



What is the current and upcoming evidence for youth social action? March 2015

Background

The #iwill campaign aims to make social action a part of life for as many 10 to 20 year olds as possible by 2020 in recognition of the benefits this activity brings for participants and those they are supporting.

Evidence is central to this ambitious goal – for providing a robust case of the benefits of youth social action (YSA) to support expansion and investment, and for directing and developing the overall campaign strategy effectively.

The current evidence base on YSA is encouraging, however there is a need for more robust data and evaluations in order to build the case for investment and enable best practice. The #iwill campaign is committed to building this robust evidence base to support the most effective kinds of structured YSA – aiming to influence stakeholders across sectors to open up more opportunities for young people to play their part and embed youth social action in their journeys from 10 to 20.

Within our priorities for evidence we, in collaboration with our campaign partners, will aim to:

- a. **Capture and analyse core data** about young people's participation in YSA across the UK as well as the availability of structured opportunities.
- b. **Develop and collate evidence of the double benefit** to build an understanding of the effectiveness of YSA in developing young people and making a positive contribution to communities.

This document sets out a current overview of recent and upcoming evidence and data relating to YSA, incorporating robust¹ research and evaluations of YSA programmes delivered in line with the [six quality principles](#) and focused on measuring the double benefit. This is intended to be an evolving document to signpost and support those wishing to make the case for investment or disseminate the double benefit of YSA.

Summary

Capture and analyse core data

- In 2014 delivery of the Youth Social Action Survey enabled us, for the first time, to have a robust measure of participation in YSA across the UK. We now know that:
 - 40% of young people were participating in meaningful² social action in 2014, with highest levels of participation in the East Midlands, South East and Scotland and lowest levels in the East of England.
 - Levels also differed across sub-groups, with participation higher amongst younger ages (10-15), more affluent families, females and those attending school, university or college; though no difference by ethnicity or disability.

¹ Large-scale, independent studies utilising rigorous methods (i.e. valid and reliable measures and analysed against a control group)

² For the purposes of this campaign 'meaningful social action' is defined as participation in social action at least every few months, or as a one-off activity lasting more than a day; and where the young person recognised both a benefit to themselves and others/ the environment as a result.



This data also demonstrates the importance of schools and colleges as a route to engagement, in addition to providing insights not just into barriers, but into factors that would encourage more young people to participate. (See project (1) in Appendix for further information).

- This survey is due to be repeated in 2015, making it possible to track trends over time, and the impact of the campaign in opening up more opportunities to take part.
- Additional upcoming research includes:
 - Survey data from young people on their views of how YSA is supported through their school, and what further support they would like to be available;⁽²⁾
 - A project aiming to collate data on the availability and range of structured YSA opportunities across the UK;⁽³⁾
 - Contextual data regarding the attitudes, interests and engagement of young people, how these have changed over time, and how these compare to adults.⁽⁴⁾

Evidence the double benefit

- The evidence base in this area is emerging, with specific #iwill partners already leading the way. For example, the recent evaluation of the Cabinet Office Youth Social Action Fund (YSAF), conducted by the Behavioural Insights Team, robustly evidenced that participation in YSA led to a range of outcomes critical for employment, in addition to improving levels of well-being and willingness to be involved in community-related activity in future.⁽⁵⁾⁽⁶⁾
- A review of social and emotional skills for the Early Intervention Foundation, Cabinet Office, and Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission demonstrated the importance of these wider skills for positive outcomes later in life, including in mental health and well-being, education and employment.⁽⁸⁾
- Upcoming research in this area includes:
 - Further evidence exploring the benefits of YSA for young people (Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), Uniformed Youth Social Action Fund (UYSAF), Journey Fund⁽⁹⁾)
 - Examining the link between YSA and educational attainment (EEF)⁽⁷⁾
 - Tracking the longer-term outcomes of YSA (NCS evaluation)⁽¹⁰⁾
 - Capturing outcomes for beneficiaries of YSA (UYSAF)⁽¹¹⁾
 - Exploring ways to build character in young people through social action (Jubilee Centre, Department for Education)⁽¹²⁾⁽¹³⁾

Over the coming year the campaign will aim to work with partners to synthesise the emerging evidence base, stimulate further robust research and spread the word on the benefits of youth social action.

For further information on the #iwill campaign's work on evidence, or to highlight any further relevant data or evidence, please contact Rebecca Wyton, Evidence Manager, Rebecca.wyton@stepuptoserve.org.uk

#iwill



APPENDIX – details of current and upcoming research into Youth Social Action

Capture and analyse core data		
Description	Lead organisation	Date due/published
<p>1) Youth Social Action Survey</p> <p>Representative and robust survey of young people aged 10-20 in the UK to determine levels of involvement in social action, and the profile and motivations of those taking part. The survey is due to be repeated year-on-year from 2014 to 2020 to support measurement of progress of the #iwill campaign.</p> <p>2014 results demonstrated that 40% of young people aged 10-20 in the UK are taking part in meaningful social action, with highest levels in Scotland and lowest in the East of England. The primary route to getting involved was through school or college, with participation associated with significantly higher levels of well-being. Lack of awareness and time were key barriers, however there are clear routes for encouraging participation further.</p> <p>http://www.iwill.org.uk/resources/research/</p>	Ipsos MORI/ Cabinet Office	2014 survey – November 2014. 2015 survey – due November 2015
<p>2) Schools Omnibus Survey</p> <p>Ipsos MORI has included specific questions on youth social action on its Youth Omnibus Survey, delivered to a representative sample of secondary schools in England and Wales. These questions will ask young people about the support their school provides for social action, including the range of ways their school may support this activity already, in addition to what more support young people would like to see for this activity.</p> <p>https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchareas/omnibusservices/youngpeople.aspx</p>	Ipsos MORI	Due April 2015

<p>3) Mapping structured opportunities Generation Change together with British Gas/Somo are exploring the potential to collate and display information on the availability of structured youth social action opportunities in an online tool. This will aim to provide better information on the full range, scale and specifics of these programmes, to enable funders, providers and sector leaders to develop and target activity accordingly. This data could then be used alongside the Youth Social Action Survey to understand supply and take-up of opportunities across the country and sub-groups, and stimulate activity to promote participation.</p>	Generation Change British Gas Somo	In development – deliverables for 2015 to be defined in May 2015.
<p>4) Contextual data on young people #iwill partners Media Trust and Kantar are aiming to collate available and relevant data from the Youth Target Group Index Survey – a survey of 7-19 year olds exploring their views and attitudes on a range of topics. This will provide contextual data on the primary concerns and interests of young people, including their attitudes towards community involvement, and wider engagement. This data is available for previous years and can be monitored going forward, providing insights into how such findings have changed over time.</p> <p>In addition Kantar and Media Trust will seek to collate their wider surveys on volunteering and social action to provide context on the adult volunteering landscape, and any further insights into the participation of young people.</p> <p>http://www.kantarmedia.co.uk/services/youth-tgi/</p>	Media Trust Kantar	Due Summer 2015
Demonstrating the double benefit		
<p>5) Youth Social Action Fund evaluation – interim findings A randomised control trial evaluation to determine the impact youth social action programmes in preparing young people for adulthood and employment.</p>	Cabinet Office Behavioural Insights Team	March 2015

<p>The results demonstrate that participation in youth social action led to robust improvements in levels of empathy, cooperation, grit, resilience, problem-solving skills, sense of community and educational attitudes compared to the control group. In addition participation increased the willingness to be involved in community-related activity in later life and improved levels of well-being, e.g. in one group reducing levels of anxiety by more than a fifth.</p> <p>http://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/publications/evaluating-youth-social-action</p>		
<p>6) Youth Social Action Fund evaluation – final report The final evaluation report will present results from a separate matched-pairs evaluation to add to the three RCT evaluations presented in the interim report, in addition to findings from the Social Action Passport, a tool that enabled participants to log and track their social action activity, experience and benefits.</p>	<p>Cabinet Office Behavioural Insights Team</p>	<p>Due June 2015</p>
<p>7) Youth Social Action Fund – Education Endowment Foundation The EEF is also running an evaluation of two Youth Social Action Fund programmes – one in Secondary school and one Primary school – to determine the link between participation in social action and improvements to educational engagement and attainment.</p> <p>http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects/youth-social-action-trials-youth-united/ http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects/youth-social-action-trials/</p>	<p>Cabinet Office Education Endowment Foundation</p>	<p>Due 2016</p>
<p>8) Review of Social and Emotional Learning This review aimed to investigate the importance of social and emotional skills in both school and the youth sector.</p>	<p>Early Intervention Foundation Cabinet Office</p>	<p>March 2015</p>

<p>Strand 1 demonstrated strong evidence in the literature to relate social and emotional skills to positive outcomes later in life. This was corroborated by longitudinal cohort studies which demonstrated that social and emotional skills aged 10 were associated with increased well-being and mental health and positive employment and socio-economic outcomes in adulthood.</p> <p>Strand 2 reviewed the evidence base for interventions developing these social and emotional skills both in school and out of schools – showing strong evidence for some in-school provision, but the need for more comprehensive evaluations in the out-of-school sector to evidence the effectiveness of this provision.</p> <p>Strand 3 carried out qualitative research to understand the range of provision available to develop these skills, highlighting a range of policy recommendations and emphasising the importance of the quality of provision for ensuring effectiveness.</p> <p>http://www.eif.org.uk/social-and-emotional-learning/</p>	<p>Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission</p>	
<p>9) Journey Fund</p> <p>The evaluation of this Cabinet Office fund will seek to demonstrate the benefits of participation for the individual, in terms of skills and character development, in addition to understanding the factors involved in encouraging continued participation in social action.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/promoting-social-action-encouraging-and-enabling-people-to-play-a-more-active-part-in-society/supporting-pages/increase-volunteering-and-social-action</p>	<p>Cabinet Office</p>	<p>Due June 2015</p>
<p>10) National Citizen Service evaluation</p> <p>Previous evaluations of NCS have demonstrated its impact in developing skills for work and life, including leadership, teamwork and communication, in addition to</p>	<p>Cabinet Office NCS Trust</p>	<p>Next evaluation findings (2014 evaluation, and longer-</p>

<p>developing social networks, improving well-being and increasing willingness to help out in future. Forthcoming evaluations will also aim to provide key evidence on the longer-term impact of the 2013 cohort, to consider how and whether impacts are sustained in the longer-term and understand their ongoing involvement in social action.</p> <p>https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/publications/1692/National-Citizen-Service-2013-Evaluation.aspx http://www.ncsyas.co.uk/impact</p>		<p>term follow up of 2013 participants) – due July 2015.</p>
<p>11) Uniformed Youth Social Action Fund The evaluation of this Fund is focused in the first instance on tracking the impact for beneficiaries of youth social action. This will provide key evidence on the range of benefits for those supported by youth social action, in addition to building and disseminating learning on the methods for collecting such data. An evaluation of the second part of the Fund (focused on innovative Uniformed YSA projects) will focus on understanding the impacts of YSA for participants in specific settings (e.g. NEETs, young offenders) – adding to the evidence base on the effectiveness of YSA across sub-groups.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/winners-announced-for-the-uniformed-youth-social-action-fund</p>	<p>Cabinet Office Ipsos MORI</p>	<p>Due March 2016</p>
<p>12) Jubilee Centre – Building character through youth social action This research report summarises research conducted over the past year with youth social action providers, looking to explore how providers aim to build character through social action.</p> <p>This research demonstrates the significant, positive impact that providers believe</p>	<p>Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at University of Birmingham</p>	<p>Due April 2015</p>



<p>social action has on a young person's character, and in turn the impact of that character development on young people and society. Based on these findings, the report concludes with some recommendations for consideration by practitioners, policy makers and researchers interested in youth social action.</p> <p>The #iwill campaign team are also working with the Jubilee Centre to identify links to the campaign across their next research programme on character and service, which is due to run from March 2015 to November 2017.</p> <p>http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/</p>		
<p>13) Department for Education Character Grants</p> <p>The EEF are leading on the delivery and evaluation of grants for projects aiming to improve character (including, but not limited to, social action projects). The evaluations will focus on developing how to measure character, and what works in developing character, building on the related work within Cabinet Office.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/measures-to-help-schools-instil-character-in-pupils-announced</p>	Department for Education Education Endowment Foundation	TBC