

# Five Ways to Embed Youth Social Action



#iwill

2019

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#iwill



# The #iwill Campaign<sup>1</sup>

Young people aren't just the leaders of tomorrow – they have the energy, skills and ideas to change the world today.

However, too many young people, particularly from less affluent backgrounds, fail to have their voices heard or capacity to make a difference recognised. This not only deprives our society of the positive impact young people can make, but also prevents too many of them from developing the characteristics and skills that will benefit them and others throughout their lives.

That's why the #iwill campaign aims to make participation in social action (such as volunteering, campaigning or fundraising) the norm for young people aged between 10 and 20.

Since the campaign's launch in 2013 by HRH The Prince of Wales, over 900 cross-sector organisations have pledged to support the #iwill campaign. They are taking the lead in embedding youth social action in their organisations, and across the UK.

This booklet uses learnings and examples from #iwill partner organisations to outline the five ways you can successfully embed youth social action (YSA) in your organisations.

For more information visit [www.iwill.org.uk](http://www.iwill.org.uk).



# What we have learnt so far?

## **Young people from low-income backgrounds are less likely to participate in meaningful YSA**

Young people want to take part in social action: 68% of them say they are likely to do so in the future.<sup>1</sup> However, only 4 in 10 young people are currently participating in meaningful social action – and participation rates have remained the same since 2014.

There has been a persistent gap in meaningful social action participation between young people from the most and least affluent backgrounds (51% vs. 32% in 2017, similar to the gap found when this was first measured in 2014, which was 51% vs. 31%).

## **Young people who take part in YSA report higher levels of wellbeing**

Participation in youth social action is associated with higher life satisfaction: young people who have participated rate their life satisfaction as 8.4 out of 10, this is 7.8 for those who never participated.<sup>2</sup>

Social action is also associated with reduced anxiety.<sup>3</sup>

## **The earlier you participate in YSA, the more likely it is to become a habit**

Those who first get involved in service to others under the age of ten were found to be more than twice likely to have formed a habit of social action than if they started aged 16-18 years.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ipsos MORI (2017). *National Youth Social Action Survey*

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Behavioural Insights Team (2016). *Evaluating Youth Social Action*

<sup>4</sup> The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (2017). *A Habit of Service*

## **High quality social action is more likely to benefit young people and their communities**

After consultation with many organisations across the youth, voluntary, education, business and faith communities, the Cabinet Office, The Young Foundation and Institute of Voluntary Research produced a report identifying six quality principles (youth-led, socially impactful, challenging, embedded, progressive and reflective).

In 2016 the Behavioural Insights Team conducted Randomised Controlled Trials of several social action programmes that embed these quality principles and showed that young people who participated saw robust improvements in character qualities like empathy, cooperation, resilience, problem-solving and sense of community .

Youth social action can encourage social integration and the Thirteen steps to tackle social segregation by the Social Integration Commission showed that a lack of integration costs our economy £6 billion, or approximately 0.5% of GDP, each year.

## **Young people are more likely to participate in YSA if it is part of their school's culture and practice**

In 2017, 65% of young people doing social action got involved through school or college, moreover teachers are the biggest motivator for young people from the least affluent families. Primary and Secondary school teachers increasingly see social action as part of their school's culture and practice (34% in 2015 vs. 59% in 2017), but fewer than 25% say over half their students participate regularly .

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<sup>5</sup> Behavioural Insights Team (2016) Evaluating Youth Social Action

<sup>6</sup> Kingdom United? (2015), Social Integration Commission

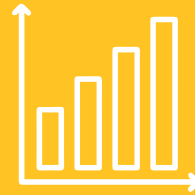
<sup>7</sup> Ipsos Mori (2017). National Youth Social Action Survey

<sup>8</sup> National Foundation for Educational Research (2017). Teacher Voice Omnibus

# 1. Prioritisation<sup>1</sup>

Incorporate youth social action into your organisational strategy and initiatives.

## Prioritising the growth of quality, scale and reach of YSA opportunities



### ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER

Explicitly reference supporting youth social action within your organisational strategy or policies

Develop a plan to:

- increase the quality of YSA opportunities your organisation provides
- engage more young people from low-income backgrounds to participate in YSA
- engage younger age groups to participate in YSA

Stipulate support for YSA within your procurement requirements

Incorporate YSA into your existing curriculum/ programmes/ calendar of activities for young people

### WHO'S DOING THIS WELL?

Defra have committed to supporting youth social action, as part of their [25 year plan](#) to improve the environment.

Generation Change [impact accelerator](#) supports organisations that deliver youth social action to measure and improve their outcomes in a rigorous way.

[Green Schools Project](#) help schools run environment social action projects for the whole school.

Co-op Foundation is working with youth social action charity Envision to embed [Community Apprentice](#) programme into [Co-op Academies Trust](#) schools.

The NHS have committed to supporting youth social action in their [Long Term Plan](#).

## 2. Measurement <sup>4</sup>

Assess the benefits for young people and the impact they are having on their communities.

### Measuring quality, scale, reach and impact of YSA



#### MEASUREMENTS TO CONSIDER

Number of quality YSA opportunities provided

Proportion of opportunities that meet six principles of high quality YSA

Proportion of young people from low-income backgrounds engaging in those opportunities

Proportion of younger people (e.g. below 14) engaging in those opportunities

Impact of YSA on the young people participating (e.g. social mobility, attainment etc.)

Impact of YSA on their communities

#### WHO'S DOING THIS WELL?

The Youth United Foundation [report](#) by ComRes shows the positive impact of uniformed youth activity and social action on social integration.

The [NHS Forum Youth Impact report](#) shows the impact of YSA on young people and on the NHS.

[Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital](#) engage those aged 10–16.

The [EEF toolkit](#) shows the impact of youth social action on essential life skills which was supported in RCTs led by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) of the youth social action programmes Children's University and Youth United.

## 3. Partnerships

Working collaboratively with #iwill campaign partners, funders and schools will enable your organisation to pool knowledge, expertise and resource to enhance the quality, scale and reach of opportunities provided.

### Developing sustainable partnerships



#### ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER

Collaborate with education organisations to embed YSA activities where young people already are

Collaborate with uniformed and youth organisations to grow the scale and reach of YSA opportunities

Closer collaboration with #iwill campaign partners to promote, celebrate and grow YSA

Collaborate with or between funding organisations to support YSA

Explore whether your organisation can fund others to grow YSA

#### WHO'S DOING THIS WELL?

Scouts and NCS have a [partnership](#) to enhance current opportunities and reach more disadvantaged areas.

[Virgin Money Foundation](#) and [Pears Foundation](#) are funding other organisations to grow YSA.

The #iwill Fund has enabled growth of YSA opportunities as well as supporting funders to collaborate.

Co-op Foundation's [Belong](#) network brings together 12 organisations tackling youth loneliness to share ideas and learning, and help strengthen the youth sector.



## 4. Empowerment

Supporting young people into leadership roles within your organisation (e.g. on trustee boards, advisory groups, etc.) can enrich and enhance decision-making.

### Empowering young people into leadership roles



#### ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER

Recruit youth advisors or ambassadors

Recruit young people on to your governing (trustee, council, governor) board

Create a youth advisory panel or shadow board

Invite a young person on to your commissioning and procurement panel

Involve young people in decision-making more broadly

#### WHO'S DOING THIS WELL?

**British Youth Council** have only young Trustees on their Board.

**Step Up To Serve** recruit a number of Trustee Board members aged under 25.

Young voices are woven into the fabric of decision-making through the **Spirit of 2012** Youth Advisory Panel.

**Co-op Foundation's** Young Members Group gives young people aged 16 to 25 years old the chance to co-create products and campaigns, contribute to strategy and have a say on what Co-op does. Co-op Foundation **invites young people to take part in panels** assessing funding applications, giving them a say on how our grants are allocated.

## 5. Celebration

Recognising the impact of young people can support recruitment and retention of young volunteers and assist organisational buy-in to maintain or grow its focus on youth social action.

### Promoting and celebrating young people



#### ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER

Develop case studies illustrating the impact of young volunteers

Have your own young ambassador programme, so that young people can act as role models to their peers and promote YSA

Recognise the impact of young people through Young Volunteer/ Campaigner/ Fundraiser of the Year awards

Support youth 'takeovers' of social media/ communication channels so that they can discuss their social action experiences

Extend media and speaking opportunities to young people who engage in YSA

Explicitly reference your support for YSA/the #iwill campaign on your website

References to youth social action within annual reviews and evaluation reports

Share your impact during "Share Your Pledge Day" and "#iwill week" by including items in your communications, hosting events to showcase YSA etc.

#### WHO'S DOING THIS WELL?

**Points of Light** is where the Prime Minister recognises outstanding volunteers daily

**NHS Youth Forum** regularly take over the NHS England Twitter and Facebook accounts to share the impact young people can make in improving the NHS

**Fixers** are a great example focused on young people using media to engage in social action and encourage others to get involved

The **Diana Award** is an accolade for 9-18 year old's to receive for taking part in social action

# What are the next steps?

1. Pledge or re-pledge to the #iwill campaign to show how you will incorporate the five ways in your organisation.
2. Showcase and share progress towards embedding youth social action using your internal and external communications.
3. Sign up to our newsletter (on [www.iwill.org.uk](http://www.iwill.org.uk)) to keep updated on cross-campaign activity and partners that can support embedding youth social action in those areas.
4. Share this checklist with your networks to ensure they are also embedding youth social action.



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