Transmitted Diseases, 'My Brighton' a creative project designed to enable young refugees to express themselves through different types of media, 'iDance4' dance events raising money for communities and 'Triple M Productions' which gives music lessons to young people with disabilities.

In October 2012 Think Big toured for four nights visiting four different locations to celebrate the young people involved in the programme and the positive changes they are making to the areas where they live. The tour was staged entirely by young people who volunteered to take part – from production to performance with all roles filled by someone 25 or under in Birmingham, Glasgow, Liverpool and London. O2 was able to call on influential music artists such as Tinchy Stryder, Chip, Sway, Mystery Jets, Noisettes, Rudimental and Rita Ora to raise the scheme's profile and cement its standing as one of Britain's most pioneering initiatives encouraging innovation in the form of youth social action and civic responsibility.

Aside from the enthusiasm and innovation of young people who submit their proposals, O2 draws upon a reliable group of supporters whom ensure Think Big continues to grow. O2 Helpers and Mentors are passionate about working with young people. They offer their support and guidance by coaching the Think Big online community via the forum. In the more advanced stages of the program they also offer face-to-face mentoring.

Think Big also has a strong relationship with UK Youth who are responsible for Think Big training courses and help match up the skills and talents of volunteers from O2 with young people and youth organisations. The National Youth Agency (NYA) are also an integral part of Think Big alongside the O2 Community team.

Tracing the social action journey

When the Campaign is complete in 2020 the social action journey that young people can take will be well established and deeply embedded into British lives.

It could look significantly different from the journey that exists now, both in terms of the quantity and spread of opportunities, but also brand new and innovative activities and programmes.

In the sections below we attempt to give a brief summary of what that personal journey could look like at this point in time. One of the key objectives of the Campaign – and something that Demos previously argued in *Service Nation* – is that there needs to be a 'life cycle' approach to service, starting from 10 or younger and stretching up through the teenage years into adulthood and ultimately into old age.

First steps with social action: 10 – 14 years old

Aside from well known national programmes like the Scouts and the Girl Guides, the majority of social action activity for 10 to 12 year olds tends to be focused on local schemes led by community groups, school-based initiatives and family-oriented day activities.

The Scouts and Girl Guides both have service components built into their programmes that encourage young participants to develop an awareness of social issues and civic responsibility that moves their activities beyond the realm of simple volunteering into social action. Activities can include cleaning up litter and debris in local communities, helping to deliver food and medicine for those with mobility issues, and holding fundraising events for local charity causes.

But the majority of social action activities for this age range take place in schools. In Years 3 through 5, children and young people throughout the UK are first introduced to concept of citizenship and social action. As noted above, an Ofsted review of citizenship education generally gave good marks to a sample of primary schools from across the country. Some schools have integrated programmes from external community and national organisations, such as the Make a Difference campaign. The experience of one primary school in Kent highlights the work of the Make a Difference campaign, which saw 139 schools, 229 classes and 6,419 pupils take part 2012-13.

Case study: Saving our hedgehogs Age: 10 years old

'It really made me feel that grownups were listening to what children thought, and what they thought was important. We made decisions and voted on things and acted like grownups to get things done' (Jack, age 10)

In Lamberhurst Primary school in Kent, children in Years 3 and 4 got together to choose an issue that they considered to be important to their community.



According to the observing headteacher, *'It was almost like a husting type event that*

you would only really experience if you went to university or went into Parliament. Children don't get an opportunity to debate and to hust. It's a really high level speaking and listening skill'.

In the end, the hedgehog won the day.

The children were spurred into action when they learned that the number of hedgehogs in the UK has declined from 36 million in 1950 to 1 million today, which is the same rate of decline as the tiger population.

The Lamberhurst primary school hedgehog campaign was part of the Make a Difference Challenge, which is a 'child-led citizenship project for pupils in KS2.

There are five phases to the programme. First, teachers receive training to help structure and support the children as they lead the campaign. The teachers then facilitate a discussion whereby the children choose a range of topics to research, before presenting their findings to the class. They then participate in a secret ballot. At the primary phase, the most popular campaigns tend to involve raising money for sick children, poor children in developing countries, homelessness and animal welfare or endangerment.

This process ensures everyone's buy in because the children are all involved in the decision-making. It also exposes the children to a range of social issues, research skills, and decision-making experiences.

Once the topic is chosen, the children design and lead the campaign, which may include raising awareness, fundraising or taking action for the benefit of their community. This includes a phase where children gather the views of the local community and make links with relevant organisations. At Lamberhurst, once they decided on their hedgehog campaign, the class designed posters and leaflets and used these in their Save the Hedgehog march, which was covered by the local press. They also built hedgehog boxes to put in their gardens.

Finally, they attended the Go-Givers Make a Difference Celebration event to share their work and celebrate their achievements with other participating schools.

Caroline Bromley, headteacher of Lamberhurst Primary school believes that the Go-Givers Make a Difference Challenge led to the development of new skills and a greater desire to learn. 'The government wants children to be 'in the cockpit of their learning', but these kids were rocket astronauts as far as their learning was concerned because they were going to the moon and back with their challenge. ... This term, when they started their projects the passion was so much greater because they have experienced Go-Givers.'

An independent evaluation found that the Make a Difference Challenge had a positive impact on the attitudes of pupils related to "community, empathy, speaking, or representing their own views."

As Zac (age 10) from Lamberhurst expressed it: *‘I was proud to serve in the hedgehog project, because I arose the awareness that hedgehogs are endangered and for that reason I am very proud of myself’*

The evaluation also showed raised awareness about issues facing the community and the need to consider campaigning or taking action in order to tackle them. Following the campaign, 14.7 per cent more students said they believed their “community is being harmed because people don’t care enough about each other” and there was an increase in 7.8 per cent in the number of students who said they would give part of their pocket money to charity.

Yet, despite the benefits for the students themselves, as Lola (age 10) remains focused on others: *‘We didn’t do it for us, we did it for the hedgehogs’*.

One programme that has recently come to the UK from North America is run by the organisation Free the Children. Free the Children provide a free citizenship programme for schools that includes motivational speakers and a free assembly that acts to encourage civic participation. If students and schools demonstrate a consistent commitment to social action throughout the year, they can win a place to attend a big concert/ assembly called ‘We Day’, which often features celebrities, big name music acts, politicians and leaders across society. At present, Free the Children is working with 300 schools in the UK and reaching an estimated 75,000 pupils. Our case study of the ‘We Act’ programme is included in the box below.

Case study: ‘We Act’

Age: 6-18 years

‘Before coming to England, I lived in Uganda. And though I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to go to school, I was always aware that many children in my country and in other countries around the world did not. Growing up in this environment, and seeing the stark differences between a life with education and a life without, made supporting Free The Children the perfect fit. I love that as a charity they not only make a huge difference overseas but they also support me in the UK to make a difference in the lives of others. That’s the great thing about Free The Children – it’s all about helping young people help other young people.’

Female Student, 13, Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College, Hove

Free The Children visited Humphrey Perkins School in Loughborough in October this year to deliver an assembly to an audience of Year 8s, the local MP, the BBC and other

local journalists, with the speech being reported in a page-long article in the local newspaper *The Loughborough Echo*. Since the visit, the students have set up a lunchtime club that has already raised around £800 from a non-uniform day, organised a food collection for their local food bank as part of Free The Children's We Scare Hunger campaign, started a volunteer project in their community to pick up litter, and planned a cake sale and roller disco, which will raise money for Free The Children's international development projects.

According to one of the students from Humphrey Perkins:

'[I] think Free The Children is really helpful for people around the world who are struggling, also it has helped us understand what it is like for children who aren't as fortunate as us'

The assembly at Humphrey Perkins School was part of the 'We Act' programme. 'We Act' is a citizenship programme delivered in schools that started in Canada and has since expanded into the US and UK. Participating schools are provided with classroom resources and lesson plans that aim to gear pupils towards social action and volunteering. The pupils then select one local and one global action they would like to engage in over the next 12 months with the support of mentors from Free The Children. Only by working towards these twin goals can a school qualify to attend the culmination of all their efforts which is celebrated at the annual 'We Day' UK.

'We Day' is a stadium-sized youth empowerment event, bringing young people together to lead global change, defy apathy and celebrate the change that they are making in their local and global communities. In Canada, the event is streamed by MTV and videos of past We Day events can be viewed at www.weday.com and on YouTube. According to the website, the aim of We Day and We Act is to get 'young people [to] discover that it's cool to care'.

By only allowing schools that have committed to active service throughout the year to attend We Day, Free The Children provides an incentive for pupils to consistently apply themselves towards charitable and voluntary schemes. The inaugural UK event will be held in March 2014 at the Wembley Arena.



Detailed studies of Free The Children alumni in Canada suggest 80 per cent of alumni who had been involved for four years or more continue to volunteer on average more

than 150 hours a year.⁸⁵

Central qualities underpinning the schemes credentials are its adaptability to differing pupil abilities, its use of celebrities and youth culture to sustain pupil's interest, flexibility to adapt to different environments and frequent energisers which help to counteract the short attention spans of young children.

The transition from primary to secondary school is a big step for many young people. Often, this means going from the security and familiarity of the primary classroom, to what can be an overwhelming environment at first in secondary school. For some young people, this transition can be especially delicate. Recognising this, a number of programmes have been developed to try to ease this transition through support. This can often include personal mentoring programmes – such as Big Brother, Big Sister in the US, and the charity Place2Be in the UK. Similarly, social action activities can help to facilitate a smooth primary to secondary transition by building the skills, confidence and social networks that are shown to help support this transition.

As we can see in the tables below, many organisations begin at the age of 10, just before this transition. In both The Scouts and Girl Guides, young people transition from the younger groups of Cubs and Brownies, respectively, into the Scouts and Guide troops, taking on more responsibility and beginning to undertake more social action type activities. Programmes such as 'We Act' above can also help to provide continuity between primary and secondary schools if both local schools decide to take part. Ten year olds can also participate in programmes like the Sea Cadets and St John's Ambulance Cadets.

Between 11 and 12 opportunities for social action begin to open up even more. Of course, citizenship education continues in most schools. Some programmes focus on young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and schools with high percentages of students on free school meals. All young people can make a contribution to their community and sometimes young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds may lack the networks or opportunities to get involved and their schools may not have the capacity to support them either. Learning from the programmes that

already successfully work with these groups is essential. One such example is the 'Get Involved' Campaign run by the National Children's Bureau in Luton, which is profiled in the box directly below.

One type of project that can have strong benefits for both the young person taking part, as well as others in the community is that which focuses on intergenerational relationships, such as the 'Get Involved' Singing Café in Luton.

Case study: 'Get Involved' Campaign – The Singing Cafe
Age: 11-16 years

'I look forward to visiting the elderly every week. I wouldn't have done this before but now would be really hurt if I was told I couldn't do it anymore'

Student



The Singing Café is a local initiative in Luton where volunteers spend time with, play games, dance and sing with elderly patients with dementia. The project was originally a partnership between local churches, Luton Borough Council, Age Concern Luton and Voluntary Action Luton. Recently, students from the 'Get Involved' campaign at Stopsley High School have got involved, and according to the Project Manager, they've brought *'a community feel that we were missing'*.

'Elderly members of the community really enjoy the company of the students. It brings energy and dynamism to the project. Students are thoughtful and caring and committed to the project'.

According to one student, *'getting involved in this project has helped build my confidence. I ... find it much easier to talk to people I don't know'*. Another student reported that their involvement changed their ideas about what they wanted to do in the

future and that they wanted *'to spend more time with Grandparents'*.

The 'Get Involved' programme, of which the Singing Café is just one part, is run by the National Children's Bureau (NCB) in partnership with Luton schools. The programme aims to foster a sense of civic responsibility in adolescents by encouraging schools to take part in social action projects that benefit the wider Luton community. Being grounded in local ownership is a key component of the scheme.

The NCB run skill building workshops so that pupils strengthen their project planning, teamwork and volunteering skills and the NCB project manager tailors the proposed project to the agenda of the specific school concerned. Pupils can gain a nationally accredited ASDAN award on successful completion of the scheme.

In Autumn 2012, 'Get Involved' was launched for Year 7 and 8 pupils of Lea Manor High School. The motivation for the Headteacher was the fact that the school spends *'a lot of time thinking about the whole child, getting young people to take responsibility for themselves and their community'*. The specific activities taken up in Lea Manor are diverse and include things like Peer Reading in local primary schools to bag packing at the local Sainsbury's to raise money for charity.

The programme launched with Year 8 pupils at Stopsley High School in January this year, and has featured supporting Luton Food Banks in addition to the Singing Café.

According to both Stopsley High and Lea Manor, maintaining momentum for the programme and pupils is essential. They do this by holding weekly 'Get Involved' meetings, which take place every Friday lunchtime. The 'Get Involved' campaign is currently being set up in Lealands High School with the further objective of involving pupils who were temporarily or permanently excluded from the school timetable. While this proved more challenging because of initial reluctance among these pupils, once on board they've demonstrated a similar capacity and enthusiasm in producing ideas for the benefit of their local communities.

An evaluation survey with 25 pupils from Lea Manor and Stopsley saw 92 per cent saying they would like to take part in future civic activities and the same figure expressing a desire to become a more active member of their school or community. Eighty three per cent said that they found the activities the best part about the project, and 96 per cent said they met new people and made new friends. Sixty two per cent that they worked harder at school as a result, 85 per cent said they were volunteering more than before, and 75 per cent said they were leading project in their school or community.

According to Amber, age 13, the project helped her learn that *'there are things in my community that I can be part of and help with and I now have the confidence to support community activities'*.

Another programme involving partnerships between schools and outside organisations is the case study of Bethnal Green Academy and London Citizens in the box below. London Citizens – which is the London chapter of the national organization Citizens UK – is one of the preeminent social action organisations in the UK. Citizens UK is a community organising organisation that seeks to help support local communities to tackle the problems that affect them through a combination of campaigning, awareness raising, lobbying and forging effective partnerships. One of their most prominent and successful campaigns is the Living Wage, which has seen hundreds of organisations and companies sign up to pay a living wage to all of its employees. According to Citizens UK, in London this led to raising 3,500 families out of poverty last year.

In London, CitySafe is another big initiative of London Citizens. The campaign aims to ensure that all young Londoners who feel threatened or endangered have access to safe havens across London neighbourhoods. Importantly, the CitySafe campaign includes partnerships with numerous local organisations, including schools. Overall, London Citizens has partnerships with over 50 ‘member’ schools across London. One of those schools, Bethnal Green Academy, is profiled in the case study box below.

Case study: CitySafe, Bethnal Green Academy
Age: 11-15 years

‘I volunteer because it improves my confidence and allows me to get involved in school life. It develops your understanding of the world around you. I enjoy working with others and sharing ideas.’ (Student)

Embedding social action in secondary school is essential to ensure that young people take part and develop a desire for social action later in life. The CitySafe initiative shows how young people can achieve a tangible impact on their local communities through training, encouragement and support.

Bethnal Green Academy (BGA) is a school committed to social action. With Citizenship courses at KS3 and KS4, all BGA students in Years 8 through to 10 are allocated a day off of timetable in order to volunteer in the community. The school also has strong relationships with the Youth Philanthropy Initiative, Hackney City Farm, City Year and Shoreditch Citizens.

BGA is one of the founding institutions of Shoreditch Citizens, a local chapter of the community organising group London Citizens. Shoreditch Citizens brings community groups together and supports them to tackle local problems. The CitySafe initiative is one example of their collaboration.

At the beginning of the initiative, teachers received training from community organisers and facilitators from London Citizens. The key target group for recruitment was students who demonstrated potential for leadership but were not living up to their potential. Once selected, the participating students received training in communication skills from BGA and London Citizen staff. They were then sent out on a 'listening exercise' to gather the views of their peers about key issues affecting them. In addition to extensive engagement with their fellow students, the project participants were encouraged to forge links with local community organisations; in the case of the CitySafe project, this includes up to 25 local organisations.

Upon completion of their 'listening exercise', the students delivered a report on what they heard from their peers at an assembly that was attended by 150 people. This gave them the opportunity to develop and test their communication skills, but also to gather further feedback on shared community objectives. One of the most commonly cited problems – and thus what became the goal of the campaign – was to make the area around the school safer for students.

Once the issue was identified, the project moved from 'listening' and reporting into action. Again, with the help and guidance of teachers and members of London Citizens, BGA young people collaborated with hundreds of young people from Randal Cremer Primary School, Bridge Academy and Central Foundation Boys School, to take practical actions to establish safer streets. Student Leaders from Years 7 through 10 conducted walks in the local area and spoke with local shopkeepers to understand their experiences of crime in the area. These conversations helped to forge positive relationships with local businesses and as a result several signed up to become CitySafe Havens. The students then established eight CitySafe zones, including on major roads such as Old Street, City Road, Kingsland Road and Hackney Road, with fifty shops across the zones offering Safe Havens to young people needing protection.



The BGA young people also succeeded in bringing together the Borough Commanders from Tower Hamlets, as well as the Police Commander, to work on a community-led plan for better joined up policing on Hackney Road and surrounding estates with significant crime problems.

The CitySafe initiative led to an 84 per cent reduction in street crime around Bethnal Green Academy and 16 shops & public buildings offering a Safe Haven to young people being chased by gangs or otherwise feeling threatened. Participating pupils also showed improved confidence, leadership, teamwork and resilience.

The project stakeholders identified three key elements of the project's success. First, senior leader buy-in within the school was essential, in particular having a lead teacher responsible for Student Leadership and Volunteering. Second, the youth-led aspect of the project, in which students listened to and surveyed student views in the design of the project, heightened their enthusiasm and ensured their commitment. Finally, BGA staff cited the training and guidance from the Shoreditch Citizens Community Organisers for both staff and students. This was vital for the skills that it taught to teachers and students, but also as it demonstrates the importance of effective partnerships to deliver social action projects, particularly for schools.

Peer-support, anti-bullying and mentoring programmes are all important in this age range as well. For example, BeatBullying and the Diana Award – both members of Generation Change – train mentors aged 14 to provide peer-support to young people who experience bullying.

Taking responsibility: Social Action activities for 14 to 18 year olds

As young people get older and move into the 14 to 18 age range, activities tend to become more formal and less structured though they still offer a high degree of flexibility in terms of time-commitment and responsibility level. Participants have increasing autonomy, institutional support becomes less rigid and the types of opportunities broaden. Activities such as The Duke of Edinburgh Award, Prince's Trust programmes, youth community service activity, tutoring, mentoring and other forms of volunteering also become available to young people in this age-group. Various cadet corps such as those within the Youth United Network, are popular. This is also the age range where most Generation Change organisations fit in, particularly

Envision, Fixers, Explorer Scouts, NCS, Challenge, vInspired, Future Foundations, Live Unltd awards, as well as young people benefiting from City Year and BB Group mentors.

Leadership and activism activities begin to feature more prominently at this age with organisations such as vInspired offering a number of resources for community activity and social action experience being offered by groups such as Changemakers and National Citizen Service. Changemakers demonstrate the new generation of dedicated social action movements. They offer an intensive three-month programme to develop leadership and community activism skills among young people aged 16 to 25. The three-month programme incorporates a residential component and a series of day and half-day conferences, events and workshops to develop young people's interests and skills in activism.⁸⁶

Case study: National Citizen Service
Age: 16-17 years

Participant, aged 16

The project has really improved my confidence and my communication skills. The residents were so full of energy and had really interesting stories to share about when they were our age. Some of them didn't achieve the career they really wanted because they left school at 14. It has made me determined to go for what I want. We have achieved unity between our generations.

Participant, aged 87

I brought in an edition of the Daily Express from May 1940 and the young people were fascinated by the stories in it. They really have the capacity to listen to older people and they have shown compassion.

NCS is a social action programme for 16 and 17 year olds that combines outdoor residential activities, with a placement in a local organisation and a youth-led social action campaign. NCS aims to be a rite of passage programme for all 16 and 17 year olds, and in the process, to generate a more 'cohesive, responsible and engaged society'.⁸⁷ In 2011, 8,500 young people participated in NCS⁸⁸, while this year, 50,000 places were made available for participants; the final number that completed the programme is as yet unknown.⁸⁹

An example of one of the community programmes is a project that involved Stoke City Football Club as well elderly residents of Reginald Mitchell Court. The idea was to run a history/reminiscence project to attract young people with a preference for more creative activity particularly linked to art and photography. Participants were encouraged to

think about the project in the context of past, present and future and the residents provided books, pictures and maps to illustrate their memories. They also had a food swap to explore different preferences and tastes and a joint play list was made to reflect their differing musical tastes. The young people arranged and planned the celebration event held at the end of the project, on 26th July, with the residents and their family and friends.

According to one participant: *‘(NCS) helped me to form real relationships with people I would never have chosen to even speak to in the past. I learnt to relate to people that were different to me and show understanding and empathy towards people with different life experiences.’*

A recent interim evaluation of NCS found improvements in core skills among NCS participants as compared to a control group, including percentages of those who said they felt they were good leaders as well as those who said that they felt more confident putting their ideas forward as a result of participating in NCS. The evaluation also found a significant increase in the number of young people who reported to be ‘good at having a go at things which were new to them’.

While the evaluation didn’t register statistical improvements with respect to social mixing, personal testimonials of participants have highlighted the benefits here. One participant from Birmingham said: *‘(NCS) has definitely helped me to get along with people from different backgrounds. [It] helped me understand that beyond the surface, it doesn’t matter how different someone is to you, we’re all still people’.*

Outside of the National Citizen Service, the majority of opportunities available again fall under the traditional structure of volunteering. For example, Community Service Volunteers offer school leavers the chance to work as a care-assistant for people with disabilities for 6 to 12 months. As part of the programme, CSV participants live with a group of 4 to 5 others and also take part in skills development and service-learning programmes.⁹⁰ Therefore, although the original model is one of volunteering, adaptations to the programme also include elements of the activism and group participation that brings it onto the spectrum of social action.

Older programmes and more established programmes like The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, mentoring and cadet corps focus on more traditional volunteerism but are beginning to provide a greater emphasis on civic education and activism in their areas of their work – for example The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award uses the language of ‘empowerment’ and helping young people to ‘create positive changes for themselves and society’.⁹¹

Transition to adulthood: Social action activities for 18 to 20 year olds

From school leaving age, young people have the biggest opportunity to fully immerse themselves in structured social action opportunities. For example, they can take part in activities that could require them to stay away from home such as the National Citizen Service, they could go abroad through gap-year schemes offered by the European Voluntary Service or travel to other parts of the country with opportunities offered by the Community Service Volunteers and Year Here. They can also spend an entire year in service, for example, through the organization City Year. A case study of one City Year participant's experience is profiled in the box below. In the US, the AmeriCorps model requires a year of service and provides an excellent model for providing high quality structured social action opportunities.

Case study: City Year – a year of service



Abigail Grant-Mends is from North London and after taking some time out of education to care for her child, she recently completed a degree in Psychology. After graduating, Abigail knew she wanted to volunteer for a year, but she didn't know where or in what sector.

'What really drew me to the programme was its length; with a whole year of volunteering I was certain I'd be able to have a significant impact. Also, it gave me the opportunity to apply what I'd learnt in my degree, while also working with children, which is something I knew I wanted to do.'

The biggest challenge for Abigail has been the long days during the Winter months and juggling her service and her personal caring responsibilities that challenged her morale.

'During November and December I was waking up before sunrise and getting home after sunset. Because I have a little girl I would go home and still have a lot to do, and would have to wake up at least an hour earlier than any of my teammates. In fact some days I'd only have 2-3 hours of sleep and would need to dig down deep to find the energy to complete another day. Those were tough days!

'City Year's definitely changed me as a person. I've achieved things that might not be something you can certify, like a degree, but I've been able to reach goals that I didn't think I could at this stage. Coming out of university, and entering the wider world, I knew I had a steep learning curve to climb in order to be ready for the workplace and adult life.

'I think City Year's enabled me to do that: I'm more confident and have learnt a lot from interacting with a diverse range of people. These are skills that people don't necessarily recognise as essential or something that can be taught, but they're important nonetheless and I've seen myself improve immeasurably as a person.'

With youth unemployment such a concern for policymakers and young people themselves, the overwhelming majority of programmes on offer at this age include an employability element. While it's commonly known that social action or volunteering is viewed favourably by university admission boards, social action can also be an extremely valuable avenue into employment for young people who do not go to University. The Build-it project profiled in the case study box below, run by the organisation London Youth, combines the aims of helping give young people skills, qualifications, and practical experience with huge benefits for the community: not only in terms of potentially reducing the number of young people NEET or unemployed, but by helping with the refurbishment of social housing that makes a contribution to easing the housing shortage in the UK.

Another similar initiative is called Community Fixers run by the Federation of London Youth Clubs (not to be confused with ITV's Fixers programme), which delivers a programme of practical skills through the refurbishment of empty council owned social housing in disrepair. The scheme brings together young people, adult volunteers and older retired or semi-retired trade people to offer practical learning. Ultimately, the programme will research 1,500 young

volunteers aged 14-24 to learn practical skills in a non-classroom environment and the ability to achieve a qualification from the National Open College Network.⁹²

Case study: Build-it Project
Age: 16-25 years

'I wanted to work with Build-it because of what they could offer me and how they can help with my future.'

Arnold joined Build-It in June 2013 and a few months later began working for MACE, the company that has led construction projects across London's skyline including on The Shard and Tate Modern. Arnold's story demonstrates the phenomenal turnaround that can happen when young people are given the opportunity to apply themselves with the support of mentors and prospective employers.

The Build-it project focuses on developing specific trade and carpentry skills and aims to provide young participants with qualifications and work experience that will help them transition into employment or further education. This personal development is delivered through practical action in service of renovating empty properties so that they can be used for social housing and community purposes. While it only just began, the project has ambitious aims for the next two years and is an excellent example of social action for the older age range.

The idea for the Build-it project was tested as a pilot in Brixton in 2012, and was featured in the first episode of Channel 4's documentary series, 'The Secret Millions' in which young people worked with architect George Clarke to bring a derelict house back into use. Following the programme, the Big Lottery Fund awarded London Youth £1.7m to deliver the programme for two years in partnership with CoSpA and with the support of Lambeth Council and Lambeth College. Cospa are key in providing the vital older volunteer mentors.

Officially launched in April 2013, the next two years will see 1,500 young people from Lambeth taking part in the renovation of community spaces and social housing across the borough.

The participants will commit to more than 60,000 accumulative volunteering hours to the project, while 1,000 will gain a trade skills qualification and at least 500 young people will progress to further skills training opportunities. The project also depends on the goodwill of the 400 trades people participating, themselves committing more than 25,000 volunteering hours to the project. At least 100 of these trades people will gain new mentoring, training and work assessment qualifications for their efforts.

University campuses have always been a site for activism and protest in the UK. The experience of the past few years, with student-led campaigns against austerity and the rise in tuition fees, shows that the current generation of university students are by no means apathetic and uninterested in politics and social issues.

Student societies across the UK are vibrant centres of social action, activism, protest and debate. It is also an incentive for those more concerned about grades than protest to get involved in student-led volunteering opportunities as a way of building crucial employment skills and strengthening the practical elements of their CV. Organisations like NUS and Student Hubs are crucial for signposting students to volunteering opportunities and setting a tone that encourages healthy activism and protest. They are also key to developing programmes like the 'I am the Change', profiled in the box below.

Case study: NUS I am the Change campaign

Ages: 18-20

The National Union of Students (NUS) works with student unions to 'promote, defend and extend the rights of students' across the UK. Working on behalf of students, NUS is active in running and promoting a number of social action initiatives. The 'I am the Change' campaign focused on providing support to students who are uniquely driven and motivated to make a difference.

Courtney Giles' story is indicative.

As a child, Courtney had attended the Epsom Phab centre – a club in Surrey for physically disabled and non-disabled children – with friends. When she heard that the centre was facing closure she decided she would act to lead a campaign to oppose its closure. She went to NUS and joined the 'I am the Change' campaign. NUS provided Courtney with training and resources to build her campaign. Through her campaign, Courtney was able to meet a number of representatives at different organisations, including the head of Surrey youth services, for advice on how to build her campaign. Her campaign culminated in a march through Epsom where protestors wore 'Save Epsom Phab' t-shirts. After 11 months of campaigning Surrey County Council agreed to keep Epsom Phab open indefinitely.

NUS have trained over 2,500 students to address issues that they are passionate about in their local communities.

Moving forward stories like Courtney's show that the support provided by NUS, combined with the energy and enthusiasm brought to campaigns by students like Courtney, can help inspire positive social activism at the same time as having long term effects in the community by helping to protect vital services vulnerable to funding cuts. NUS are now developing this work to support grass roots activity through their 'We are the change' campaign, creating community organising support to identify and address issues in local communities across the UK.

Student Hubs are another interesting organisation at the university level that are key to the current social action landscape. Student Hubs are based in Bristol, Cambridge, Oxford, Oxford Brookes, Imperial, SOAS, Southampton and Warwick universities, with a membership of 20,000 students and 100 student groups. They run student conferences on a range of issues, including international development and community volunteering, and their mission is 'a world in which every student makes a difference during their time at university – inspiring a new generation of socially-active citizens.

Further mapping of the journey

The landscape of social action in the UK is inevitably richer and more numerous and diverse than what we describe above, and as the campaign moves forward, continued mapping exercises will be crucial. Going forward, interactive maps – such as the one created by Generation Change and available here:

<http://www.generationchange.org.uk/social-action-map.html>

will be essential for the campaign and campaign partners to keep up-to-speed with all the different types of social action that are going on and new initiatives emerging.

CHAPTER 4: SOCIAL ACTION ON SOCIAL MEDIA: THE NEW DIMENSION

Over half of British internet users now use at least one platform, Internet site, app, blog or forum that allows them to generate and share as well as consume content.⁹³ These new, ‘social’, media are creating new spaces where people congregate, discuss, argue and plan. They are increasingly important to how we lead our lives and capture more and more of our thoughts, feelings, concerns and hopes.

Clearly, the current generation uses social media frequently but the habits that govern this use – the intentions and purposes for using it, how they see it fitting into their lives and the benefits they regard they receive from it – are constantly evolving. The extent to which social media plays a role in social action, whether to discuss social action or indeed conduct it, are unknown. It is unclear whether social media can be researched to understand social action in the UK today, or actually used to promote it. These are key questions for the Campaign and campaign partners going forwards.

This chapter presents an initial analysis conducted by Demos’ Centre for the Analysis of Social Media (CASM) about the relevance of social media for social action, including charitable work, campaigning and volunteering. It is a scope of how and why people talk about social action on social media, the themes and topics that the discussions in this context raise, how they identify and associate to it, and whether social media is itself a venue for these kinds of behaviours. Overall, it aims to provide an assessment of the quantity and quality of available and relevant data on social media, the potential of social media research to inform and guide social action campaigns, and what this guidance may be.

For the purpose of this scope, two social media platforms – Twitter and Facebook were selected. Facebook is the most popular social media platform in the UK - around 62 per cent (33million) of Britain’s Internet users use it. Its technological infrastructure and the way it is most often used, make it the most significant forum for social media-based affiliations, identities, and associations related to social action. Twitter is the fourth most popular social media platform in the UK, and around 6.6 million people regularly use Twitter in the UK.⁹⁴ It

allows users to create accounts and post ‘micro-blogs’ – tweets - to the site of no more than 140 characters in length. With nearly 500 million tweets posted daily, it is the most significant forum for posting social-media based views, comments, opinions, links and attitudes related to social action.

Both these sites were selected on the basis of:

- Their size.
- The technological ease of accessing data.
- The publicity of the data: The privacy of social media data, and the ethics of accessing it, is an important and often controversial issue. These two platforms were selected because they provided access to classes of information - public tweets and posts - (by no means all the information hosted on the platform) that are unambiguously public.

Part 1 - Facebook

Facebook users can do a number of things that link them to an interest in a particular activity, from politics and sport to shopping and lifestyle. They can ‘like’ a particular page or post, be a member of a particular group, or they can discuss and share information on the topic themselves. These are analyzed by Facebook and presented as the ‘interests’ of each user.

Method: A publicly available application on Facebook – the ‘ads manager’ – can be used to determine the background - the age, gender and geographic location – of the Facebook users that have an interest in a particular topic. This was used to review the size and demographic breakdown of British Facebook users, between thirteen and twenty years of age that are interested in groups, behaviours or themes related to social action.

Overall landscape: 5.5 per cent (345,420) of British Facebook users between 13 and 20 were identified to have an interest related to social action, as depicted in Table 9.

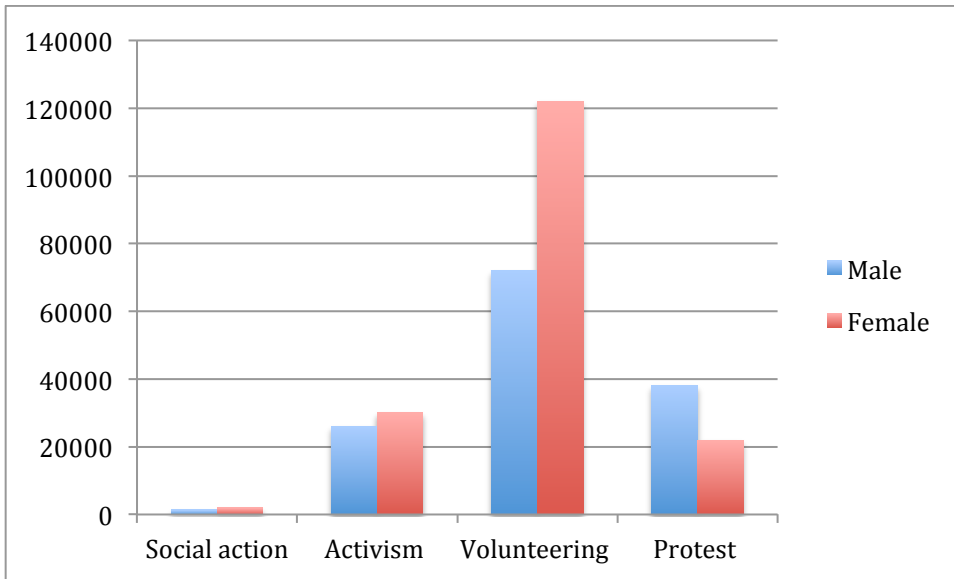
Table 9 – Facebook users who have an interest in social action

Search term	Audience size
Volunteering	192,000
Activism	56,000
Protest	42,000
Political campaign	19,200
Advocacy Group	5,600
Civil disobedience	5,600
Virtual volunteering	5,600
Demonstration (people)	5,200
Lobbying	5,200
Social actions	3,400
Advocacy	2,000
Student activism	1,480
Youth activism	1,360
Internet activism	380
Occupation (protest)	300
Youth participation	100
Total	345,420

Who likes social action? Differences within the UK

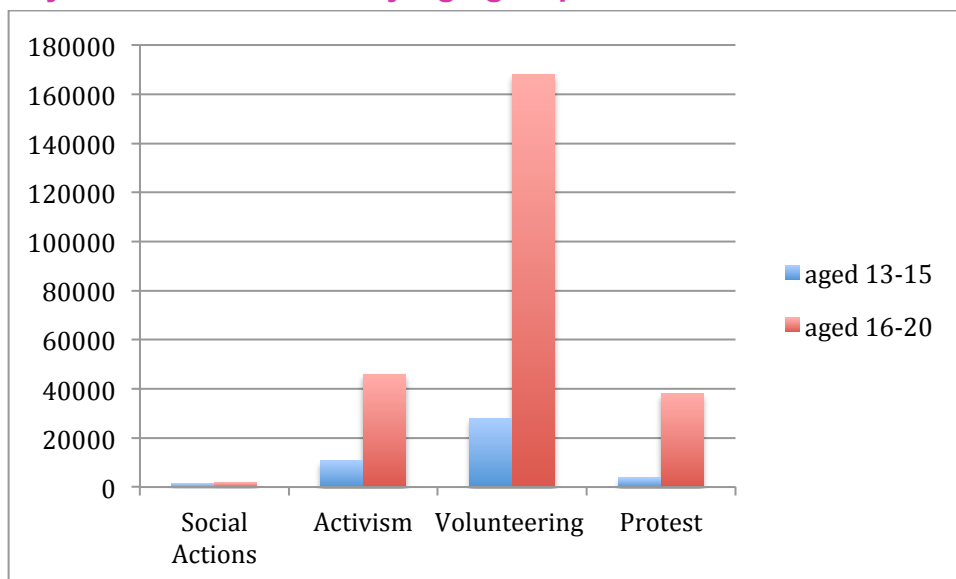
Further study was then conducted on the background of those 192,000 Facebook users that were interested in ‘volunteering’, the 56,000 that were interested in ‘activism’, the 42,000 for ‘protest’ (as wide and popular interests) and the 3,400 Facebook users that were interested in ‘social actions’ (as a more specific and less popular interest).

Figure 2: British Facebook users aged 13-20 that liked a social action key by gender



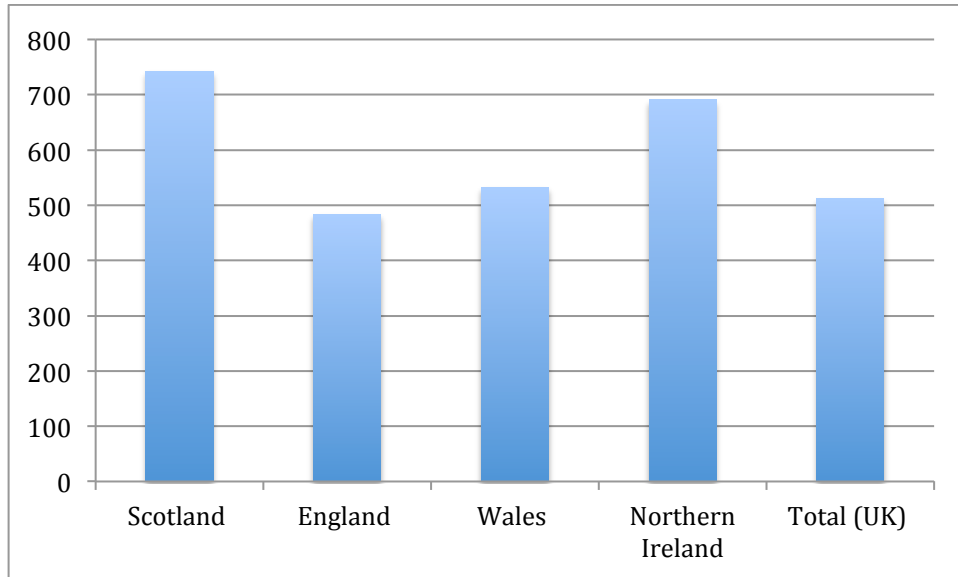
Of the British Facebook population under 20, around 49 per cent are male and 51 per cent are female

Figure 3: British Facebook users aged 13-20 that interested in a key social action term by age group



Of the British Facebook population aged between 13 20, 18 per cent are aged 13-15 and 81 per cent 16-20

Figure 4: Number of Facebook users aged between 13-20 per region of the UK interested in at least one of one of the four key terms per 10,000 Facebook users in that region aged 13-20



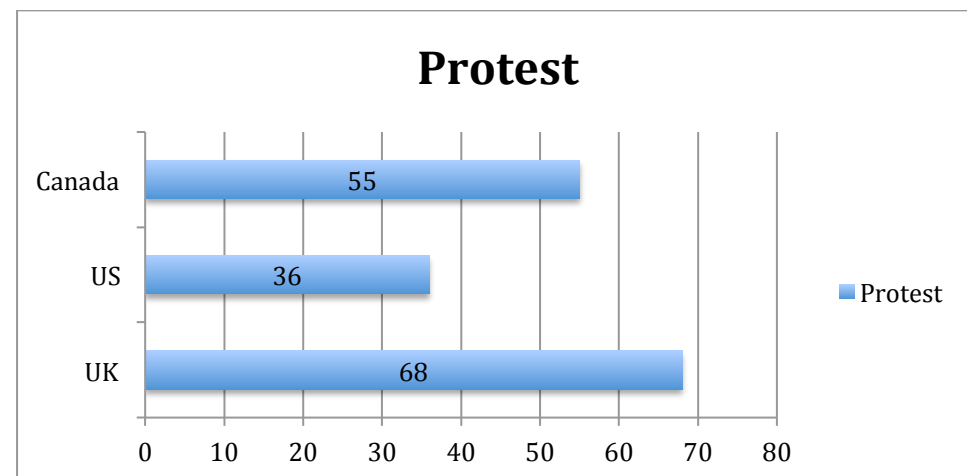
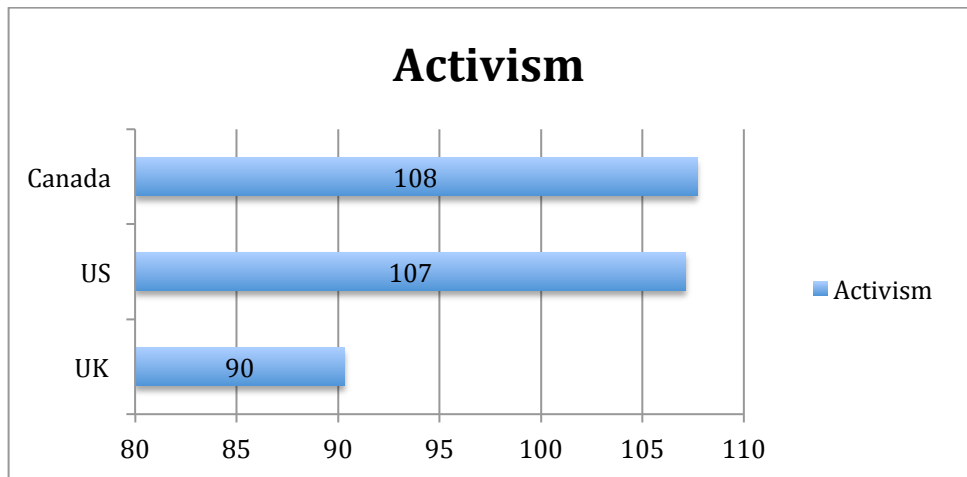
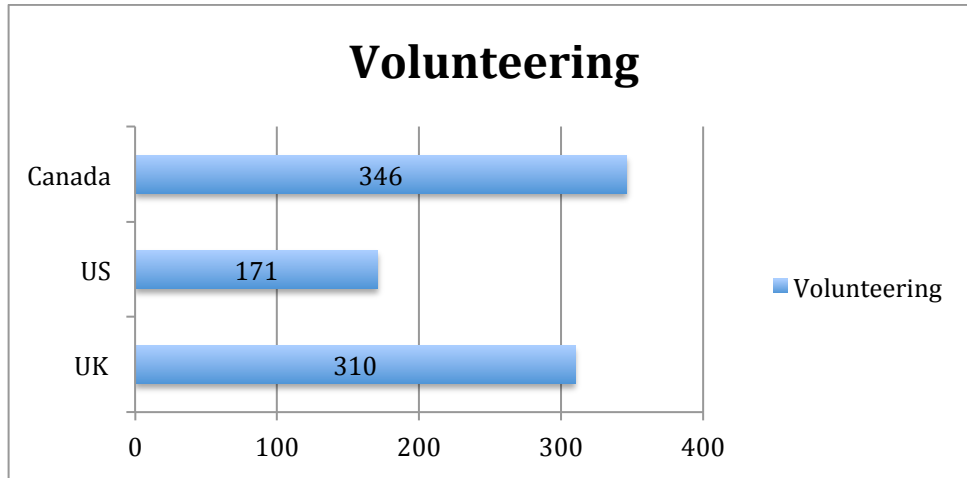
Aged 13-20, there are 460,000 Facebook users in Scotland, 240,000 in Wales, 134,000 in Northern Ireland and 4.8million in England

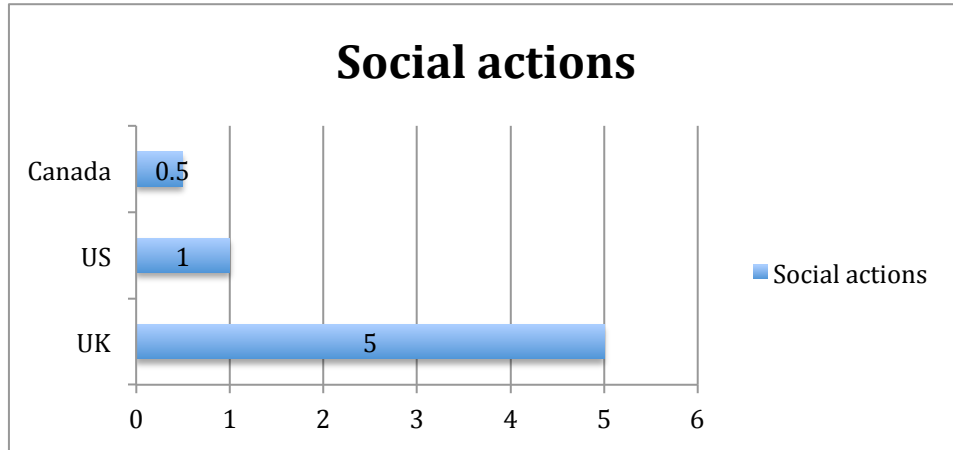
This preliminary study identifies a broad base of interest in social action by UK Facebook users. Of course, there are some visible demographic distinctions: females were more likely to be interested in volunteering and males in protesting, and Scottish and Northern Irish Facebook users were markedly more interested in social action than English or Welsh ones. Some consistencies were also marked: interest in social action across age was roughly proportional to the numbers of each age group on Facebook (there are many fewer people aged 13-15). However, overall, it shows that there is strong cross-regional, cross-age and cross-gender in social action.

Who likes social action? International Comparisons: United Kingdom, United States and Canada

The same method, using the same four key terms of ‘volunteering’, ‘protest’, ‘activism’ and ‘social action’ was then used to make preliminary comparisons of Facebook social action between the UK and Canada and the United States. The UK has 6.2 million Facebook users between 13 and 20 years of age; the United States has 28 million, while Canada has 2.6 million.

Figure 5: Number of Facebook users aged between 13-20 per country interested in one of the four key terms per 10,000 Facebook users in that country aged 13-20





This comparison identifies some differences between the UK, Canada and the US. A greater proportion of young people in Britain are interested in protest and ‘social actions’, substantially fewer in activism and roughly equivalent amounts in volunteering. These may reflect genuine differences in interest, or differences in how language is used to express broadly similar interests. As with the UK analysis, however, it most importantly shows what these countries have in common: substantial constituencies of young Facebook users identifiably interested in issues to do with social action.

Part 2 – Twitter

The chapter now moves to discuss Twitter. People use Twitter to micro-blog no more than a few sentences, a few individual images or links at a time. Twitter’s 200m active users (17 per cent of which are from the UK) together post 400m of these micro-blogs – Tweets – daily. The ‘tweet-stream’, a gushing torrent of constantly arriving Tweets, is a new layer of information in society. It is a chaotic and diverse deluge of digital commentary, arguments, discussions, questions and answers.

Method: to assess both (a) the quantity and (b) the kind of Tweets related to social action within the tweet-stream, a research strategy was developed to collect and analyze the data at great scale and breadth, but also allowed for deeper, detailed analysis to understand the subtleties and nuances of the data. This multi-level research methodology combined both automated and manual analysis around the use of a new technological methodology developed by CASM called **Digital Listening**.⁹⁵ It was used to:

- *Automatically collect Tweets* directly from Twitter that contained one of a number of key words (see below) related to social action, as they are posted in real-time.
- *Build ‘classifiers’ to understand them.* Tweets are created too rapidly, and in too large a quantity, for them to be understood by conventional social scientific research techniques. In order to understand them at scale, natural language processing was used. ‘Natural language processing’ (NLP) is a field of artificial intelligence research that combines approaches developed in the fields of computer science, applied mathematics, and linguistics. CASM technology was used to create ‘classifiers’, algorithms that automatically (and at great speed) place Tweets in one of a number of pre-defined categories of meaning. Classifiers are trained through a three-step process:
 - *Phase 1: Definition of categories.* A small, randomly sampled part of the dataset is manually read and its main contours and characteristics are noted. From this initial analysis, the categories that the algorithm will be trained on are defined.
 - *Phase 2: Creation of a Gold-standard baseline:* On the basis of this formal criterion, analysts manually ‘annotate’ or assign 100 Tweets one of the categories above. This creates a small ‘gold standard’ dataset that is used to test the classifier’s performance.
 - *Phase 3: Classifier Training:* The analyst manually annotates a set of tweets to train the machine learning classifier. The NLP algorithm looks for statistical correlations between the language used and the meaning expressed to arrive at a series of rules-based criteria. Having learned these associations, the computer applies this criteria to additional (and unseen) Tweets and categorises them along the same, inferred, lines as the examples it has been given.
- *Conduct additional manual qualitative research* from samples of Tweets to expose the nuances, meanings and significances that the automated procedures above cannot. This takes the form of manual ‘coding’ of Tweets into different categories, accompanied by an unstructured narrative. Consistent with a well-known

sociological method called grounded theory, the analyst moves iteratively and organically between the data and the codes that they place the data into, attempting to draw the codes out of the data rather than applying their own preconceptions, *a priori*, onto it.⁹⁶

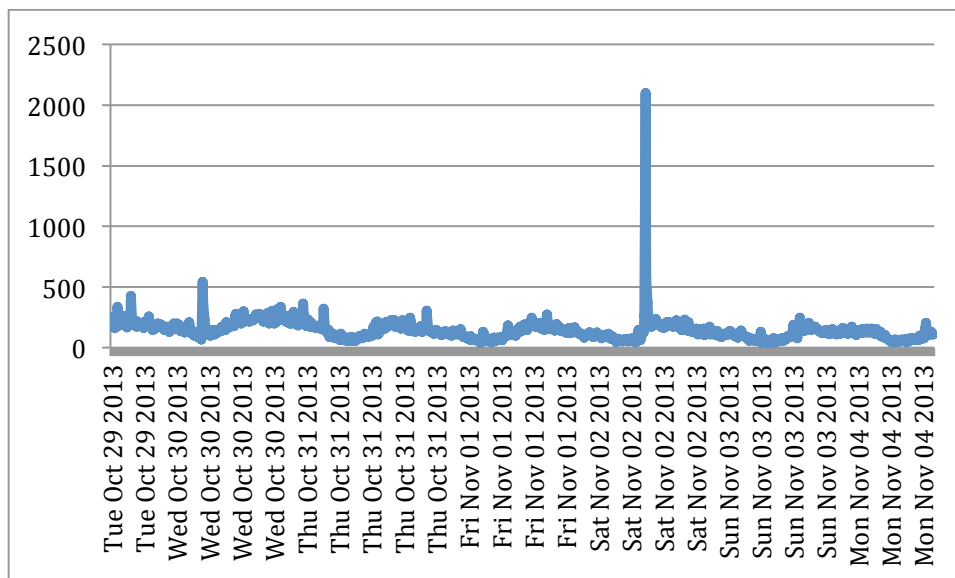
Preliminary Phase

A preliminary phase of analysis was conducted first. This was primarily to learn the contours of the data to inform the automated and manual analytical efforts of the main phase.

All the Tweets containing four keywords - 'volunteering', 'volunteer' and 'social action' that were posted between October 29th and November 4th 2013 were collected. This dataset totaled 124,559 Tweets.

First the volume of these Tweets over time was analyzed. It should be noted that the Tweets were not spread evenly during this time. A very large spike in volume of posted Tweets occurred around 11:20am on November 2nd.

Figure 6: Number of Tweets containing 'volunteering', 'volunteer' and 'social action' between October 29 and November 4th 2013



A single Tweet, re-tweeted over 2,000 times, was largely responsible for the spike:

NEW VIDEO: The Fault In Our Stars: Revisited! I went volunteering, and to catch you guys up with some old friends ;) <http://t.co/dPjJcw4ItD>

(see below for a further discussion of this).

Preliminary manual analysis

Of these 124,559 Tweets, 500 were randomly selected for qualitative analysis to understand how volunteering and social action were discussed.

The following initial observations were made:

‘Volunteering’ predominated over ‘social action’: The overwhelming majority of the sample - related to the terms ‘volunteer’ or ‘volunteering’. Very few Tweets related to ‘social action’ (less than 5 in 500).

A substantial number of irrelevant Tweets: Around 23 per cent of the sample were irrelevant. A large proportion of these tweets were in foreign language messages, while another common category was ‘Hunger Game’ quotes (‘I volunteer as tribute’).

Many charitable appeals: Around 25 per cent of Tweets were appeals by charities or volunteer organisations. Whilst these appeals occasionally asked for donation or sponsorship, the majority were for volunteers. Perhaps surprisingly, only between 7-8 per cent of these Tweets related to a specific crisis or emergency (for example floods in South East Asia or the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy). The remainder related to ongoing volunteering efforts:

“Volunteer Ecuador Galapagos Orphanage projects <https://t.co/oOyNMx6oF1> #goabroad #projectsabroad”

and

“Want to help? volunteer form here: <http://t.co/P5sTzgsJnP> & you can email ATXFlood@gmail.com & text [@ATXFlood](https://twitter.com/ATXFlood) to 23559 for announcements”

Twitter was used most commonly to discuss volunteering:

The largest single portion of Tweets, 32 per cent, was composed on people having conversations about volunteering. Around a third of these Tweets were about the Tweeter’s own activities as a volunteer:

“I'm volunteering at a school tomorrow, guys, and have to teach grade 1s c'est l'halloween. there are A LOT more verses than i remember...”

and

“Re-Activated my UCF application, signed up to volunteer w/ kids, and got kettle corn with chocolate, M,Ms , marshmallows! It's a good day!”

These conversations also included people’s aspirations to volunteer, or possible to learn more about it:

“I really want to volunteer at the animal shelter but I would probably just cry the whole time and try to hide all the animals in my car :/”

and

“@LifeProAdvices volunteer work? I didn't understand. Can u elaborate it?”

A small number (3 per cent) of these conversations discussed the utility of volunteering:

RT @CUCareerServ: Career enhancer: Volunteer! Improving others' lives will make yours better <http://t.co/qrBZA9V6B3> via #CareerBuffs Blog

Only 1 per cent of Tweets were links promoting news articles that mentioned volunteering. For example:

Samantha Cameron promotes social action in Glasgow - Samantha Cameron has visited a social enterprise project... <http://t.co/QlocAI1liO>

Celebrity tweets dominated discussions about social action:

Two celebrity Tweets accounted for around 15 per cent of the entire dataset. 4,772 Tweets (6 per cent of all Tweets gathered) were re-

tweets of a Tweet posted by Troye Sivan, an actor/artist with 602,703 followers:

“NEW VIDEO: The Fault In Our Stars: Revisited! I went volunteering, and to catch you guys up with some old friends ;) <http://t.co/dPjJcw4ItD>”

9,025 Tweets (9 per cent of all Tweets gathered) were re-tweets of a Tweet by Justin Bieber (46,892,898 Twitter followers) which links to a video showing Bieber discussing his volunteering in Guatemala.

“Watch: @JustinBieber posts heartfelt video reflecting upon his recent trip to Guatemala. <http://t.co/nwYv3XXov4>”

Main phase

Based on this initial analysis, we expanded the sampling terms to incorporate more terms the researchers believed were relevant.

Data collection: All Tweets posted between November 7 and November 15 containing one of the keywords "mentors", "voluntary interns", "campaigner", "charity worker", "campaign worker", "immersion", "social programme", "social project", "immersion program", "charity work", "mentoring" were collected. 56,088 Tweets were collected. They were subjected to three levels of analysis.

Level 1 – Use of Classifier to filter for relevancy: This dataset was manually inspected and found to contain relevant Tweets that discussed social action in ways broadly within the ambit of this project, but also Tweets that were irrelevant. A classifier was trained to make a decision about whether each Tweet was either (a) relevant or (b) irrelevant to social action.

38,698 Tweets were found to be **relevant**.

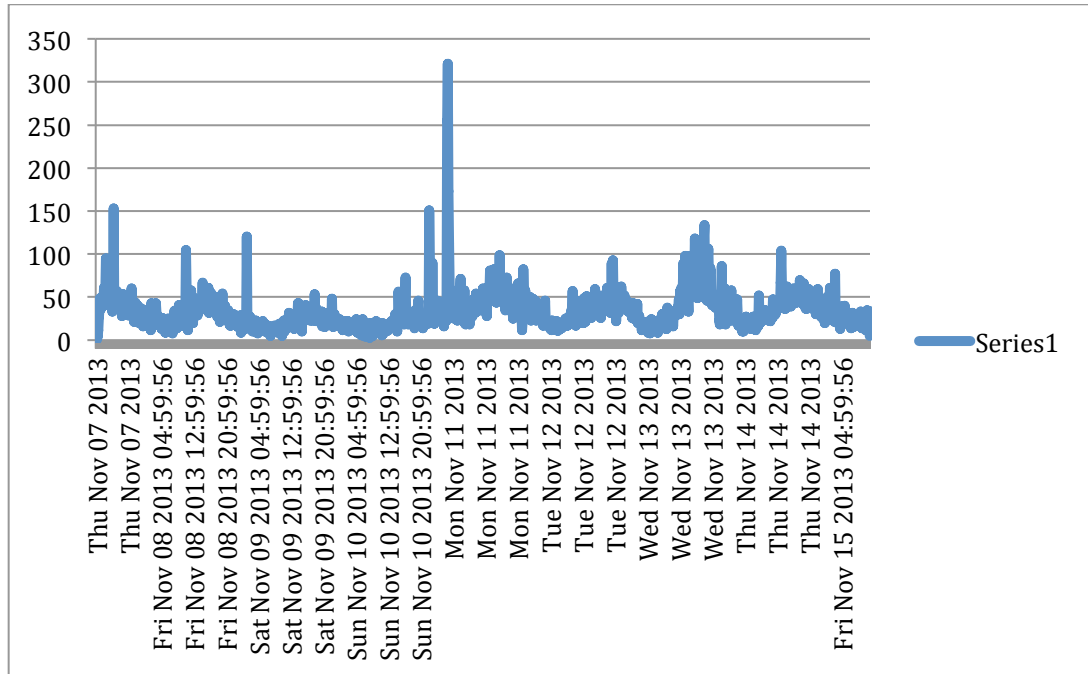
17,390 Tweets were found to be **irrelevant**.

(The classifier had a measured accuracy of 77 per cent)

The volume of Tweets considered by the classifier ‘relevant’ to social action were plotted over time. As the table above shows, conversations

about social action were sustained throughout the period of analysis, with a marked, sharp peak of the number of conversations on November 11th.

Figure 7: Volume of Tweets 'relevant' to social action over time



Level 2 - Making the key distinction between 'mentoring' and 'non-mentoring' Tweets: The dataset of Tweets 'relevant' to social action were then assessed. It was manually observed that a very high proportion of this dataset were discussing the issue of 'mentoring', either being a mentor or receiving mentorship in a number of different contexts. In order to measure the extent to which conversations about mentoring predominated over other conversations related to social action, a second classifier was trained to automatically classify tweets as either (a) related to mentoring, (b) not related to mentoring or (c) irrelevant. The classifier found that:

The vast majority of Tweets, 32,190, were **related to mentoring**.

A smaller minority, 4724 Tweets, **were relevant to social action but did not discuss mentoring**.

1784 Tweets were **irrelevant to social action**.

(The classifier had a measured accuracy of 87 per cent).

Of the 32,190 ‘mentoring’ Tweets:

Around 40 per cent (12909) were re-posts of another Tweet (a ‘re-tweet’): This high proportion indicates that a smaller number of heavily re-tweeted ‘power-users’ are prominent in the discussion.

Around a third (10,530) shared a link: this implies that external sources – whether news, commentary, references, other websites – are important reference points for conversations on Twitter about mentoring, and may powerfully drive and influence them.

Only 7 per cent (2523) were replies to another user: suggesting that most of the conversations about mentoring on Twitter were posted with the intention to broadcast a message to a larger number of users rather than to sustain conversations with a small number of specific users.

Of the 4724 ‘non-mentoring’ Tweets:

Close to half - 44 per cent (2085) – were re-tweets. As above, this suggests that power-users powerfully influence discussions about social action on Twitter.

32 per cent (1513) of the tweets linked to material external to Twitter. Again, it is an indication that external sources, such as news, commentary and analysis, drive and influence social media discussions about social action.

11 per cent (528) were replies to another Twitter-user: this implies that there was a small but visible presence of sustained conversations considered to be relevant to social action.

Both the mentoring and non-mentoring datasets were then manually assessed. Whilst some mentoring tweets were seen to have value to the project, the value of the mentoring dataset overall was more varied: many of the Tweets were discussing mentoring on commercial or private contexts not clearly relevant to social action. A decision was therefore taken to conduct more detailed analysis of the non-mentoring dataset.

Level 3 – Looking in detail at the non-mentoring Tweets about social action

Once the scale of Tweets broadly discussing an issue related to social action had been understood, the project then deployed manual, qualitative analysis to understand more closely the kind of data that existed.

Researchers manually analysed five hundred tweets selected at random and coded each Tweet in two dimensions, (a) how people were talking about social action and (b) where mentioned, the specific kinds of social action that were discussed.

(a) How people were talking about social action

Four categories of usage were found:

Category 1: People discussing their experience or attitudes toward the subject (47 per cent)

Forty seven per cent of tweets were judged to include some discussion by the twitter user about their views toward charity or voluntary work. This was found to be a fairly broad category, which included a number of fairly distinct ways in which this views were expressed.

A small proportion – around one in five of the tweets in this category, included some specific mention of the work they are doing, have been doing, or would like to do in relation to charitable work. For example:

Heading to do some #charity work at the salvation army this morning

i would happily do charity work

*doing charity work with school does that make me a good person? gtg
xxx#charity*

*Really wanna do some sort of charity work this Christmas #GivingBack
#4daDot*

Very occasionally, this was a negative comment on some aspect of that work, or charity in general:

Rt @laurenisabelong: So relief operations for NSTP is REQUIRED.. fml i hate it when people make charity work a requirement it's so abusive

A larger proportion covered some opinion about work that others were doing, such as the following (a subject which generated a lot of traffic):

zayn has done-charity work-donated money-seen sick kids-cares for usbut he still never gets enough attention

charity work #EMAZing Justin Bieber

A large proportion, approximately one third, used twitter to comment on a specific event, but use that to express some kind of opinion about the principle of charitable work, even if indirectly. This could include reference to celebrities' work, or members of their friends or family network:

Welcome @bchrist14 who is on staff at @cchscool. They have a tremendous history of charity work in #hs4 #catholicedchat

#WeDay... Everyone in this audience EARNED their seat by doing charity work. So inspiring.. 20 000 kids.. WOW!!

<http://t.co/Iv1xyM3Tbp>

*RIP Steve Prescott legend both on & off the field always be remembered for his tireless charity work his family should be v proud of him**

Category 2: using Twitter as a means to campaign (11 per cent)

Approximately eleven per cent of tweets were judged to be a way in which individuals were attempting to use Twitter as a form of social action in and of itself. For example a number of users were express direct support for a campaign, and encourage others to join:

Save Hove campaigner in new battle to restore her collapsed ceiling ...

<http://t.co/bnJMbVcSA> #breckland #sia

Beeline Britain: LeJog in a straight line. Let's support these adventurers doing some great charity work. <http://t.co/vQOJMVuAak>

* This was a very popular line, repeated in various formats dozens of times.

Often, that would take the form of users trying to draw the attention of celebrities, journalists or other users to significant issues, we assume to raise awareness of the subject;

@ShaukatAli Watch @rochellemonite fellow campaigner 4 careworkers take on boss of Allied #zerohrs contracts/non payment NMW @Channel4News.

@TheRealRyanHiga Remember your Honk for Japan video? What about another charity work for the Philippines? #PrayForThePhilippines ??????

For a relatively small proportion, Twitter was used to raise awareness by users of their own fundraising or charitable efforts (this was either individuals or organisations). For example:

Welcome and support my charity work in Africa. Like share and support my work <http://t.co/TAoWLdVPCa>

setting up a relief fund for our filipino exotics plz messages us if intrested Let help out our fellow Exotics n do charity work for EXO

We are proud to be partnering with @PrathamUK; their #Charity work helps India's illiterate children. Have a look at <http://t.co/kPsVRZrP2K>

Want to use #socialmedia for social good? Sign up now to become a social campaigner: <http://t.co/fQdNcdRaLk>

It is our opinion, based on other research we have undertaken that this category is likely to be significantly under represented due to the way data are collected. (There are, for example, a large number of online campaigns and protests that are launched and shared on Twitter, but do not include the search terms we selected. To determine the full extent of this category would, we believe, require further work).

Category 3: sharing a news story or link (25 per cent)

Twenty-five per cent of tweets were users sharing stories – usually mainstream media stories – or links to stories with other users, with very little additional commentary. It is difficult to determine the reasons why people share stories on Twitter: whether it is an implicit act of support, or more simple an expression of interest. These were

clustered around a small number of stories that had broken on around the time the data were collected. The most voluminous of these were the following:

Britain's oldest campaigner Hetty Bower dies aged 108: Ed Miliband leads tributes to "remarkable fighter for justice" <http://t.co/2PsG8T56f6>

Campaigner-In-Chief .@BarackObama To Hit Three Star Studded Hollywood Fundraisers <http://t.co/u5LJAthUQ2>

'Prince Charles is Britain's longest-serving and most effective environmental campaigner' <http://t.co/NSoQ8GzeXC> #Charlesat65

Occasionally this included a short comment, such as an expression of support:

Nice one @MatthewMcVarish - Campaigner gives hope to Luxembourg child sex abuse survivors: <http://t.co/eExgTDtVUL>

Category 4: Other (17 per cent)

Seventeen per cent of tweets were judged to be irrelevant, or extremely difficult to accurately classify, even with a human analyst making the decisions. This included humour:

**likes your selfie* well thats enough charity work for today*

It also included uses that the researchers could not determine, but may have been generated by automatic 'bots' (fake accounts):

love me for charity work on your résumé

(b) the specific kinds of social action that were discussed

Of the 500 analyzed Tweets, around 10 per cent - 51 - mentioned a specific cause:

Table 10 – Tweets mentioning a specific cause

Cause	Quantity
Disaster relief in the Philippines	5
International Development	5
Supporting Care Workers	5
Children in need	4
Climate Change	3
Medical work	3
Payday Loans	3
Homelessness	3
Animal Rights	2
State corruption	2
Farm Animal Welfare	2
Female Genital Mutilation	2
Nuclear safety	2
Disability rights	1
Illiteracy overseas	1
Anti-page 3	1
Equality/Social Justice	1
The Croydon Incinerator	1
'Bedroom Tax'	1
Female Rights	1
The Living Wage	1
Veterans	1
Badgers (anti-cull)	1

Conclusions

Our analysis below begins to provide an initial insight, but further data collection and analysis is needed. Moreover, the internet remains a fast-moving environment. The social media websites and methods of interacting change with increasing rapidity.

Social media have created new digital spaces significant to social action:

- Social media are ‘campaign forums’: active and vigorous spaces which people use to raise awareness, drive home a point or an issue, pursue additional support and find willing volunteers.
- Social media are also forums where people discuss social action more widely – its pros and cons, its importance to them, and its utility and importance to their lives and careers.

It can be a powerful and useful source of information for understanding the role of social action in the UK today:

- **Very large amounts of freely available information:** it is often expensive to gather attitudinal information – to employ interviewers, mail surveys or and incentivise panels of participants. In sharp contrast, 180,647 Tweets were collected, and around 300,000 on Facebook were researched, for free.
- **Real-time information:** Social media, especially Twitter, reflects conversations about social action in real-time, as they happen. Researching it can therefore provide a window into the UK’s living debate on social action, in time to be able to react and take advantage of new developments or opportunities.

However, there are important limitations to this kind of research:

- **Social media data is challenging to understand:** It is difficult to collect large numbers of relevant conversations without also gathering large amounts of irrelevant conversations. Social media data is additionally often taken out of its context, and is consequently ambiguous, fragmentary or unclear. On Twitter, the

geographical origin of conversations about social action is also often unclear.

- **Social media research is a new research discipline:** The methods, tools and technologies needed to research social action on social media are new, experimental and often untested. Their full range of strengths and weaknesses are unknown, and it is unclear where they can be most effectively and reliably used.

RECOMMENDATIONS: RESEARCH PRIORITIES GOING FORWARD

Social action continues to occur within a context of continuous societal change. Attitudes and priorities towards social action will change, as will the possibilities, opportunities and reasons to do it. The campaign must swim with this current. It must continue to improve, to learn from its mistakes and successes, and to know and reflect the changes in the wider society that it serves.

The core research priorities of the campaign should continue to be:

- Further mapping of social action opportunities across the education, business, wider voluntary and public sectors, for example through an interactive mapping tool such as the one created by Generation Change and available at:

<http://www.generationchange.org.uk/social-action-map.html>

- Further research to understand the double benefit of impact to individuals and communities
- Exploring how to apply the principles of high quality social action at different age ranges
- Exploring how best to engage young people in social action across demographics

This report sets out the known participation levels of social action, but more and better data is needed going forward to measure the campaign's success. The Community Life survey run by the Cabinet Office represents the best vehicle to do this.

The campaign is calling on the Cabinet Office to pledge to:

- Shape the questions used to act as a source of data for youth social action participation
- Invest in a booster to increase the proportion of respondents to the survey aged 16-20

- Extend the survey to young people aged 10-16 or work in partnership with existing surveys to include the same questions as the Community Life survey for this younger age group
- Provide analysis on the 10-20 age group on a regular basis

This would allow for a consistent and robust method of gathering of data across the life of the campaign that would be a very significant contribution to understanding the impact of high quality social action.

To utilise the opportunities presented by social media, we recommend that the campaign:

Harness celebrity's digital power: Social media is often dominated by a small number of 'power users' – highly followed, highly engaged celebrities. Our research shows not only that these individuals have a large audience online, but that this audience are active participants: re-tweeting and discussing messages, and co-opting these messages to spread them even further through their own networks. The campaign must use these digital super-nodes to support social action online.

Harness specific events: Social media are subject to surging, viral groundswells in interest on any given theme. The ability to research it in real-time opens the door for the Campaign to harness relevant events – whether an important news story, a meme or a popular debate - as they happen. It is possible to promote social action opportunities and pathways to people in a way that is relevant to them, and to their current priorities, concerns and interests.

Know the causes: In addition to specific conversations about social action, there are wider debates on social media about the issues that concern people. Researching them can provide powerful and up-to-date contributions to decisions about which issues and opportunities should be supported and promoted.

Find the social action aspirants online: the research also found that people turn to social media to express a desire to do social action, or an unhappiness that they are not doing more. This was found to be particularly prevalent in the context of Christmas. This research indicates that it would be possible to build technology to be

able to reach these individuals, and provide them meaningful pathways to turn their aspirations into concrete action.

Exploit social media for international social action: The research found that many of the topics of concern – from climate change and disaster relief in the Philippines to tackling overseas illiteracy – were international ones. It also found that there were sizeable social action constituencies in Canada and the United States as well as the United Kingdom. The Campaign should exploit the great power of social media to facilitate the collaboration of people who have closely aligned interests but are geographically far apart to create international communities of interest for social action.

Support social action sharing: The analysis also indicated that people use social media to talk about their own experiences of social action. Many of the people who spoke about it were proud of what they've done and wanted to tell others. If supported and structured, this kind of sharing can provide opportunities for further take-up. The Campaign should consider equipping volunteers with digital sign-up tools, video-journaling, drawing or other tools to allow their volunteers to create sharable, visual content that details their experiences and what they feel they have gained through social action.

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We know that youth social action – practical action in the service of others – can have tremendous benefits for the young people taking part and the communities they serve. Social action includes everything from volunteering, to activism, mentoring, civic participation and fundraising. Tackling tomorrow’s social and economic problems requires a new generation of activists and active citizens raised on social action. *Service Generation* sets out to uncover exactly what we know about social action in the UK: how many young people take part, the details of what they are doing and the impact it is having on their character and their local communities.

This report is published to support the launch of Step Up To Serve, a new cross-sector campaign which aims to achieve over 50 per cent of British young people between the ages of 10 and 20 taking part in high quality social action projects by 2020. With the Prince of Wales as the its Royal Patron, and the strong support of all three of Britain’s major political parties, the campaign aims to achieve a once-in-a-generation step-change in attitudes to social action, such that it becomes a habit for life and something we come to expect everyone to take part in.

The campaign has set an ambitious target and this report has some ideas on how to achieve it. First, it is crucial to recapture the spirit of London 2012: the Olympics inspired young people in particular to volunteer and there is some evidence that this has continued, but more can be done. Second, social action opportunities need to be more accessible for all young people, and greater involvement of the education and business sector will be especially important. Third, analysis by CASM finds that social media have created new digital spaces significant to social action: this should be harnessed through celebrity endorsements and event-specific social media campaigns. And finally, measurement of this is crucial – Demos calls on the Cabinet Office to supplement the Community Life Survey to ensure that any gains from the campaign are captured.

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