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# #iwill Fund Learning Hub Evidence Workstream

The Socio-Economic Participation Gap in Youth Social Action

Dartington Service Design Lab

March 2019

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## About the #iwill Fund Learning Hub

This is a report by the #iwill Fund Learning Hub. The #iwill Fund Learning Hub was commissioned to support, and build on, the activities of the #iwill Fund. It has two strategic objectives:

1. To inform the strategic and investment direction of the #iwill Fund. This will ensure that the Leadership Board and #iwill Fund delivery partners are able to target funds into the right areas, ages and approaches, where it is really needed.
2. To strengthen and connect the youth social action sector by enabling and facilitating the sharing of learning, data and insights across delivery partners, including what does and doesn't work. Sharing key insights and learning more broadly within the wider youth social action sector.

The Learning Hub has developed three workstreams which will support its objectives. This will allow us to support funders in making decisions about how to support youth social action now, and to capitalise on the evidence generated through the #iwill Fund to create a legacy of evidence to support funding and delivery in the future.

### 1) Systems

This work will develop our understanding of barriers and enablers in building and strengthening sustained youth social action. It will support the identification of emerging practice and the testing of potential new solutions as well as to help guide investment decisions.

#### **(a) Systems Mapping**

Co-production workshops, supported by research briefings, will build the understanding of barriers to, and opportunities for, embedding and sustaining youth social action in three priority themes: education, place, and the relationship between youth social action and 'all ages' social action. Workshops are attended by Match Funders, invited grantees, and other invited stakeholders. (Sept 2018 – Mar 2019)

#### **(b) Funder Collaboration**

A series of 'Lab Storms' will be offered to Match Funders to enable a collaborative approach to identify common challenges, and to find and share actionable responses to them. The Lab Storms will support Match Funders to fund as effectively as possible (April 2019 – April 2021).

### 2) Sector Evidence Plan

This work will build our understanding of what youth social action achieves, how to reach under-served groups, and how to sustain youth social action (Aug 2018 – ongoing). It will

draw on these four information sources to develop and evolve answers to key questions:

- Intra-fund evaluation aggregation
- Extra-fund research aggregation
- Match Funder returns to the Fund #iwill Fund and data from Information Management System
- Results from other workstreams.

### 3) Quality Practice

This work will deepen our understanding of what it takes to deliver quality youth social action. It will illustrate how delivery organisations define 'double benefit' and how they attempt to both achieve and measure it. This work will support delivery organisations to improve their offer (September 2018 – ongoing). 'The Impact Accelerator', delivered by Generation Change, is an intensive process of impact support, challenge and development – up to 30 organisations will take part in this. Learning from these organisations will be shared more widely to spread knowledge about improvement across the youth social action landscape.

## Introduction

This paper is one of a series released as part of the #iwill Fund Learning Hub's Sector Evidence Plan workstream. It takes as its focus the gap in youth social action participation based on young people's socio-economic status.

Engaging (which covers recruitment, retention, completion, and transition) more young people from lower socio-economic groups to participate in youth social action is one the four investment drivers of the #iwill Fund. The paper presents what is known about the gap in participation, the likely drivers of the gap and potential effective approaches to recruiting more young people from lower socio-economic groups. It aims to support the #iwill Fund Leadership Board, Match Funders and delivery organisations so each are able to make better, more informed decisions in attempting to drive up participation. This paper is published beyond the #iwill Fund to inform other funders and stakeholders.

Information in this paper is drawn from published research, and from internal reports shared with the #iwill Fund Learning Hub by Match Funders. We anticipate that the volume of relevant information, particularly on what seems to work (or not) in recruiting young people from lower socio-economic groups, will grow as a result of the #iwill Fund. We will update this paper over time in the light of this.

It should be noted that although increased participation of young people from lower socio-economic groups is an investment driver for the #iwill Fund, this is not about ‘closing the gap’ by decreasing recruitment from higher socio-economic groups.

## Data on the socio-economic participation gap in youth social action

The likelihood that a young person participates in social action is associated with their household’s socio-economic status.<sup>i</sup> The National Youth Social Action Survey found that 51% of young people (10-20 years old) from the most affluent backgrounds took part in some form of social action in 2017 compared with 32% of the least affluent.<sup>ii</sup> An analysis of data from the first four years of the National Youth Social Action Survey suggests that the most affluent young people are around 20% more likely to volunteer than their least well-off peers.<sup>iii</sup>

These findings are not a surprise. There is a similar link between socio-economic status and volunteering for adults which is both well-established and confirmed by new research in the UK.<sup>iv,v</sup> Moreover, the youth social action participation gap mirrors other socio-economic inequalities, including access to extra-curricular opportunities and levels of physical activity.<sup>vi,vii</sup> The latest estimates for the gap between the most and least affluent young people’s participation in social action and extra-curricular activities (including sport, performing arts and social clubs) are remarkably alike (51% vs 32% for social action; 66% vs. 46% for extra-curriculars).<sup>viii</sup>

Policies that seek to promote participation in youth social action are motivated by two complementary perspectives on the benefits of participation.<sup>ix</sup> First, youth social action has been associated with a range of positive outcomes for a young person who participates including employment outcomes, attitudes to education, personal wellbeing and a sense of community. Initiatives to close the socio-economic participation gap are therefore justified on the grounds that unequal access to youth social action contributes to an unequal distribution of these benefits across society. The second perspective views wider participation in youth social action as a form of civic engagement which has been linked with a more cohesive and democratic society. Diversity of participation in youth social action is therefore important in order to bring more of society together.

Which of these two perspectives is adopted makes a difference to the design, implementation and funding of initiatives that addresses the participation gap. The first, ‘individual’ perspective, for example, may lead to the creation of targeted programmes that offer opportunities to participate in youth social actions only to young people from lower socio-economic groups. The second, ‘societal’ perspective might encourage the design of programmes that aim to recruit a diverse group of young people including those from higher and lower socio-economic groups.

The socio-economic gap in youth social action participation should not be considered in isolation from other domains of social inequality. Different manifestations of inequality do not just add up with one another but intersect to produce quite different experiences.<sup>x</sup> BAME girls' experiences of youth social action, for example, differ from the experiences of both white girls and BAME boys.<sup>xi</sup> It is difficult to estimate with confidence the associations between, for example, ethnicity and social action participation because sample sizes for minority groups in national surveys are often too small to draw firm conclusions. The most statistically robust research relates to adult social action and finds that White British people are over-represented among volunteers compared with BAME groups.<sup>xii</sup> Despite challenges measuring the aggregate effect of factors such as gender, race and sexual orientation on social action participation, they should not be overlooked at the level of policy or programme design.

## What causes the gap?

This section reviews the research evidence that explores the causes of the socio-economic participation gap in youth social action. While there are many factors which have been found to correlate with social action participation, including those identified by the National Youth Social Action surveys, we focus here on research which has sought to understand these correlated factors in order to produce a coherent explanation for the presence of the participation gap. An effort to use the raw correlations identified by the National Youth Social Action surveys in a theory explaining the participation gap would be a fruitful direction for further research.

Young people from socio-economically advantaged households are the children of parents who have higher socio-economic status. The positive relationship between socio-economic status and adult volunteering is consistently observed regardless of whether status is measured in terms of income, education or occupation.<sup>xiii</sup>

A parent's socio-economic status is predictive not just of their own participation in social action but also the participation of their children. There are theories that attempt to explain the socio-economic gap in youth social action participation which focus on how parents' volunteering behaviours are reproduced in their children. These, and others, are described below. All of them have potential implications for programme design and delivery, as well as for the strategic direction of investment.

**Socialisation theory.** Young people 'inherit' the role of social action participant through their parents' actions and words.

Socialisation theory focuses on the fact that participation in social action is part of a social role that has to be learned. Children learn a great deal about the social roles they are expected and able to play from their parents who establish expectations through explicit communication and by role modelling. According to socialisation theories, young people from more affluent backgrounds are

more likely to volunteer because their parents are more likely to tell them – and show them – that social action is important and that it is something that they can and should do.

An international study found that children were more likely to intend to do something to improve society, and to act on that intention, if their parents “emphasised the need to be attentive to others, especially those less fortunate than themselves”.<sup>xiv</sup> However, as Musick and Wilson said in their seminal social profile of volunteers, “it is far from clear that teaching values has much effect on children unless the parents exhibit behaviour to their children consistent with those values”.<sup>xv</sup> The number of family members involved in social activity also matters. A survey of American teenagers found that 78% of those whose parents volunteered were volunteers themselves compared with 48% whose parents were not volunteers. Where both parents and siblings volunteered, 86% of teenagers were also volunteers compared to 38% where no family members volunteer.<sup>xvi</sup>

The role of ‘social action participant’ cannot be considered in isolation from the roles that children from different socio-economic backgrounds are expected to play. Based on an analysis of data from the Understanding Society survey, Bennet and Parameshwaran have argued that participation in social action achieves a similar purpose as accessing higher-status cultural activities, namely, as a signal of an individual’s higher status.<sup>xvii</sup> This explanation of the socio-economic gap positions youth social action participation as part of a high-status role that more affluent children are more likely to learn.

**Status transmission.** More affluent young people are more likely to participate in social action because of the socio-economic advantages they inherit from their parents.

Status transmission refers to parents passing on socio-economic resources to their children. According to this explanation of the socio-economic gap in youth social action participation, “children follow their parents’ example in volunteering because they inherit their parents’ socio-economic status.”<sup>xviii</sup> This includes material and financial resources, the benefits of the parents’ social network and social, cultural and physical capital.

Jon Dean provides an illustration of status transmission based on qualitative research in the UK. “The engaged young people are also the ones most likely to receive support from parents and families to take part in such activities [youth social action]; in giving lifts to attend activities or money for bus fares, and as a result “hoover up” good activities, using their cultural and economic capital to their advantage.”<sup>xix</sup>

The status transmission hypothesis includes three causal explanations for the socio-economic participation gap.<sup>xx</sup>

- i. *Direct pathway.* Parental status affects volunteering regardless of the child's education. Children from more affluent background volunteer more because they inherit their parents' higher socio-economic status and resources.
- ii. *Indirect pathway.* Parental status affects education which determines participation in youth social action. Children of higher-status parents attain higher educational qualifications which cause them to be more likely to participate in social action.
- iii. *Present environment.* Households with higher socio-economic status provide resources that enable young people to participate in social action.

A large-scale, longitudinal study from the United States in 1982 concluded that all three pathways are relevant in determining young people's participation in youth social action.<sup>xxi</sup> While we did not identify any similar research that is more recent or UK-specific, the consistent prevalence of a socio-economic participation gap in social action across times and countries suggests the findings are relevant to the current UK context.

**Recruitment.** Young people from higher socio-economic groups are more likely to be recruited to participate in youth social action.

Socialisation theory and status transmission focus on the mechanisms by which young people from higher socio-economic groups inherit a greater disposition and ability to participate in youth social action than their peers from lower socio-economic backgrounds. A different set of explanations of the socio-economic gap in youth social action participation focuses on how young people are recruited to participate in social action.

Adults, unsurprisingly, are more likely to volunteer if they have been asked to volunteer.<sup>xxii</sup> In Brodie and colleagues' model of pathways to participation in social action, being asked to volunteer is a *trigger*, one of four conditions required for an individual to volunteer alongside *motivation*, *resources* and *opportunity*.<sup>xxiii</sup> Based on their analysis of National Youth Social Action survey data, Hogg and de Vries found that the absence of a trigger was by far the most common reason reported by young people for not participating in social action.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Two recent qualitative studies have shown how young people from higher socio-economic groups are more likely to be recruited to participate in youth social action. Spaaij and Storr found that young people who had higher attainment and better behaviour at school were more likely to be nominated by their school for a prestigious sport volunteering programme.<sup>xxv</sup> The authors attributed this pattern to schools' desire to protect and enhance their reputation through the young people they send to the programme.

Dean's research focused on volunteer brokerage workers. He found that due to constraints placed on them by ambitious national targets (one million youth volunteering opportunities created) and limited resources these workers focus their efforts on recruiting middle class young people who were more inclined to volunteer.<sup>xxvi</sup> The brokerage worker perceived that young people from

higher socio-economic group required less support to find and maintain a voluntary placement. This might be attributed to greater support from parents or peers to volunteer or a greater motivation to volunteer internalised by more affluent young people through the process of socialisation described above. A small qualitative study found evidence that confirms this perception, observing that in contrast to middle class young people, working class young people's routes into sport volunteering were based on chance events and support from coaches rather than being situated within a longer-term plan.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Moreover, a review of the literature around young people and volunteering found that volunteering infrastructures – organisations and institutions that provide and broker volunteering opportunities to young people – were substantially stronger in areas of socio-economic advantage.<sup>xxviii</sup> This would compound the issues identified that young people from lower socio-economic groups are less likely to volunteer without a non-parental intervention and are less likely to receive this intervention even when volunteer brokerage infrastructure is in place.

In 2017, 65% of young people doing social action got involved through school or college.<sup>xxix</sup> This is clearly an important pathway through which young people engage with youth social action. However, the 2015 Schools Omnibus Survey found a significant gap in teachers' perceptions of their school's culture of youth social action with just 27% of Primary teachers in schools with a high percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals saying social action is embedded there, compared with 57% of Primary teachers with few pupils eligible for free school meals.<sup>xxx</sup> Young people from lower socio-economic groups may be less likely to encounter youth social action opportunities through their school than their more affluent peers.

These studies suggest that youth social action recruitment strategies can reinforce socio-economic differences in young people's likelihood of participation. "The shape of policy delivery makes it convenient for volunteering workers to build on these advantages, rather than challenge them."<sup>xxxi</sup>

**Exclusive definition.** The dominant definition of youth social action excludes forms of social action performed by young people from lower socio-economic groups.

A fourth perspective on the socio-economic gap in youth social action participation suggests that the true gap may not be as large the one measured by national surveys. Based on his analysis of General Household Survey data, Colin Williams has argued that the commonly used definition of community participation (similar to social action) reflects a culture of participation characteristic of areas with a concentration of people of higher socio-economic status.<sup>xxxii</sup>

A forthcoming qualitative study involving both participants and non-participants in youth social action found that those not currently engaged in social action (by the commonly used definition) defined the concept, "more in terms of aspects that are closer to their daily lives (such as helping



family members with caring duties),” as opposed to “broader social issues such as climate change.”<sup>xxxiii</sup>

The definition of social action used by the National Youth Social Action survey excludes activities such as helping family members. This suggests that people from lower socio-economic groups would personally define an activity that they are engaged in – helping family members, for example – as social action, but the formal definition does not encompass this.

The #iwill Fund Learning Hub will address the issue of defining and categorising youth social action in a later paper in this series.

## Approaches to increasing recruitment of young people from lower socio-economic groups

This section lays out some approaches to tackling the socio-economic gap in youth social action participation. First, we explore recommendations made by researchers studying youth social action based on their analyses of the gap’s causes. Then, we present approaches that have been tried in practice, including some from the unprecedented wave of programmes that have been supported through the #iwill Fund. These are further divided in two.

**Promising approaches** have demonstrated the potential to engage young people from lower socio-economic groups in youth social action. One is from an #iwill Fund-supported programme, the other is not.

**Emerging approaches** are grounded in a theory of how to engage young people from lower socio-economic groups in youth social action but have not yet collected data and evidence to support the theory.

The standard for evidence required for inclusion in section b is lower than the academic standard of the studies referenced in the other parts of this paper. These examples should be taken as guidance and inspiration for policymakers, programme designers and funders operating in the youth social action space rather than the final word on the matter. It is part of the #iwill Fund Learning Hub’s intention to include ‘emerging’ approaches as we hear about them and revisit them to discover lessons learned. Over the duration of the #iwill Fund we expect to see more data and evidence published by match funded programmes about their success at reaching young people from lower socio-economic groups, so a greater number of promising approaches may be identified.

## a. Approaches from research

Several researchers have proposed approaches to tackling the socio-economic participation gap in youth social action. In general, these recommendations are intended to mitigate or prevent causes of the participation gap which are identified by academic research.

John Dean argues that a universal approach to connecting young people with social action opportunities should be avoided. Low levels of resources and ambitious targets increase the likelihood that volunteer brokerage workers will focus their efforts on children who require the least support to volunteer, which tend to be those from higher socio-economic groups (see **Recruitment** above). Instead, he advocates a **targeted approach to volunteer brokerage** that focuses on young people who would otherwise be unlikely to participate in youth social action.<sup>xxxiv</sup> It should be noted that this is in contrast to the ‘whole school’ approach which is often advocated as a way to embed youth social action sustainably, and guard against schools only putting forward certain groups of pupils.

In contrast, Eddy Hogg and Robert de Vries observe that there is no significant socio-economic gap in youth social action participation when children are in school years 7, 8 and 9 (in England). At these ages, school is the primary pathway to participation for *all* socio-economic groups. They find a participation gap at all other age groups, and also observe a decline in the importance of school as a pathway to youth social action. They argue that **schools can be an effective site for work to close the participation gap** at other ages if resources and attention are devoted to promoting youth social action throughout the school journey.<sup>xxxv</sup> The burden should not rest entirely with schools, however. Hogg and de Vries propose that organisations seeking to engage young people to social action can make the most of the fact that young people from all backgrounds go to school by working closely with schools to recruit participants.

Mathew Bennett and Meenakshi Parameshwaran’s analysis of Understanding Society survey data identified parental role modelling and socialisation as key determinants of children’s volunteering (see **Socialisation**). They recommend that **mentoring programmes** could be introduced as a “substitute for parental involvement for those youths lacking civically engaged role models.”<sup>xxxvi</sup> There is an extensive body of evidence around best practice for mentoring programmes on which funders and delivery organisations seeking to adopt this approach should draw.<sup>xxxvii</sup> It highlights the importance for a successful programme of: mentor selection; mentor-mentee matching; a mentee-centred approach; and adequate support for mentors.

Finally, a forthcoming paper by Irene Garnelo-Gomez and Kevin Money will consider the implications of **extending definitions of youth social action** (such as the commonly-used #iwill campaign definition) to include forms of social action that take place closer to the home (see **Exclusive definition**).<sup>xxxviii</sup> They suggest that by embracing activities which are more likely to be performed by young people from lower socio-economic groups, such as caring for relatives, formal volunteering opportunities may become more accessible because the difference between formal

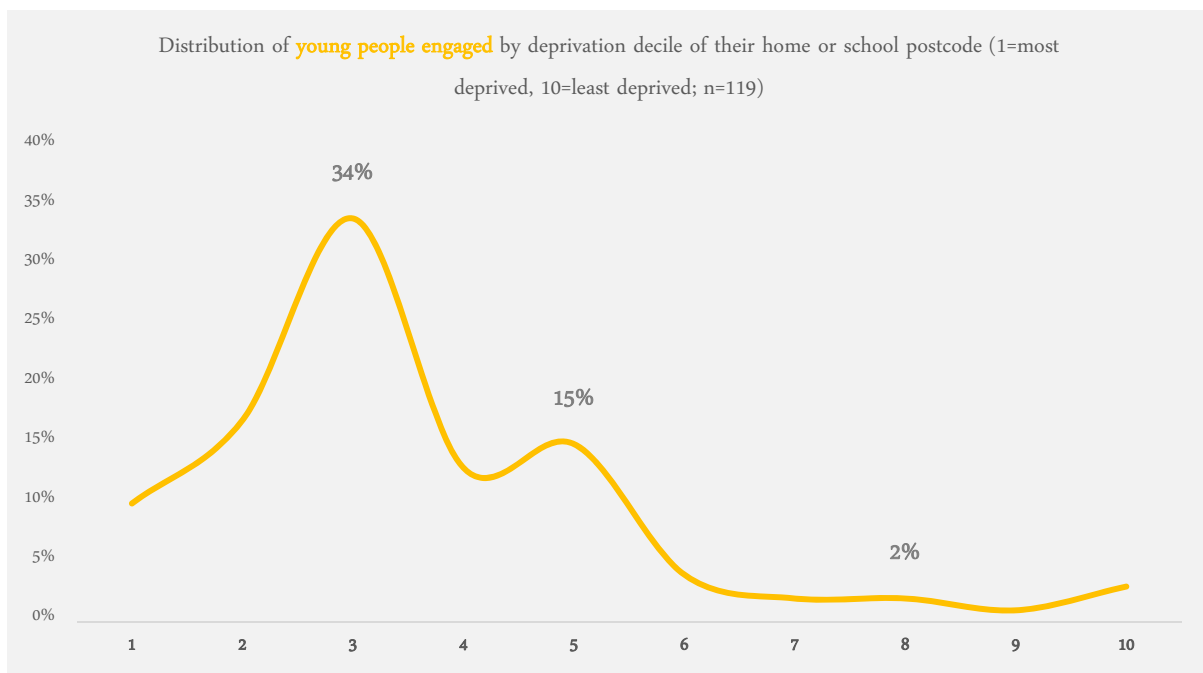
volunteering and informal social action close to home may be perceived as less significant. By admitting informal social action that takes place close to home into widely-used definitions of social action, it is hypothesised that the psychological barriers expressed in statements like, ‘It’s not for people like me,’ will be removed.

## b. From practice

### Promising approaches

The **Team London Young Ambassadors** programme delivers assemblies, workshops, youth summits and resources to support pupils in London schools to engage with their communities through social action. Compared to its first phase, the programme has been able to reach a greater proportion of children from lower socio-economic groups because of changes it has made to its engagement strategy. Firstly, the programme moved from a universal to a targeted approach, using the Index of Multiple Deprivation to identify and engage schools in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. It also specifically engages young people through special educational needs and disability (SEND) schools and pupil referral units (PRUs). Secondly, the Team London Young Ambassadors programme adapted the message it gave to schools when asking them to refer pupils.

The new message encouraged teachers to think of pupils from “diverse and deprived backgrounds” to counter “the inclination to put their ‘best’ students forward”. The chart below shows that, based on the organisation’s own estimates using participant-reported postcodes, the majority of pupils engaged by the programme lived or went to school in the most deprived areas of London.



**National Citizen Service (NCS)** is a two to four week programme offered to all 16 and 17-year-olds in England and Northern Ireland that includes a significant youth social action component. It is delivered by local organisations with support from a national office. NCS is well-advertised, including on social media, as well as in schools through assemblies and tutor groups. NCS aims for participation in their programme to be representative of the local population. A regular evaluation of the programme collects data on whether participants are eligible for Free School Meals, a proxy for lower socio-economic status. In summer 2016, 16% of NCS participants were eligible for Free School Meals, compared with 12.4% of all secondary school pupils. Similar ‘over-representation’ was observed for young people from BAME backgrounds and with Special Educational Needs.

For this paper we spoke to several researchers familiar with youth social action and asked them for their reflections on NCS’s success in this area. All felt that NCS’s generous resourcing was important in allowing them to run outreach that could reach all types of young people and that it also contributes to a high national profile and desirable brand. They also give a reasonably high level of autonomy to local delivery organisations to adapt the offer to local contexts, which was felt to be important. One of the largest provider partners, The Challenge, has at the heart of its mission, the integration of different social groups.

NCS provide bursaries to cover the sign-up fee which allow young people from low-income backgrounds to attend the programme. Potential extra costs such as food on the residential course are all covered. The programme also notes that it does not just offer social action opportunities. Some young people may be initially attracted by the ‘adventure’ or ‘discovery’ parts of NCS, but take part in – and enjoy – the social action as an intrinsic part of the programme.

While NCS adopts a universal approach to recruitment, Team London Young Ambassadors has adapted its approach to target lower socio-economic groups. Both programmes reach young people through schools. Notably both NCS and Team London Young Ambassadors (and particularly NCS) are well-resourced, large-scale programmes that have enjoyed political support from the highest level.

When resource is constrained, programmes and policies may be more inclined to focus on recruiting young people from higher socio-economic groups who require less support, or be unable to invest in the more intensive strategies required to recruit and retain those from lower socio-economic groups.<sup>xxxix</sup>

### Emerging approaches

<b>Programme   Funder</b>	<b>Approach</b>
Duke of Edinburgh Award	<b>Provide funding and support to local organisations with reach into communities experiencing higher levels of deprivation.</b> The relationships local organisations are able to build with communities are leveraged to increase the reach of youth social action programmes. While the Duke of Edinburgh

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Award is not a grant-making trust, it can provide additional resource to local groups for the purchase of equipment and transport for participants which are significant financial barriers to participation in the whole Award.<sup>xi</sup>

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Ormiston Academies Trust  
*Ormiston Trust*

**Create a universal infrastructure for youth social action in schools.** Leverage schools' near-universal reach to young people to provide youth social action to all. Formalise and standardise schools' resources and techniques for fostering youth social action participation in all pupils and students.

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Pears Foundation

**Embed youth social action in FE Colleges.** Data shows that young people from low-income backgrounds are disproportionately likely to attend FE colleges – supporting youth social action in colleges is designed to improve uptake by this group.

**Support youth social action delivery in disadvantaged areas.** Pears Foundation are supporting Guides and Scouts to expand delivery in low-income locations.

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Football Beyond Borders  
*Sport England*

**Use another activity (sport, theatre etc.) as a 'hook' for youth social action programmes.** It is important that youth social action opportunities are engaging regardless of the socio-economic status of young participants. However, an attractive hook may be more important for young people from lower socio-economic groups as they are less likely to have a socialised or parental-driven motivation to do social action for its own sake (see Socialisation). Football Beyond Borders uses football to engage young people, many of whom are from lower socio-economic groups, who have been excluded from schools. They are developing a social action component to their programme.

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One Million Mentors,  
UPrising

**An adult mentor can provide encouragement, resources and networks that more affluent young people get from their parents.** Young people volunteer partly because they learn to do so from their parents and because their parents' resources and networks allow them access to opportunities. Parents of lower socio-economic status are less likely to be able to provide this, so a mentor may act as a substitute, and role model, for the young person in this respect.

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StreetGames  
*Sport England*

**Develop a rubric of five factors to consider when establishing a project locally: the 'Five Rights'.<sup>xli</sup>** These are right price, right time, right place, right people and the right style. In order to answer the rubric, a good understanding is needed of the assets and interests of young people and the community. StreetGames have been successful in reaching young people from lower socio-economic groups by applying the Five Rights through their 'Doorstep' sport access programme. The Doorstep programme has detailed documentation that sets out what can be done to reach this group.<sup>xlii</sup>

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### *Virgin Money Foundation*

**Fund programmes that help young people to tackle the issues which are important to them.** Often this is related to the issues of which the young people have lived experience. The Virgin Money Foundation fund, for example, a café-based peer mentoring programme for young people with experience of self-harm. Based on the experience of programmes they support, the Virgin Money Foundation report that this approach requires: a significant investment of time building trust with young people and allowing them to figure out where they want to try and make a difference; the identification of individuals in young people's communities who young people trust.

## Conclusions and recommendations

A socio-economic gap in social action participation has been observed consistently across countries and over time, for children and for adults. The data collected by the National Youth Social Action survey since 2014 have brought precision to our understanding of the gap, but it is reasonable to believe that it has been present in British society for a long time. It is therefore the product of deeply entrenched social dynamics, in particular the intergenerational transmission of the expectations, resources and networks that motivate and enable participation.

Charitable funders and delivery organisations that seek to close the socio-economic gap must be conscious of the fact that it is due to self-reinforcing patterns of behaviour and therefore requires an intentional response that is implemented consistently. Dean's study of volunteer brokerage illustrates how a well-intentioned service designed to connect young people to opportunities can end up reinforcing unequal participation. Brokerage workers did not have the time or resource to constantly counteract the dynamics that produce the gap. Under pressure they reverted to the standard social pattern of recruiting young people from higher socio-economic groups.

Evidence of promising and emerging practice in this area remains sparse and work needs to be done to strengthen the evidence base. As stated above, this paper will be updated as more information emerges from the #iwill Fund. The recommendations set out below are, therefore, tentative. They are also largely focussed on the *design* of programmes. As the example from Dean shows, charitable funders and delivery organisations in the youth social action space must also consider seriously the resources and structures required for successful *implementation*.

### Recruitment

(1) **Go to where the young people are.** This is very often schools because nearly all young people can be reached here. Match Funders such as Pears Foundation and Ormiston Trust have funded work that aims to embed youth social action opportunities within schools and colleges, while Sport England have supported Street Games to deliver social action in disadvantaged communities through their 'Doorstep' approach. A more targeted approach might consider partnering with organisations that already have reach or exposure to the young people who are targeted for recruitment.

(2) **Be explicit about who you are trying to recruit.** Where programmes are not specific about wanting to recruit young people from a range of backgrounds or specifically those from lower socio-economic groups, they are likely to find that they have more young people from higher socio-economic groups referred in or applying.

(3) **Resource recruitment well.** Where resources are scarce it is understandable to weight funding towards the costs of delivery. But spending on marketing, brand, and outreach may be important in reaching beyond the already-motivated, and 'word-of-mouth' networks which the research suggests will result in the recruitment of young people from similar backgrounds to those already participating.

### Programme design

(4) **Be conscious of how people from different social backgrounds will react to different environments.** Emerging approaches such as Football Beyond Borders are built around an activity or environment that they hypothesise is more interesting, familiar to, and comfortable for their target groups of young people.

### Resources

(5) **Minimise resource barriers to participation.** Status transmission, when young people benefit from the social and economic resources of their parents, means that financial barriers to participation will affect young people from lower socio-economic background disproportionately. This may include funding or providing travel or suitable clothing, an approach that is implemented by the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

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- **Rachel Kyle-Barclay**, Programme Officer, Virgin Money Foundation
- **Sue Heritage**, Head of Intervention Development, StreetGames

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<sup>i</sup> Musick and Wilson (2007), *Volunteers: A Social Profile*, p.230.

<sup>ii</sup> Ipsos MORI (2018), *National Youth Social Action Survey 2017*.

<sup>iii</sup> Hogg, E. and DeVries, R. (forthcoming), *Different Class? Exploring the relationship between socio-economic advantage and volunteering during adolescence*.

<sup>iv</sup> Musick and Wilson (2007), Ch.6; Rochester and colleagues (2010), *Volunteering and Society in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Ch.4

<sup>v</sup> Lawton and Watt (2019), *A Bit Rich*; McGarvey et al. (2019), *Time Well Spent*.

<sup>vi</sup> Sutton Trust (2017), *Life Lessons: Improving essential life skills for young people*.

<sup>vii</sup> Sport England (2018), *Active Lives Children and Young People Survey: Academic Year 2017/18*

<sup>viii</sup> Ipsos MORI (2018); Sutton Trust (2017).

<sup>ix</sup> Bennet and Parameshwaran (2013), *What factors predict volunteering among youths in the UK?*

<sup>x</sup> Crenshaw (1989), Demarginalising the Intersection of Race and Sex in *University of Chicago Legal Forum*

<sup>xi</sup> Taylor-Collins (forthcoming) and Taylor-Collins (2019), *Working-class girls and youth social action: 'hope labour'?*

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