Evaluation Report:
National Youth Agency Youth Social Action Journey Fund Programme

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context of the evaluation

Voluntary social action is lauded in Western societies because of its positive contribution to building social capital and the maintenance of civil society. Civil society is the location within which most formal voluntary social action takes place. The majority of volunteering in the UK is currently delivered by people who occupy what has become known as the 'civic core' where people make regularised long-term commitment to social causes.

The government has set itself the laudable objective of increasing the number of young people who voluntarily take part in meaningful social action. Currently, about 40% of young people do so and a target has been set to increase this number to 50% by 2020 supported by the *iWill* campaign which is run by *Step up to Serve*. But as it has been argued in this report, moving young people from all backgrounds into the civic core is not a straight-forward matter.

The Social Action Journey Fund

The Cabinet Office established the Social Action Journey (SAJF) Fund to increase the level of social action amongst young people. In so doing, several programmes were funded to experiment with different approaches to achieving this objective.

The National Youth Agency's SAJF project, undertaken in collaboration with the O$_2$ Think Big programme, took as its primary focus the engagement of young people from more deprived or socially marginalised backgrounds. As such, the programme attempted, through the support of newly appointed youth work apprentices (YWAs), to engage marginalised young people in social action journeys.

Young people entered the programme by attending O$_2$ Think Big events, after which many progressed to undertake Level 1 Think Big projects. It was anticipated that for many young people, this would be their first encounter with voluntary social action. Furthermore, it was anticipated that many of the younger age group participants in the programme would progress to join the National Citizen Service.

Approach to evaluation

The evaluation draws upon qualitative and quantitative research which builds upon intensive research on the O$_2$ Think Big programme and Cabinet Office Social Action Fund 2 programmes by Durham University. The programme was evaluated against six areas of impact (see Figure A).

Figure A	
Key areas of impact exploration in the evaluation programme	
(a) Challenging	Stretching and engaging, as well as exciting and enjoyable.
(b) Youth-led	Young people have a key role in owning and shaping the social action (with appropriate adult support).
(c) Socially impactful	Creating positive change that is of benefit to the wider community as well as to the young person themselves.
(d) Progressive	Progressing to other programmes and activities.
(e) Reflective	Valuing reflection, recognition and reward.
(f) Embedded	Becoming the norm in a young person's journey to adulthood and a habit for life.

Headline quantitative findings on impact

The quantitative evaluation strategy was devised by the Behavioural Insight Team (BIT) and questionnaire data was collected for 147 young people who started the programme. Data on participants' personal biographies was collected to ensure that the programme was drawing in a range of young people. At the start of the programme participants included 47% females and 53% males; 19% were from ethnic minorities, 10% were registered disabled or had limiting illnesses; and, 33% (of those who responded to the question) had been in receipt of free school meals.

By the end of the programme, it is indicated that young people show signs of considerable benefit when data are aggregated against several key factors. These factors are ordered in Figure B according to strength of response for the end questionnaire. It is evident that cooperation, empathy and problem solving are reported as particular strengths. Wellbeing, attainment and grit show weaker responses, but remain at the positive end of the scale.

Figure B **Aggregated capability, wellbeing and pro-sociality indicators in priority order** *(by end questionnaire sample: mean scores on a scale of 0-10, 0=complete disagreement, 10=complete agreement)*
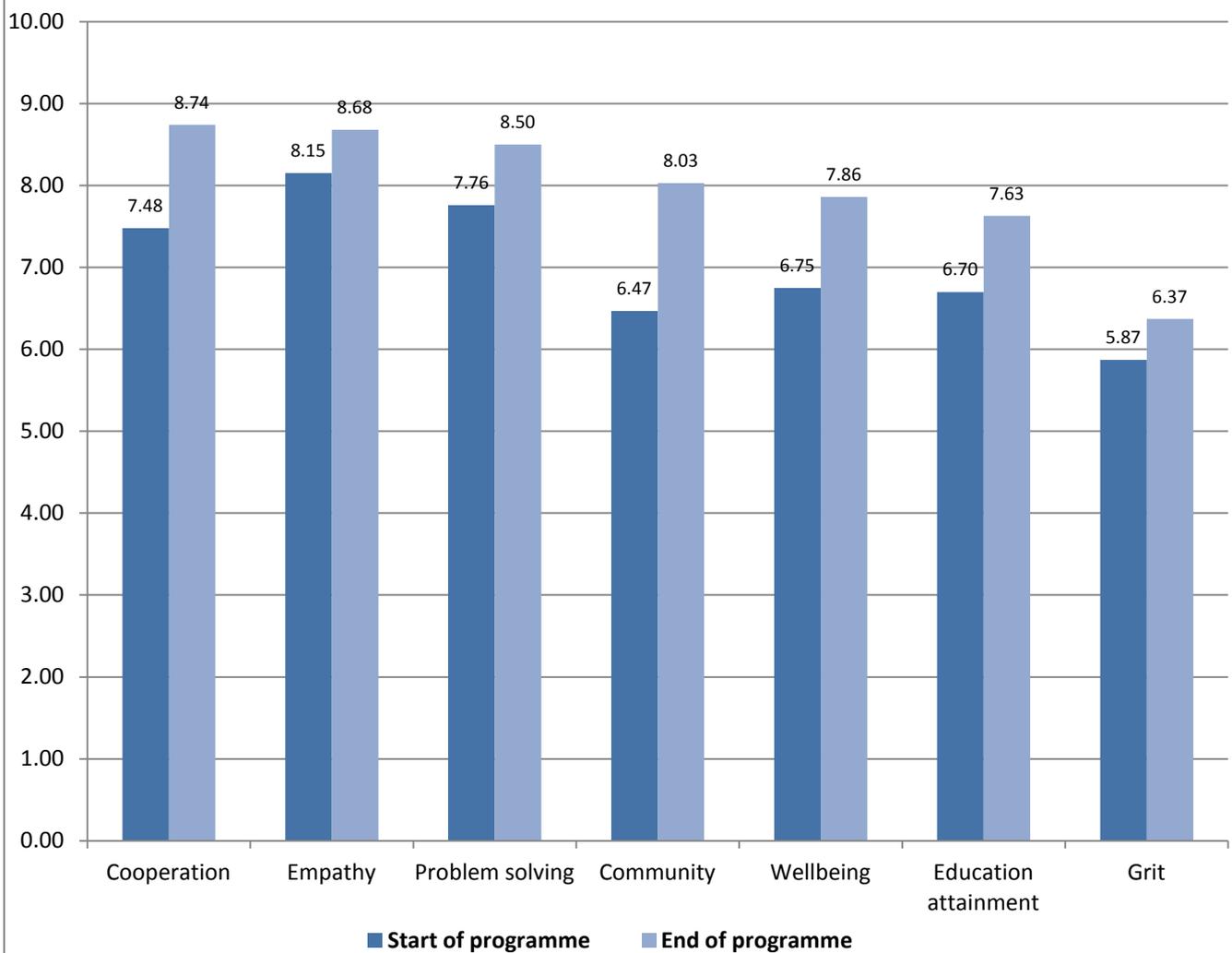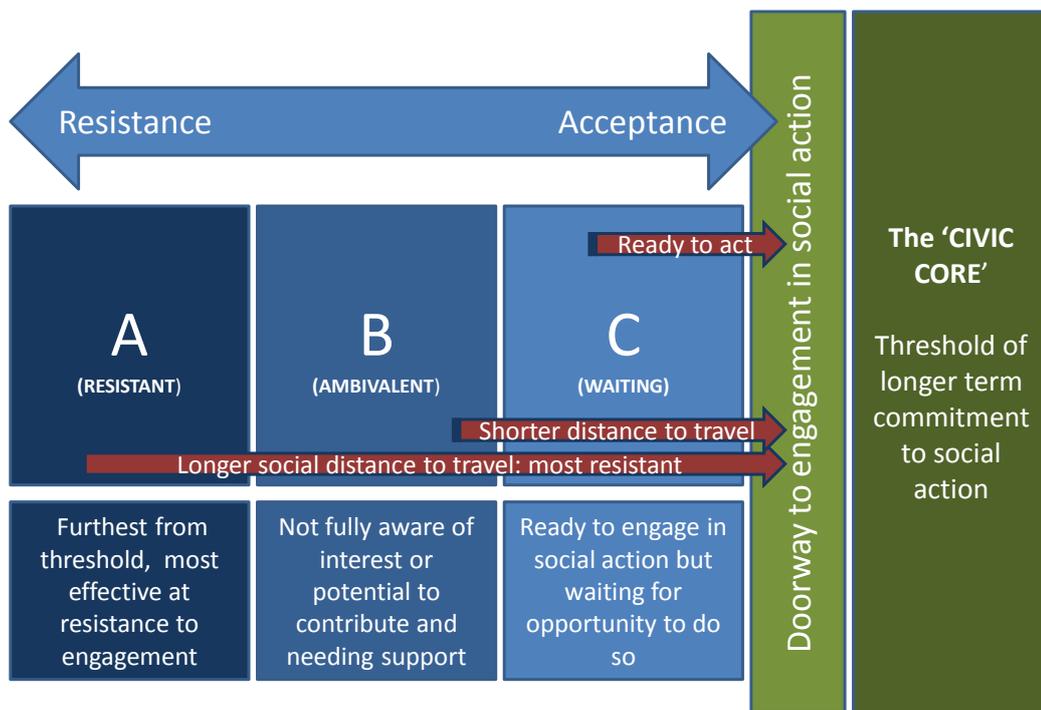
Key qualitative findings

This report shows that young people do not all begin at the same starting point in a social action journey. Figure C presents a diagram to explain the key conclusions from the study. On the right hand side of the diagram, the desired outcome of social action journeys is shown in two bars. The first bar represents the 'doorway' to voluntary social action – through which, by their own volition, encouragement or constraint, young people can enter.

The second bar to the far right of the diagram represents the threshold government is keen to encourage young people to cross – where they make a longer-term personal commitment to voluntary social action in the civic core.

This report has argued that the distance young people have to travel to cross this threshold differs significantly, depending upon: (1) their social, economic and cultural circumstances, and (2) upon their own propensities to do so which may be linked to personality factors. Making a journey of this kind requires young people to be able to imagine a different future for themselves. This in turn requires them to have a measure of self-confidence, determination, resilience and hope.

The diagram identifies three broad positions young people may occupy prior to making a social action journey. This has been devised to explain how young people embrace or resist the prospect of engaging with voluntary social action.

Figure B   **Engaging marginalised young people in meaningful voluntary social action**

Resistance ← → Acceptance

| A (RESISTANT) | B (AMBIVALENT) | C (WAITING) | Doorway to engagement in social action | The 'CIVIC CORE' Threshold of longer term commitment to social action |

Ready to act

Shorter distance to travel

Longer social distance to travel: most resistant

Furthest from threshold, most effective at resistance to engagement

Not fully aware of interest or potential to contribute and needing support

Ready to engage in social action but waiting for opportunity to do so

Position C: Closest to the threshold of longer-term commitment to voluntary social action

Some young people are already willing to take part in social action and simply need an opening to do so. Young people in this position are more likely to have been successful in the education system and they are likely to have substantial stocks of social, economic and cultural capital. Consequently, they are likely to have broader social horizons, have identifiable or emergent life-ambitions for themselves and, like as not, a measure of empathy for the situation of others.

When making a social action journey, such young people need less support and encouragement as they already have well-tested skills, confidence and have seen the evidence of the outcome of determination. They are more likely to *have* role models, support and encouragement from families, schools and peers to get involved in voluntary social action and sustain their involvement when they arrive there. Evidence suggests that many young people are likely to occupy this position but do not have the opportunity to achieve what they want.

With stocks of social capital, higher levels of personal confidence, capability and empathy, these young people are more likely to be interested in more abstract social causes and outcomes for beneficiaries, they are also more likely to see direct instrumental benefit in personal development terms and be more effective at recognising and articulating such benefit.

Position B: Young people who are not far from the point where they may make a longer-term commitment to voluntary social action

Some young people may be less aware of the benefits of engaging in social action and/or may not have identified opportunities to do so. They may be less likely to have role models in or encouragement from families, schools and peers to get involved in voluntary social action.

Being closer to the threshold of commitment to voluntary social action, engagement is likely to be more straightforward if sufficient encouragement and opportunity is provided in effective ways. But it cannot be taken as read that they need the same kind of encouragement as young people in position C. It may be the case that young people are more likely to resist attempts to get them involved in voluntary social action if the objectives of those who encourage or try to persuade them appear to run counter to the expectations of significant others.

These young people are more likely to focus on 'grounded' issues when they engage in social action – drawing upon more immediate needs or experiences due to their shorter social horizons than young people in position C. And because they may have more limited stocks of social capital and lower levels of achievement in other domains, often for personal or situational reasons, they may not be as confident and determined.

The marginal cost of encouraging these young people to engage in voluntary social action will be higher than those young people in position C as they need more support and encouragement. That stated, getting them involved in voluntary social action may be relatively straight forward if interesting opportunities are open to them and they have sufficient and appropriate support and encouragement to take them through their social action journey. It is likely that fewer will capitalise upon their experiences as fully as young people in position C, however, and cross the threshold to engage in longer-term social action entirely of their own volition within the civic core.

Position A: Young people who are more resistant to making a social action journey

Some young people are much further from the threshold where they will engage in voluntary social action of their own volition in the longer term. Indeed, many may actively resist engagement. The marginal cost of moving young people from position A across the threshold of voluntary social action, through interventions such as the SAJF programme is likely to be much higher than for people in position B or C.

While it is recognised that resilience can represent a positive feature of personality, it is shown in this report that young people can be resilient in negative ways and use it to resist engagement in new challenges. Breaking people out of from a position of resistance is not easy to do and requires much more intensive intervention than is the case for those young people who have greater stocks of social, economic and cultural capital.

Young people in this position may have shorter social horizons, limited levels of empathetic understanding and have lower levels of achievement and self-esteem. This can manifest itself in a negative form of resilience which steels young people against the prospect of change or identifying positive futures. The operation of 'categorical fate' further embeds and justifies resistance strategies.

Getting young people in position A involved in voluntary social action is therefore more costly and challenging and requires more skillful and sustained intervention by youth work professionals. This is because youth workers need to compensate for the lack of encouragement and support young people may receive within families, in peer groups and perhaps also in schools. Breaking through barriers may require stronger levels of encouragement and incentivisation for some young people, although some, when given such support will clearly benefit more quickly than others.

The journeys young people from position A have to make towards the civic core require them to traverse many social, economic and cultural hurdles. And it is easy from the perspective of the onlooker to fail to recognise the many leaps forward they may take when compared with the achievements of young people with much larger stocks of social capital.

There may be a temptation to focus primarily on those young people who are closest to the threshold of the civic core because that is where the best results from modest investment may be garnered. But

to take such a course of action would ensure that the civic core remains an enclave occupied by a relatively privileged section of the population rather than for society as a whole. To reach those furthest from the threshold of the civic core would, therefore, require sustained and targeted investment.

Key learning points for future evaluative work

More confident participants are eager to tell the story of their successes to a range of audiences. Personal development journeys are more easily articulated by young people who have access to ideas about the purpose of voluntary social action and know who may be impressed by their participation; and, be aware of the impact it may have for beneficiaries.

For young people from families which are supportive of such activity or encourage their children to get involved, the likelihood is that they will already know how to 'talk about' voluntary social action and position their involvement in a positive way. Such factors will also affect the way they approach self-reportage on their experience of a voluntary social action journey using quantitative methodologies.

More socially marginalised or socially deprived participants, may regularly be involved in informal voluntary action in their communities, but may be unwilling to tell significant others that they had played a major role in a formal social action project, feeling that efforts to do so may be elicit negative responses. Indeed, socially marginalised young people may not even consider thinking about the idea of a developmental journey – but rather consider it simply as yet another 'episode' in their lives that has been foisted upon them.

This does not mean that they have not had a positive experience, but implies that people who are less adept at recognising and articulating the benefits of voluntary social action have a longer journey to make towards regularised commitment to such activity. A social action journey, in sum, differs depending upon the starting point of the individual who embarks upon it. The distance they travel and the quality and impact of the experience they have cannot easily be measured in a consistent or comparable way as a consequence.

1   Introduction

Voluntary social action is lauded in Western societies because of its positive contribution to building social capital and the maintenance of civil society. Civil society is the location within which most formal voluntary social action takes place. The majority of volunteering in the UK is currently delivered by people who occupy what has become known as the 'civic core' where people make regularised long-term commitment to social causes.

The government has set itself the laudable objective of increasing the number of young people who voluntarily take part in meaningful social action. Currently, about 40% of young people do so and a target has been set to increase this number to 50% by 2020 supported by the *iWill* campaign which is run by *Step up to Serve*. But as it has been argued in this report, moving young people from different backgrounds or biographies into the civic core is not a straight-forward matter.

The Cabinet Office established the Social Action Journey Fund (SAJF) to increase the level of social action amongst young people. In so doing, several programmes were funded to experiment with different approaches to achieving this objective.

The National Youth Agency's SAJF project, undertaken in collaboration with the O_2 Think Big programme, took as its primary focus the engagement of young people from more deprived or socially marginalised backgrounds. As such, the programme attempted, through the support of newly appointed youth work apprentices (YWAs), to engage marginalised young people in social action journeys.

Young people entered the programme by attending O_2 Think Big events, after which many progressed to undertake Level 1 Think Big projects. It was anticipated that for many young people, this would be their first encounter with voluntary social action. Furthermore, it was anticipated that many of the younger age group participants in the programme would progress to join the National Citizen Service.

This evaluation report provides an overview of findings from research on the National Youth Agency's Social Action Journey Fund programme project which was undertaken collaboratively with the O_2Think Big programme which is funded by Teléfonica Foundation.

The report is divided into several sections.

- Section 2 provides a discussion of the policy context and a brief appraisal of the academic literature on factors which affect young people's positive life transitions.

- Section 3 includes a discussion and literature review on the definition and measurement of voluntary social action.

- Section 4 provides a discussion of key qualitative findings from the research on young people's social action journeys

- Section 5 presents quantitative findings from surveys undertaken at the start and end of the programme.

- Section 6 presents a discussion of the key learning points from the research

2   The evaluation in policy context

Preparing young people to lead successful adult lives

Over the last few years, political argument about how to build young people's future confidence, ambition and capability has intensified. The major political parties have both injected considerable energy into such debate – some of which has led to a measure of consensus on what young people do or should aspire to and what the key priorities for the development of young people should be.[1]

In aspiration terms, politicians and many influencers from universities and think tanks, tend to emphasise the importance of producing a more 'open society' where social mobility can be achieved by those who invest in their own future ambitions. The coalition government, shortly after taking office in 2010, established the Commission for Social Mobility and Child Poverty, chaired by the Rt Hon. Alan Milburn.[2] The purpose of the Commission was to examine the factors which held young people back from achieving success in life and to consider potential social policies which may facilitate such progress.

The Commission, in its wide-ranging work has tended to pay attention both to 'structural' and 'cultural' constraints on social mobility, whilst also focusing more narrowly on how to encourage young people to develop the right credentials and attitudes to achieve social mobility. It is recognised; by the Commission that there are many barriers to social mobility which have been progressively strengthened structurally and culturally over recent decades by those whose vested interests lead them to maintain aspects of social closure.

In political circles, arguments have generally remained rather more simplistic. As such, much of the debate has adopted a model of social mobility which is more closely associated with the political philosophies of the United States than European ones. As such, the balance of responsibility has fallen on young people themselves to take charge of their own destiny. Furthermore, such argument has tended to adopt a relatively uni-dimensional position on what constitutes social mobility and 'success' in life.

Much of the political writing and debate on social mobility has, in fact, become quite confused. Politicians' claims that there should be 'social mobility for everyone' may sound quite attractive but, even if assuming that most people aspire to 'upward mobility' (rather than staying as they are or downward social mobility), it is

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[1] In the run up to the last General Election in the UK there was, perhaps, surprising levels of similarity in the proposals made to tackle issues such as youth employment and training, education and engagement in voluntary social action. For a review of the key proposals from each of the major parties, see: the NYCVS review of the manifestos here: http://www.ncvys.org.uk/civicrm/mailing/view?reset=1&id=180.

[2] See: Commission for Social Mobility and Child Poverty (2014) *State of the Nation 2014: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain,* London, Cabinet Office.

mathematically not possible. There are, of course, too few places at the upper end of the hierarchy to accommodate those who are currently at the lower end.[3]

It should be recognised that in structural terms this situation can change. Between the 1950s and the mid 1970s, the number of middle-class jobs grew enormously due to changes in the structure of the labour market – thereby creating many places for people to be upwardly mobile into. But since then, change has been less pronounced. With their advanced knowledge of how the education system works, their greater economic potential to invest in their children's future, and the stronger likelihood that they can prepare their children well to achieve success in credentialist terms, middle-class families have tended to propel their offspring into the best universities and jobs. By definition this leads to the under-employment of many people with considerable capability (and perhaps in many cases greater capability than some of their middle-class counterparts) so leaving a pool of societal and individual potential partially untapped.

A second problem with contemporary interpretations of social mobility is a tendency to emphasise only 'long-range' mobility as a marker of true success. Long range mobility is where people achieve very significant movement through the social hierarchy during their lifetime (intra-generational mobility) and perhaps also achieve considerable upward movement through the socio-economic status ladder when compared with their parental origins (inter-generational mobility).

This is aptly illustrated in the following quotation from the Chair of the All-Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility, Baroness Tyler, which recently issued its *Character and Resilience Manifesto*.[4]

> *"[The APPG has] taken a look at one of the most knotty and seemingly intractable social policy challenges we face as a country. Why do some talented children grow up to fulfil their ambitions and become leaders in any number of fields, while others never realise their full potential?"*

The idea that people need to become 'leaders' in their particular field suggests that the only ambitions that really count demand long-range mobility. The likelihood is that extraordinary people with very strong ambitions with some encouragement and support and a willingness to break with the constraining ties and commitments of people and place in order to do so, will generally find their way to the top. But they tend to be relatively small in number.

Many people adopt much shorter-range social ambitions. Leadership may not be a key driver, but it does not mean that these people do not make a huge contribution to the domain they have chosen to work in and a major contribution to economy and society as a consequence as builders, doctors, teachers, restaurateurs, police officers and so on. To achieve success in such professions requires commitment and hard work during a long period of apprenticeship, often but not always necessarily academic credentials, and a requirement for continuous personal development throughout a career.

In political terms, it is hard to promote policies that may appear to encourage people to 'settle-for-less' than those who have reached the very top of any particular profession. A more important point, however, is to recognise that because

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[3] For an excellent review of the arguments surrounding the misinterpretation of social mobility, see Payne, G. (2012): A New Social Mobility? The political redefinition of a sociological problem, *Contemporary Social Science: Journal of the Academy of Social Sciences*, 7:1, 55-71.

[4] Paterson, C., Tyler, C. and Lexmond, J. (2014) Character and Resilience Manifesto, London: APPG on Social Mobility, Centre Forum and Character Counts, p.4.

'definitions' of what 'counts' as an achievement vary significantly depending upon the origins and social destinations of individuals.

There is a wealth of evidence to demonstrate how the affluence of families affects educational outcomes. To illustrate this point, Figure 2.1 shows differences in terms of attainment on Key Stage test scores by ages 7 and 11 and GCSE scores at age 16 across five quintiles of the index of multiple deprivation.

Figure 2.1   **Average test scores by socio economic profile of household[5]**
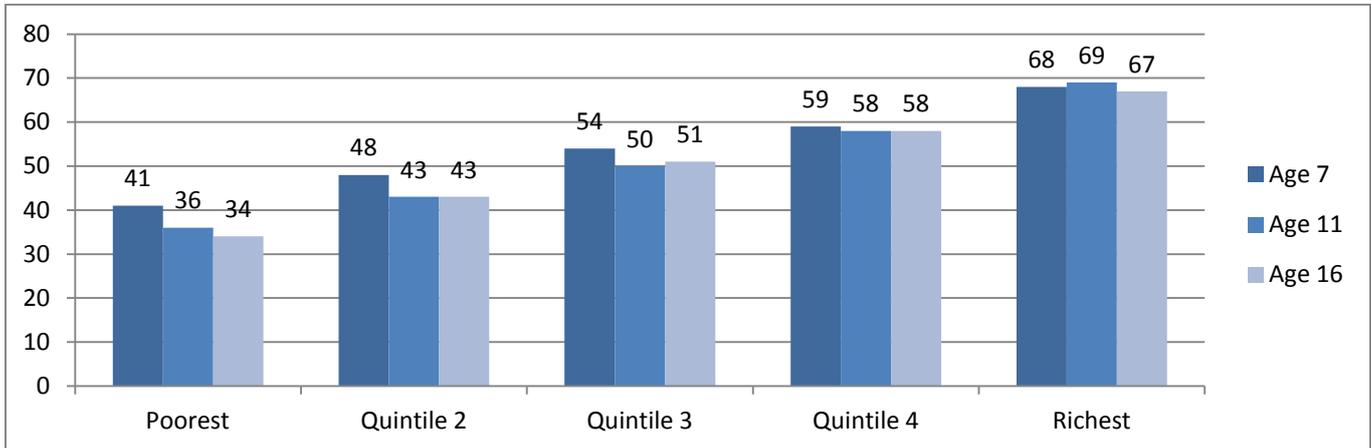
Achieving good SATs scores, GCSEs, A Levels and even a degree may be regarded by some commentators as 'normal' expectations of performance along the journey towards adulthood. While for others such achievements may be too much to hope for or even imagine. Credentials indicate achievement of a level of performance against standardised criteria, in other words, but for one person from, say an established middle-class family, such performance may be regarded as little more than a routine expectation; while for someone from a multiply-deprived background, it may be considered a triumph. Producing benchmarks (or 'gold standards') of what constitutes a level of achievement is possible or desirable may, in short, conceal as much as it reveals about personal success.

In one of my own studies for the Department of Education[6], a few years ago, I looked at what constituted achievement of young people who had been excluded or were close to exclusion from school. The Department's initial objective for the Youth Achievement Foundation intervention I was evaluating, was to achieve 5 GCSEs grade A-C (including Maths and English). If the success of the programme were to be measured against this too-demanding criteria, most of the young people would be consigned to the category of abject failure.

For these young people, who had suffered many forms of economic social and psychological deprivation and had consequently developed attendant attitudes and behaviours which tended to further embed their deprivation, success was ultimately defined differently.

The evaluation pinned these achievements down to the following:

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[5] Adapted from Figures 4.1 and 5.1 (2010:27/33) First two columns refer to Key Stage Test scores and column 3 refers to GCSE attainment age 16. Source: Goodman, A. and Gregg, P. (eds.) *Poor children's educational attainment: how important are attitudes and behaviour*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

[6] Chapman, T., Van der Graaf, P. and Bell, V. (2011) *Raising Aspirations, Recognising Achievements and Realising Potential: providing non-formal learning to excluded young people: Final evaluation report of the YSDF Youth Achievement Foundation Pathfinder.* Middlesbrough: Social Futures Institute, Teesside University.

- their ability to willingly and of their own volition get to school in the morning, to behave appropriately when they were at in the classroom;

- to be collegiate, attentive and interested in what they were doing;

- to produce achievement beyond that which they expected of themselves; and,

- for their horizons to be broadened sufficiently to be able to imagine a future where they could wrest a measure of control over their lives through productive work, education or training a field they were attracted to.

If this is what is meant by 'character' development and the production of the right kind of positive 'resilience' – then the intervention was a success.

Current political thinking on 'character' and 'resilience' has emerged in response to concerns that the focus on credentialism alone has been too narrow and that schools, youth work interventions and so on, need to work both on measurable educational achievements (such as SATS or GCSEs) and on building the right personality traits for successful adulthood. The terms, character and resilience have, however, tended to be used in an imprecise way. Imprecision can produce significant problems further down the line when assessing the impact of interventions.

Before I turn to a discussion of the teaching or learning of character and resilience, it is necessary to take a brief diversion and make reference to the issue of the social, cultural and economic 'assets' young people hold and how this, in turn, may interact with the way that they can access and marshal aspects of temperament or character to achieve positive social and personal outcomes.

Personal assets and successful life transitions

Young people's life transitions have become increasingly complex and unpredictable in recent years due to changes in the structure of the labour market and changed cultural attitudes. There is a tendency in policy circles to focus attention on the agency of young people when tracking reasons why successful life transitions are achieved or not. In this evaluation, a more holistic point of view is adopted, which emphasises the mix of *Structural, Situational, Relational* and *Personal* factors which all impact on transitions.[7]

By adopting this approach, it is easier to understand why young people may gain different kinds of benefits from a programme of social intervention and show where the investment of resources can pay the best dividends in social terms. Figures 2.2 and 2.3 summarise those factors that affect young people's life chances, ranging from structural factors which they can do little or nothing about – such as the state of the labour market to factors surrounding individual differences such as temperament.

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[7] This section is adapted from analysis reported in the SAF2 Evaluation: see Chapman, T. and Dunkerley, E. (2014) Evaluation of the National Youth Agency Social Action Fund (Round 2), Durham, Policy&Practice, Durham University.

Figure 2.2

Factors affecting young people's life chances

Structural factors	Situational factors	Relational factors	Personal factors
Social, political and economic change **Institutional constraints** (e.g. educational, legal, criminal justice systems) **Labour market opportunities**	**Local political, economic and environmental factors** **Local demography, culture and community cohesion** **Local labour market conditions, infrastructure and facility**	**Family life** (quality of relationships with parents and guardians, siblings, etc.) **Material well-being** **Peer influences and friendship networks** **Intimate relationships**	**Individual attributes** (intelligence, health and well-being) **Skills and aptitudes** (credentials, talents, attractiveness, etc.) **Personality and temperament**

Figure 2.3

Defining influences on young people's life transitions

Structural factors are largely out of the control of individuals, such as the legal and bureaucratic frameworks which shape the way the education system works, or the structure of the labour market. Structural factors are not static. Social and economic change can rapidly transform the landscape for young people. Perhaps the most important statistic to demonstrate the impact of structural factors is that of youth unemployment which now stands at over 20 per cent in the UK.[8]

Situational factors are influenced by wider structural factors, but the local situation can exaggerate wider influences in significant ways. The economic, cultural and demographic makeup of the local area can affect expectations and experiences of young people. Local labour markets, community cohesion, health and wellbeing, public safety and neighbourliness, and local infrastructure (such as public transport, sport, leisure and youth recreation facilities) all affect opportunities. Situational factors do not just shape opportunities. They also have a pernicious cultural impact on perceptions of what is possible and desirable. Often it is difficult for 'outsiders' to make sense of the choices people make in different contexts and fail to recognise what they mean or why they are valued.

Relational factors refer to the relative strength and weakness of inter-personal ties. Young people can experience relationships in positive and negative ways. Relational factors often produce complex and unpredictable outcomes for young people's life transitions. Some young people may have supportive parental and sibling relationships and yet suffer poor peer group relationships (through, for example, pressure to engage in risky behaviour or to become the object of ridicule, ostracism or physical bullying). Intimate relationships also affect young people's life choices. Such factors impact heavily when families are under serious economic and social pressure. More affluent families tend to be able to cushion themselves from recurrent financial crises produced by ill-health, unemployment and so on. Furthermore, they are better placed to ensure that their children can attend the best schools and have access to constructive after school activities.

Individual differences such as character and temperament; intelligence and other attributes all impact on individuals' behaviour. It is not uncommon for professionals and practitioners to make judgements on individual capabilities and thereby close down young people's avenues of opportunity if they appear not to match expectations. While the likelihood of successful life transitions may be estimated statistically in line with some factors, it is not possible to make effective predictions about the impact of deprivation, ill-health, educational underperformance, disability and so on, on an *individual's* life trajectory.

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[8] Parliamentary briefing on youth unemployment, 13th September 2013, see. http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/sn05871

Irrespective of all of the structural, situational, relational and individual factors which can be considered, young people have quite uniform aspirations. Research shows that commonly adopted assumptions about low aspirations amongst less affluent young people may not actually be true. As a Joseph Rowntree Foundation study observed:

> *'…there is a lack of clarity about whether aspirations are fundamentally too low, especially among people from disadvantaged backgrounds, or are in fact rather high, but cannot be realised because of the various barriers erected by inequality'* **(Kintrea et al. 2011: 7).**

The problem this study refers to is a mismatch between aspirations amongst young people and the positions available in the labour market for them to be achieved. As Figure 2.4 illustrates, at age 15 young people want to get the best jobs, but their chances of realising these aspirations are limited by the number of positions available.

Figure 2.4   **Aspirations compared to UK labour market at age 15**[9]
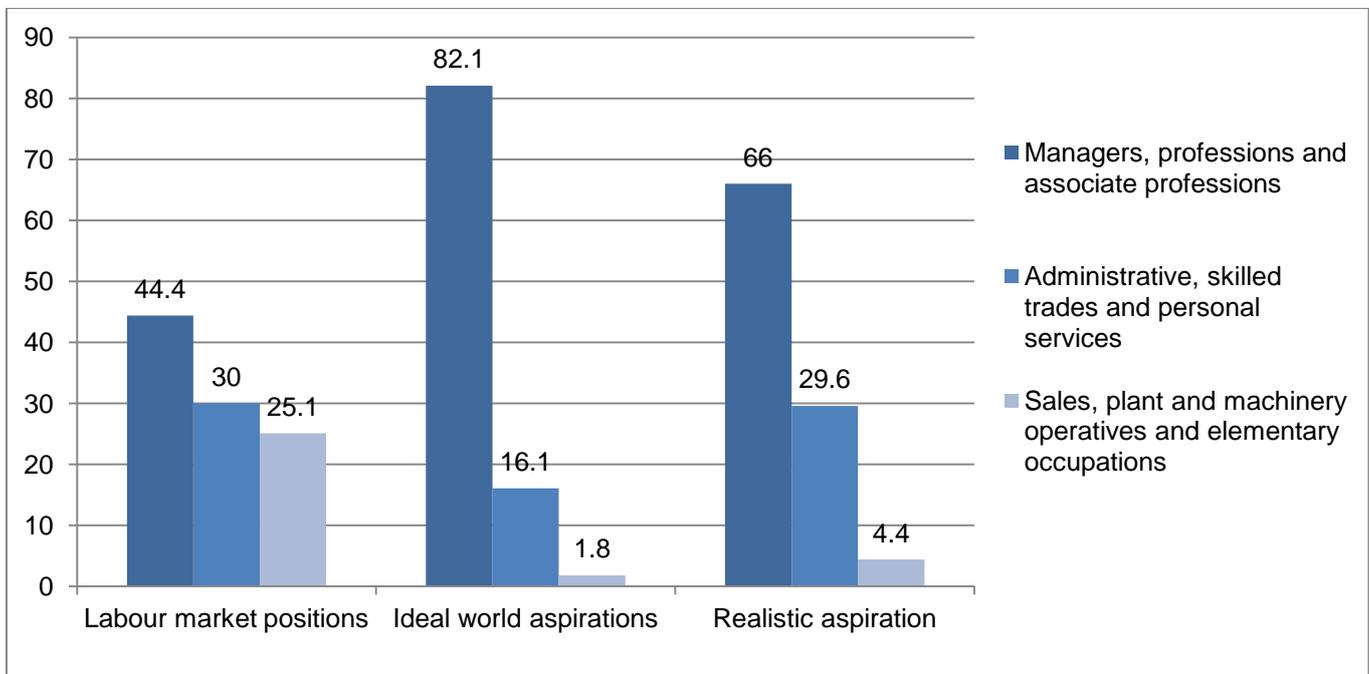
A study by Goodman and Gregg demonstrates that as children get older, relative affluence or deprivation starts to have an impact on, amongst other things, self-belief, locus of control and involvement in risky behaviours (see Figure 2.5). So it is important not to be seduced by arguments that put too much store on individual agency and responsibility to effect change – whilst at the same time avoiding structural arguments that suggest poor outcomes are more or less inevitable.

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[9] Kintrea, K., St Clair, R. and Houston, M. (2011:38) *The influence of parents, places and poverty on educational attitudes and aspirations*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Figure 2.5 **Attitudes and behaviour age 14** (percentages)[10]	*Household socio-economic profile*		
	Lowest quintile	Middle quintile	Highest quintile
Wants to stay on in full-time education at 16	79%	83%	93%
Likely to apply for higher education and likely to get in	49%	57%	77%
Ever involved in antisocial behaviour	41%	31%	21%
Ever played truant	24%	14%	8%
Reads for enjoyment weekly	70%	75%	81%
Get a job that leads somewhere is important	70%	70%	67%

Social, economic and cultural assets

Young people who tend to make the most successful life transitions have a stronger asset base. This can include greater stocks of 'cultural', 'social' and 'economic' capital. It is worthwhile briefly to explain these three terms which originate from the writings of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.[11]

- **Cultural capital**: consists of ideas, education and skills which are underpinned by a set of values, passed down by parents and significant others through socialisation.

- **Economic capital**: refers to control over economic assets (money, shares, commodities, cash).

- **Social capital:** consists of the resources gained by having access to influential social networks or relationships which give access to opportunities.

Social capital benefits individuals in three main ways.[12] Firstly, because it is 'productive' in the sense that it provides people with a resource which facilitates action. Secondly, it is 'self-reinforcing' in that successful relationships in one area of social life are transferable to others. And thirdly, it is 'cumulative' in the sense that once people have a stock of social capital, they can build more of it. Bourdieu argues, therefore, that social capital is used instrumentally by individuals to create, sustain and monopolise their resource.

Making successful transitions from childhood to adulthood requires young people to make good decisions about how they want to shape their future and act on these decisions in a positive way. Such decisions are made in the context of the opportunity structures that are available (or perceived to be available) to young people. Making such decisions involves choices which may be inherently risky. Risks might include the possibility (or even the probability in some contexts) of failure and disappointment. Not taking risks, by the same token can also have damaging

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[10] Adapted from Figure 5.3, Goodman and Gregg (2010: 39).

[11] Bourdieu: (1988) 'The forms of capital', in J.G. Richardson (ed.) (1988) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. Westport: Greenwood Press.

[12] See: Jochum, V. (2003) *Social Capital: beyond the theory*. National Council for Voluntary Organisation.

consequences. There are few prospects available for achieving success for those people who are not prepared to take a chance.

Taking risks which may lead to positive outcomes requires young people to have self-belief and confidence. But where does it come from? There is much debate on this issue. From a sociological point of view, the environment within which young people grow up is regarded as being crucially important in shaping self confidence and ambition. Many sociologists argue that life chances are shaped, primarily, by socio-economic status. Affluence, as noted above, produces a higher degree of certainty and stability in people's lives – it affords opportunities to plan ahead, build stocks of human and social capital, experiment with alternatives and have a safety net if things do not work out first time around.

Deprivation and/or social marginalisation, by contrast, shortens and lowers horizons; it limits the prospects of planning ahead and increases insecurity, closes down possibilities for building social and human capital, and restricts the range of opportunities available to young people. There is a wealth of statistical evidence to show that the more deprived the environment within which young people grow up, the fewer life chances they have and the higher risk that they will not make successful life transitions.[13]

That stated, making generalisations about opportunity structures can mask the variety of responses that people might have to adverse circumstances – extraordinary people can pull themselves out of the most difficult situations and achieve what others might consider impossible dreams – but always they are in a small minority. In some cases, character alone may provide the impetus to break through what look like impossible barriers to achievement, but without some level of support and encouragement most young people would not achieve such feats of achievement.[14]

Character, resilience and pro-sociality

The recently established Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at Birmingham University firmly believes that character can and should be taught by educationalists in schools. Its pedagogic and moral position is as bold as it is contentious. In its Framework for Character Education in Schools, it is claimed that:

> *Human flourishing is the widely accepted goal of life. To flourish is not only to be happy, but to fulfil one's potential. Flourishing is the aim of character education, which is critical to its achievement. Human flourishing requires moral, intellectual and civic virtues, excellence specific to diverse domains of practice or human endeavour, and generic virtues of self-management (known as enabling and performance virtues). All are necessary to achieve the highest potential in life. Character education is about the acquisition and strengthening of virtues: the traits that sustain a well-rounded life and a thriving society.*

These demanding requirements are deeply rooted, as the Jubilee Centre recognises, in Christian ethics. What schools need to achieve, therefore, is as follows.

> *Schools should aim to develop confident and compassionate students who are effective contributors to society, successful learners and responsible citizens.*

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[13] See: Commission for Social Mobility and Child Poverty (2014) *ibid.*

[14] See David Lammy's account of his own route to social mobility, due to sponsorship from a teacher; and the lack of it for many other black young men from Tottenham, London, for example: Lammy, D. (2011) *Out of the Ashes: Britain after the riots.* London: Guardian Books.

> *Students also need to grow in their understanding of what is good or valuable and their ability to protect and advance what is good. They need to develop a commitment to serving others, which is an essential manifestation of good character in action. Questions of character formation are inseparable from these educational goals and are fundamental to living well and responsibly. Character development involves caring for and respecting others as well as caring for and respecting oneself.*

The centre's assertion that it is possible to identify what constitutes a 'good character' or that it is possible to define what counts as 'good' or 'valuable' in society is somewhat contentious. In a pluralistic society made up of groups of people with diverse interests, such definitions are, arguably, hard to come by.

Nevertheless, the framework alludes to a long history of success in achieving these high demands in (certain types of) schools.[15] Questions remain, however, as to whether such success is the result, largely, of pedagogy (i.e. that character can be taught) or whether such virtues are absorbed as a consequence of emersion in a rich pool of social, economic and cultural capital. The Jubilee Centre's definition of what character education is, implicitly, recognises this.

> *Character education is an umbrella term for all explicit and implicit educational activities that help young people develop positive personal strengths called virtues. Character education is more than just a subject. It has a place in the culture and functions of families, classrooms, schools and other institutions. Character education is about helping students grasp what is ethically important in situations and to act for the right reasons, such that they become more autonomous and reflective. Students need to decide wisely the kind of person they wish to become and to learn to choose between already existing alternatives or to find new ones. In this process, the ultimate aim of character education is the development of good sense or practical wisdom: the capacity to choose intelligently between alternatives. This capacity involves knowing how to choose the right course of action in difficult situations and it arises gradually out of the experience of making choices and the growth of ethical insight' (2013: 2)*

While the Jubilee Centre claims that its position on character education is not class based or conservative in its philosophical roots, critics of character education have questioned the evidence that young people are either as malleable as the Jubilee Centre claims or, indeed, whether teaching character can be achieved at all.[16]

The above quotation adopts a language of certainty about what the 'right' things young people should know and therefore should be taught. A much bigger and more interesting question, of course, is to think about how lasting these influences are and, indeed, whether educators are (or were ever) in a position to know what the societal or individual needs of young people will be when they enter adulthood.

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[15] The evidence seems to have been garnered primarily from schools which have been able to engage in selective education such as grammar schools with filtering entrance examinations, church schools or public schools. While not developing the point in any detail, an impression is given that egalitarian experiments in comprehensive education failed by comparison: *"with the exception of a few decades towards the end of the 20th century when, for a variety of different reasons, this aim disappeared from the curricula from many Western democracies. Contemporary character education, however, is better grounded academically than some of its predecessors, with firm support both from the currently popular virtue ethics in moral philosophy and recent trends in social science, such as positive psychology, that have revived the concepts of character and virtue. Finally, a growing general public-policy consensus, across political parties and industry, suggests that the role of moral and civic character is pivotal in sustaining healthy economies and democracies.* " 2013: 1-2.

[16] See, for example: Hinsliff, G. (2014) 'Why only the lucky can 'lean in'', *The Guardian,* February 13th; Young, T. (2014) 'Should children be taught 'character', as Tristram Hunt wants? All the evidence suggests it's a waste of time', *The Times*, February 13th.

Personality: a mix of character and temperament

Psychologists generally draw a distinction between two elements of character. *Temperament* is regarded as the raw material we are born with and which stays with us throughout our lives. *Character*, by contrast, refers to the 'socially produced' elements of personality which derive from experiential and environmental circumstances. To assume that these factors operate separately from each other would obviously be a mistake. Both elements interact and play a significant part in the development of personality.

It is all too easy to get confused about the contribution of temperament and character to aspects of opinion (moral, ethical or otherwise) and behaviour. Opinions on what constitutes a moral or ethical position are certainly not fixed over time as indicated above. And what personality traits (whether defined by character or temperament or both) lead to particular behavioural outcomes is equally open to interpretation.

Aspects of 'good character' may, in short, produce very promising or worthy outcomes from the point of view of some people, while it may produce calamitous or odious outcomes from the opinion of others. To provide an example of this, it is useful to consider the value of the currently popular character trait of 'resilience'.

> *'In simple terms, these traits can be thought of as a belief in one's ability to achieve, an understanding of the relationship between effort and reward, the patience to pursue long-term goals, the perseverance to stick with the task at hand, and the ability to bounce back from life's inevitable setbacks.' Baroness Claire Tyler (2014: 4)*

From a positive point of view, resilience helps people to 'bounce back' in the face of adversity. This is the stuff of hundreds of 'self-help' books which encourage people to believe that they can go against the constraints of their temperament and 'change', and/or that they can learn new character traits to help them recover from adversity and prosper. Resilience can also be as much about resistance – of not changing even at the expense of personal or societal detriment. Resilience, as psychologists have argued, is a multi-faceted concept which can produce positive outcomes - but not always.

Research on resilience tends to focus on young people's responses to opportunities and challenges from a psychological perspective (where environmental factors may not be taken as much into account) or social-psychological perspective (where the interaction of personality and environmental factors are considered). Resilience researchers often focus on the balance between the 'assets' individuals possess and their chances of taking positive or negative risks. Small and Memmo[17] argue, for example, that:

> *'...the lack of assets is directly related to a person's failure to thrive, but only indirectly related to problem behaviours. As is often the case among children with few assets, a failure to thrive occurs when a child lacks essential growth opportunities needed for normal development. However, these same conditions also may heighten vulnerability, because the positive features that are absent in asset-poor environments tend to be replaced by hazardous or socially toxic conditions that generate risk... We believe that in the presence of risk, rather than a lack of assets, that likely leads to problem behaviours.*

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[17] Small, S. and Memmo, M. (2004) 'Contemporary models of youth development and problem prevention: toward an integration of terms, concepts and models', *Family Relations*, 55:1, 3-11.

> *Therefore, while a youth with many assets may thrive developmentally, he or she may still exhibit problems if risk processes are present'* (2004:4).

Resilience, according to Small and Memmo, results from a combination of four main processes that helps young people '*retain those assets* necessary for a person to display competence and thrive developmentally, or avoid the development of problem behaviours despite their experience of risk' (2004:6 my emphasis).

- ■ *Resilience resulting from the operation of protective processes*: this refers to the action of significant others who act to protect or cushion young people from risk factors often in conjunction with efforts to build personal assets.

- ■ *Resilience resulting from exceptional personal characteristics*: this refers to characteristics such as intelligence or sociability which may be innate personality factors or emerge in response to their developmental history.

- ■ *Resilience gained by recovering from adversity*: successful recovery from stressful situations or crises can result from reducing or eliminating the threat of recurrence or drawing upon other resources to aid coping strategies to make the situation manageable.

- ■ *Resilience gained through the process of steeling*: steeling is the process by which individuals overcome challenges and strengthen their resolve in the face of adversity. It is a process of hardening a person against the impact of difficulties and disappointments.

A critical reading of these four interacting factors would indicate how resilience can work for people in positive and negative ways. Having a strong sense of resilience on its own does not necessarily indicate an inherent likelihood that people will behave in a socially constructive way. A more general assumption is, however, that the wider range of 'assets' an individual has at their disposal – the more likely that a strong sense of resilience will benefit them.

Positive youth development programmes, such as the National Citizen Service and the SAJF programme (in conjunction with O$_2$ Think Big), tend to focus on asset-building and usually incorporate a mixture of 'protective processes' (such as the encouragement to get involved with positive confidence building activities rather than negative risk taking); provide support, where appropriate, to aid recovery from previous adversity; and, channel efforts in positive directions so that young people capitalise upon their innate or socialised assets such as sociability and intelligence.

Being positive about young people, all young people, is the key to challenging society's (and often young people's own expectations) about what they can reasonably be expected to achieve. Building 'character' assets to bolster resilience is a central part of this process so that good choices can be made within the range of opportunities that are open to young people.

How can we know if character education works?

Determining a reliable and replicable methodology to assess change in the way that young people think and act in response to social policy interventions is beset with problems. There have been major programmes of intensive work in the United States, for example, where interdisciplinary research teams from across several

universities, using mixed methods on a range of interventions trialled in different social circumstances which produced no conclusive evidence of positive impact.[18]

The inevitable question posed by this team of researchers was to ask if the failure to find positive results was, amongst other things: a failure of the programme itself to produce the right kinds of activities to cause change; a product of a flawed methodology to examine change; or, a failure to ask the right fundamental theoretical questions about what constituted change in the first place.

While it is not possible fully to review the findings from that major study, it is useful to note the following points.

- In testing the efficacy of a social policy intervention, it is never possible fully to account for the changes in young people's attitudes and behavior which may have been produced because they have grown older – even in relatively short-term interventions shifts in behavior and attitude can be fast moving.

- Where researchers aspire to produce comparative evidence using young people who have received 'the treatment' and those who have not, it is not possible to control for many other factors which will influence from outside the scope of the study. Young people are subject to intervention, in short, pretty much all of the time from one source of influence or another.

- Where informed judgments about change in young people's attitudes and behaviour are made by psychologists, practitioners, parents, teachers and so on, it may be possible to triangulate evidence and get a better understanding of findings at the level of the individual. The risk is that levels of association, investment or attachment of observers to young people may skew interpretation favourably or otherwise.

- Testing change in attitudes and behaviours in a thorough way is expensive and produces data which are complex and hard to interpret. A cheaper and more commonly adopted approach is to collect 'self-reported' data on changed attitudes and behavior. Such analysis can be useful providing that researchers have access to very large groups of participants, so that it is possible to disaggregate and cross-tabulate data from discrete sub-sections of the whole sample.

- Understanding change, theoretically, will always be contentious and rely on researchers' informed judgments on what constitutes a positive or negative change in behavioural or attitudinal terms. Similarly, interpretation of data may be flawed unless researchers have a clear and robust explanation for differing patterns of response to interventions.

These five factors are important ones and need to be borne in mind when developing new evaluation strategies. The next section of the report takes the discussion forward by examining definitions of voluntary social action and how involvement can be evaluated and understood.

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[18] Social and Character Development Research Consortium (2010) *Efficacy of Schoolwide Programs to Promote Social and Character Development and Reduce Problem Behaviour in Elementary School Children: report from the social and character development programme:* Washington: U.S. Department of Education /National Center for Educational Research / Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

3 What is voluntary social action?[19]

Using social action programmes to develop skills for life

In the UK, over the last few years, much work has been undertaken by Cabinet Office, Institute for Volunteering Research, NCVO and the Young Foundation to consolidate thinking on the evaluation of the quality and impact of youth social action programmes.[20] Such programmes of work have tended to focus on both the impact of interventions on young people's behaviour (their propensity to get involved in and sustain an interest in, for example, positive social action), and upon their character development (the interaction between their civic or pro-social attitudes and their compendium of personal attributes such as communication skills, team working, problem solving, motivation and perseverance, etc.).

The analysis produced by IVAR/ NCVO/ Cabinet Office and Young Foundation has been underpinned and bolstered by a broad analysis of current and recent research on the impact of youth social action in the UK undertaken by DEMOS.[21] The outcome of this work has been the development of a scoping framework (illustrated in Figure 3.1) which has emphasised the importance of establishing a definition of social action that can be brought into common usage. On the basis of the exploration of the literature and a stakeholder consultation the following definition was arrived at:

> *"Young people taking practical action in the service of others in order to create positive social change that is of benefit to the wider community as well as to the young person themselves."*

This definition embraces the idea that positive social action needs to be understood in the context of young people's developmental needs as well as the actual impact it has on the wider community. The scoping framework also highlights the importance of young people's agency in the development of social action programmes, by which it is asserted that effective programmes should be 'youth led'. Again, this sits closely with the objectives of the Think Big programme which is the medium through which the SAJF programme was delivered. And indeed, extensive analysis of the Think Big programme over its first three years of operation, clearly demonstrated the importance of agency in the design and delivery of individual youth led programmes.[22]

The framework combines two methodologies, developed by the CBI and Young Foundation which focus, in the case of the former approach, on three core individual attributes. The approach offered by Young Foundation, which has eight attributes, is then mapped against those of the CBI.

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[19] DEMOS have recently produced a useful literature review on evaluative work on young people's social action programmes in the UK. See Birdwell, J et al. *ibid* 2013.

[20] The Campaign for Social Action (2013) *Scoping a quality framework for youth social action*, London: Cabinet Office (with IVR, NCVO and Young Foundation)

[21] Birdwell, J., Birnie, R. and Mehan, R. (2013) *The state of the service nation: youth social action in the UK,* London: DEMOS.

[22] Chapman, T. and Dunkerley, E. (2013) *Opening doors: developing young people's skills and raising their aspirations An evaluation of O2 Think Big 2010-2012,* Durham: St Chad's College, Durham University.

Figure 3.1		
Combined framework of outcomes for young people		
CBI	Young Foundation	Benefits for the community
Optimism	Communication	Can be wide ranging, from civic participation, health, educational engagement - to safer communities, sustainability, voting, resilience and employability
	Creativity	
Determination	Confidence and agency	
	Planning and problem solving	
	Resilience/grit	
Emotional intelligence	Leadership	
	Relationships	
	Managing feelings, self control	

Source: Campaign for Social Action (2013:11)

Figure 3.2   The O$_2$ Think Big Programme

Think Big is a youth programme, supported by O$_2$/Telefónica Foundation to provide young people with opportunities to set up projects to make a difference to their own lives and to the wellbeing of their communities. The programme's mission is defined as follows:

'We believe in young people. We believe they have the power to make a better society. We need to back them, celebrate their talent and release their true potential to fix the things that matter. We'll campaign for them. We'll support their projects and promote their achievements. We'll change attitudes. We'll challenge the stereotypes that stifle them and ensure they are connected to the heart of our communities'.

Think Big aims to benefit young people who lead projects or actively take part in them by:

- increasing aspirations, hope and confidence;

- providing new experiences and acquiring new skills;

- improving employability and entrepreneurial skills; and,

- developing the leadership potential of young people.

The project is socially inclusive in its design – but it is expected that at least 50% of young people on the programme will come from less advantaged backgrounds (the target is 80% for young people who are recruited by partner organisations). The programme expects to reach young people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds; young people with disabilities or limiting illnesses; and, from all regions and nations of the UK.

Think Big has been running since March 2010. The programme currently has two levels.

- ▪ *Level 1* projects are awarded to young people with good ideas about how to make a contribution to their community. They receive £300 in funding together with some other incentives to do their project and are given information, training and support along the way.

- ▪ *Level 2* projects get more funding: £2,500, and it is expected that they are larger in terms of scope, reach and ambition. Think Bigger is also accompanied by support and more in-depth training together with some further incentives to get involved and stay committed. Young people who apply to Think Bigger must have done a Think Big project first.

The Policy Research Group, at St Chad's College, Durham University is evaluating the O$_2$ Think Big programme. This is a well resourced social evaluation project which is now in its third year. The objective of the evaluation is to monitor and analyse programme progress on the indicators and targets set out by O$_2$ outlined above. The research also aims to demonstrate the impact of the programme in bringing new opportunities to young people and challenging negative stereotypes. The action research element of the evaluation involves close integration into the programme in order to help enhance and deepen the impact of the intervention.

What is voluntary social action?

The Social Action Journey Fund programme funded project led by the National Youth Agency aimed to increase young people's stocks of social capital and hoped that as a consequence of this is that they will make a strong contribution to society through voluntary social action in future. It is important to get a clear understanding of what is understood by voluntary social action, and explore what encourages people to get involved with it, before attention is turned to the detail of how this issue was investigated empirically.[23]

There is little agreement nationally, let alone internationally, on how to define volunteering and less still on how to measure how much of it people do. Defining what counts as volunteering is difficult, with disagreements over, for example, whether or not informal and private caring class as volunteering, and if any remunerated activities can be included. Wilson argues that 'Volunteering means any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group or organization' (2000: 215), and "volunteering can be seen as an extension of private activity in the public sphere" (200: 216).

Clary and Snyder differentiate *spontaneous* helping, which refers to activity in the aid of, for example, friends, family or neighbours, from *planned* helping which involves more deliberate and scheduled activity (1998: 1517). However, Anheier and Salomon's definition is framed in its societal context:

> *…volunteering is much more than the giving of time for some particular purpose. In fact, as a cultural and economic phenomenon, volunteering is part of the way societies are organised, how they allocate social responsibilities, and how much engagement and participation they expect from citizens* (1999: 43).

This definition provides a useful starting point, but it is important not to be distracted by debates on how much volunteering goes on, nor to dwell on which categories of individuals are most likely to volunteer (for useful analyses of these issues, see: Wilson, 2000; Anheier and Salomon, Plagnol and Huppert, 2010). A more useful starting point is to ask - why is voluntary action lauded in Western societies?

Voluntary action is lauded in Western societies because of its positive contribution to building social capital and the maintenance of civil society (Blond, 2010; Norman, 2010; Putnam, 1993, 1995, 2000). Researchers generally approach this issue by exploring the social and economic 'characteristics' of those who are most and least likely to volunteer. Using categories such as class, age, gender, ethnicity, faith, place, and so on, it is shown that certain groups of people are attracted to particular types of voluntary activity and measurements are made on the comparative likelihood to volunteer and how much of it people will do. Such work can produce valuable insights, many of which are of interest to policy makers who want to increase levels of voluntary activity in order to promote social engagement, build social capital and strengthen civil society.

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[23] This section is based on Chapman and McGuinness (2013).

What factors affect attitudes about voluntary social action?

When people choose to do voluntary social action, they are making decisions about the kind of person they want to be, the kind of life they want to lead and the kind of society they want to live in. The extent to which people think this through in a conscious way is not known. Nor is much known about how people choose between social causes in a crowded social market. Using 'binary opposites' can help to clarify how people make choices.

■ **Collective pressures and individual choice**

Choosing to volunteer can be affected by collectivist drives. Gender and class indicated the likelihood of voluntary action in much of the 20th Century – with older, middle-class women particularly likely to choose this option. Volunteering choices can be shaped by awareness, encouragement or pressure to take part in activities that are socially sanctioned (or imposed) by the collectivity. Faith-based volunteering has a particularly strong influence, evidenced historically by, for example, the work of the Salvation Army, Scouts, Guides or the Christian Housewives Association.

■ **Grounded and abstract motivations to engage in voluntary action**

Volunteering choices can often be 'needs motivated', especially when a desire to support others is grounded in personal experience. Volunteering for 'abstract' causes may be more likely to be the preserve of those whose understanding or empathy for social issues lay beyond their immediate personal experience. By volunteering to serve an abstract cause, people may become involved in fundraising activity for, perhaps, relief funds for disaster or famine victims, or for those who suffer human rights abuse in despotic regimes. Similarly, they may be more directly involved in campaigning against the indignities societies impose on people or animals, or the damage done to the environment in 'other' places.

■ **Instrumental and altruistic motivation to volunteer**

Less analytical treatments of this topic tend to follow the populist view that voluntary activity *should* be primarily driven by altruistic motivations. More complex theories recognise that altruistic and instrumental motivations are linked. Clary and Snyder (1999) argue, for example, that volunteering serves several functions for the individual. [24]

That stated, much of the research on how people choose whether to volunteer or not are rooted in a largely unquestioned belief that volunteering is a good thing for the individual and for society and is therefore, fundamentally, a rational choice. By implication, those who choose not to volunteer are tarnished by an implicit value-based accusation that they care less about the world than those who do. But this may not necessarily be true.

The Quality Framework for Youth Social Action, discussed above, reinforces the view that altruistic and instrumental objectives can be closely aligned rather than

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[24] See also: Wilson, 2000; for recent studies, see: Holmes, 2009; Meer, 2007; MacNeela, 2008; Carpenter, 2010). These include value-based and other altruistic motives and also reasons of self interest such as: personal understanding and growth; skills and career development; and, social connectedness and advantage. People also volunteer, they argue, for 'protective' reasons, such as the reduction of guilt or to address personal problems. In sum, Clary and Snyder conclude that motivations for volunteering are multi-faceted and reject a false dichotomy between egoistic or altruistic motives. Anheier and Salomon (1999), also recognise a mix of altruistic and instrumental motives, but emphasise the importance of social obligation, especially in faith groups when studying how people 'choose' to volunteer (see also, for example, Ruiter and de Graaf, 2006; Becker and Dhingra, 2001; Borgonovi, 2008).

producing tensions or contradictions. Indeed in that report, these two motivational aspects are described in terms of a 'double benefit' (2013: 11).

Researching young people's routes into voluntary social action

Putting theoretical analysis to good use in empirical research is possible, providing that care is taken in defining terms and that clear indicators can be produced to measure attitudes and beliefs in the context of change.

Figure 3.3 indicates that within the realm of social action (which includes practically any activity in society) actions or inaction involves some level of decision making by young people.

Figure 3.3   **Conceptual map on the importance of volition in defining 'new volunteers'**
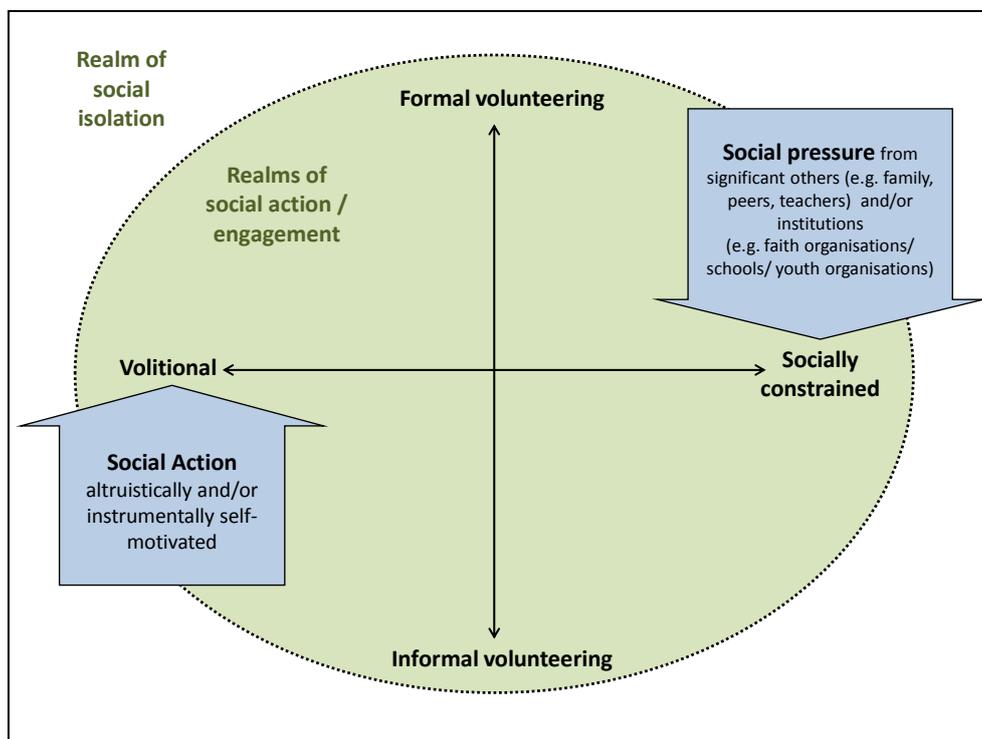
The diagram shows the relationship between formal and informal volunteering on one axis, and the extent to which young people make their own free choices or are constrained to do things on the other.

Formal volunteering is generally defined as activity which is planned, formalised in relationship terms and usually regularised. Informal voluntary action is more likely to be spontaneous and delivered irregularly. Informal volunteering is not usually about support within families – but is about neighbourliness, community action or helping individual people in particular circumstances. In Figure 3.3 working within families has not been removed, however, because many young people act, for example, as carers for siblings, parents, grandparents, etc. which is an important contribution socially – and might mean that they simply do not have the time or emotional energy to do formal voluntary social action.

Social action through volunteering (formal or informal) is 'freely given' in the sense that it brings benefits to the people who are recipients of help and support without direct financial costs (although there may be personal or social costs, as discussed above). This can indicate that the person who gives the help is behaving

'altruistically'. It is not easy to define what is 'freely given' and what is 'socially constrained'. All social action is constrained to some extent by cultural expectations about what is the right way to behave. But it is possible to think about volition/constraint across a continuum.

The task faced in evaluation work is to think of questions which capture information on the extent to which free choice is used or denied. As noted above, altruism rarely, if ever, operates in a vacuum. People who give time usually get other benefits ranging from simply feeling good about themselves, to more tangible benefits such as impressing university admissions tutors or potential employers. These might be described as 'instrumental' benefits – but it should not be assumed that this is a problem providing that the beneficiary is being supported in some way.

4   Programme impact: qualitative findings

Summary of the programme's aims and structure

The National Youth Agency, funded by the Cabinet Office Social Action Journey Fund (SAJF) and the O_2 Think Big programme, aimed to promote voluntary social action amongst young people by engaging them in youth led project work. A central aim of the programme was to target young people who are socially marginalised and/or from deprived areas. This was to be achieved through coordinated work with a number of youth organisations which was facilitated by a team of youth work apprentices (YWAs), led by a newly qualified youth worker and an experienced programme manager.

Young people entered the programme by attending Think Big events, after which many progressed to undertake Level 1 Think Big projects. It was anticipated that for many young people, this would be their first encounter with voluntary social action. Furthermore, it was anticipated that many of the younger age-group participants in the programme would progress to join the National Citizen Service.

The evaluation builds upon intensive research on the O_2 Think Big programme and Cabinet Office Social Action Fund 2 programmes by Durham University. This has enabled some comparative assessment of the progress made by young people from identified disadvantaged groups.

In the sections which follow, key findings from the research are provided which are drawn from a range of data sources including quantitative data from the SAJF, SAF and Think Big evaluations together with qualitative research undertaken as a part of this evaluation programme.[25]

At the outset, it was the intention of the evaluation team to assess the success of the programme against six areas of impact (shown in Figure 4.1[26]). The Think Big programme, which has been running since 2010, has been intensively evaluated since it opened. Research has shown that the programme is effective in engaging young people by providing money and support to develop youth-led projects which have a positive impact on the community.

Think Big operates with the expectation that at least 40% of young people who enter the programme are from less advantaged geographical areas. The programme has consistently exceeded this expectation with about 60% of participants meeting this criteria (see Chapman, 2015).

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[25] Full details of the methodology can be found in the original evaluation proposal which is available from author, which are summarised in Appendix 1.

[26] Each of the research questions used in the commentary, below, are mapped against these six criteria. See Appendix 2.

Figure 4.1	
Key areas of impact exploration in the evaluation programme	
(a) Challenging	Stretching and engaging, as well as exciting and enjoyable.
(b) Youth-led	Young people have a key role in owning and shaping the social action (with appropriate adult support).
(c) Socially impactful	Creating positive change that is of benefit to the wider community as well as to the young person themselves.
(d) Progressive	Progressing to other programmes and activities.
(e) **Reflective**	Valuing reflection, recognition and reward.
(f) Embedded	Becoming the norm in a young person's journey to adulthood and a habit for life.

While community impact is an essential criteria for participation in the programme, it is underpinned by a fundamental objective of developing young people's skills and confidence – and especially so for young people from less advantaged backgrounds.

Because the programme seeks to help young people from many backgrounds, the approach does not adopt 'gold standards' on what constitutes a successful project. This approach has emerged in response to the early evaluation research finding that levels of achievement should be measured or assessed differently depending upon the starting point of young people in the programme in experiential and capability terms.

In the SAJF programme, these findings have been replicated. And in terms of reaching socially marginalised young people, the programme has again exceeded expectations by either targeting more deprived areas or by focusing on young people who are marginalised for different reasons, such as disability or long term problems of ill-health.

■ *Is the programme exciting, engaging and enjoyable? Does the programme challenge and develop their views about society?*

There is extensive evidence to show that most young people find the Think Big programme enjoyable and exciting (Chapman and Dunkerley, 2014). This derives largely, it has been shown, from the programme management team's willingness to allow, and indeed expect, that young people try out new ideas to achieve objectives which are self-generated and important to them.

The Think Big programme was devised to encourage young people to address issues, through project work, which they believed are important to their communities (however so defined to include for example local communities, communities of interest or digital communities). In the SAJF programme, this principle was adhered to closely.

The qualitative evidence collected in this evaluation research programme shows that achieving this objective is easier for more affluent young people who already hold stocks of social capital or have demonstrated higher levels of achievement in terms of educational credentials. Young people with higher levels of confidence

and capability, together with tangible social, educational or financial assets, have a broader base of understanding of the social world and are able to identify possibilities for change which may be of a more abstract nature. That is, they can think beyond their own immediate needs and be more empathetic about the needs of others. As a consequence, their project plans tend to 'look' more ambitious than those attempted by young people with fewer advantages. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that these young people generally need lower levels of support in their project work.

Young people who are less confident and have lower levels of capability tend to have shorter social horizons and are less well aware and empathetic of others' needs outside of their immediate social circle. Project plans, therefore, are harder to elicit and more encouragement is needed to help them shape objectives which may achieve realistic outcomes. On the surface, the achievements of more marginalised young people can look less 'impressive' than those who have a stronger skill and confidence base. But, as noted in previous evaluation reports, this is not to argue that levels of achievement are lower. Small steps forward can represent significant achievement if they represent fundamental challenges to individuals on what they see as possible for themselves in developmental or confidence terms or for what they can achieve for communities.

■ ***Does the programme help them to develop and act on their own ideas? How do projects differ in terms of objectives and scope?***

The Think Big programme aims to encourage young people to act on their own ideas, but as noted, the SAJF programme was particularly concerned with the situation of socially marginalised young people who are less well equipped to achieve this objective.

Those young people who have significant stocks of social capital and previous experience in voluntary social action (or at least a predilection to get involved) tended to engage quickly and were eager to develop projects which tackled issues of importance to them. Often such projects tackled issues which were not grounded in their own experience but demonstrated higher levels of empathetic understanding of other young people's needs. Young people with higher levels of confidence and capability were also more able to lead projects without too much support (see section on youth led projects below for further discussion).

Much of the work of the youth work apprentices (YWAs) who were engaged to carry out the programme, with support from a programme manager and a newly-qualified youth worker, focused on engagement of young people who showed significant signs of nervousness about, or resistance to getting involved.

Observational evidence and reportage from YWAs shows that resistance from young people was palpable when meetings were arranged to engage them in the programme. This resistance manifested itself in direct strategies of disruption, or passive non-cooperation. In the case of the former, some groups of young people were not ready to listen or even settle sufficiently to hear what the programme was about. YWAs, therefore, had to develop strategies to tackle the situation.

It was recognised early on that active resistance was usually led by one or a small number of dominant individuals in groups and the job of the YWAs was to

either make special efforts to actively engage them within the context of a group or to isolate them so that others could participate more freely.

The preferred approach was to win over those who showed the highest levels of resistance within the group context and by using a mix of 'incentives' or 'treats' (such as 'freebies') this was often made possible. In other situations, this did not work and so the more disruptive or resistant individuals needed to be dealt with separately. Sometimes, this occurred from within the group. On one occasion, when every member of the group of young people seemed likely to fail to get involved in the activities, just one person showed signs of willingness to engage and had the courage to approach the YWAs for help. This had the effect of empowering others who followed their lead – so isolating the more vocal and disruptive participants.

The active involvement in the production of ideas by young people could cause difficulties for the YWAs too. In one incident, a young person became so frustrated that their idea for a social action project was put under a degree of critical scrutiny by YWAs (but not rejected, as such) they exhibited signs of anger and frustration – culminating in the throwing of a chair. So it is not just a question of getting marginalised young people to think up ideas, it is also vital to get them to work with these ideas in a realistic, constructive, collective and empathetic way.

The newly-qualified youth worker and YWAs developed their own skills and understanding as the programme progressed and became more able to exercise judgement on how to deal with particular groups more quickly. In some cases, they could engage resistant groups through their energy and enthusiasm, sometimes this needed to be allied with incentives – but in some situations, they engaged young people by withdrawing their own efforts, perhaps by exhibiting signs of disappointment or frustration, so forcing young people to make a decision to engage or abandon the session. In the event, no sessions were abandoned.

- **■ *Will they understand what adding value to their community means? Is it evident that projects make a difference to the pro-social attitudes of the young people who organise projects?***

Less marginalised young people were often more able to engage quickly with the programme, as noted above, and due to higher levels of social awareness and empathetic understanding, they could imagine how their contribution could benefit communities. Social understanding and empathy alone do not necessarily result in the generation of viable project ideas, however, and YWAs had to work hard with young people to ensure that their ideas were realistic and achievable. For the more capable participants, over ambition was often the most difficult thing to overcome – working on a programme backed by a major company and supported by government led them to imagine outcomes which were too far out of their reach.

Managing over ambition without lowering motivation was a hard balance to strike by YWAs, and strategies had to be developed and replicated to ensure that projects could reach successful outcomes. Where there were groups of mixed ability, this problem was exacerbated to some extent because YWAs needed to work in different ways with young people in one location.

The less capable and/or more socially marginalised young people often found it difficult to understand terms such as 'social action' and were unclear or hard to

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convince about what would constitute social benefit. The result of this could be that they would seek to achieve oblique or tangential forms of social benefit rather than direct forms. A common example would be to produce a project which was, essentially, merely about fundraising so that somebody else could achieve benefit. In other cases, ideas were developed solely for entertainment rather than social benefit as such – sometimes this amounted, on the surface at least, to their own personal entertainment by making a visit to an ice rink or cinema or such.

However, YWAs realised that even these activities could bring benefit to young people in unanticipated ways, so they did not reject such proposals out of hand. For the most socially marginalised young people, to arrange a visit somewhere new or different could produce significant social value. This derived from a process of widening social horizons by bringing young people into contact with previously unknown 'others' in or near their immediate communities about whom they held prejudicial, derogatory or fearful views.

To make assertions that adding social value is a straightforward manner in a social programme such as SAJF are, therefore, unfounded. The evaluation points to a need for considerable sensitivity and flexibility in approaches to defining what counts as important to young people or could (without them necessarily know this initially) bring potential benefit to young people.

■ ***Is there evidence to show that the programme is youth led? To what extent do young people frame the purpose of projects?***

As noted above, there is much evidence to suggest that the Think Big programme is youth led. But definitions of what constitutes a youth-led project need to be carefully thought through as levels of autonomy differ significantly depending upon the asset base of the individuals involved.

One of the dangers of delivering interventions such as this, in the context of the SAJF programme, is that young people's willingness to devise, plan and deliver projects by themselves (with more or less support required depending on their capability) can be undermined by those who are there to support them.

The SAJF programme, delivered by the NYA, was devised in such a way as to allow other local youth organisations to engage young people in the programme and to support them through their project journey once a Think Big proposal had been accepted. In the majority of cases, youth organisations or youth workers were effective in using their professional skills and judgment to get the best out of young people, but not always.

In one situation observed by Durham researchers, it was evident that local youth workers had led the programme leaving young people with minimal room to determine the objective or practice to be adopted in achieving social benefit. In this case, a youth worker further developed an existing project through Think Big. While the project itself may have brought some social benefit (although this was not observed by the researchers, so it is not possible to know if that was the case) it was clear that the young people involved were gaining little benefit. Few recognised that the project was 'theirs' in any sense and some did not know that there was a project running at all.

This was an isolated case, but it is worth noting because it highlights the problems associated with 'managing' young people rather than working with young people to achieve outcomes which are important to them. From the perspective of the youth worker in question, managing a group of disadvantaged young people may have been the limit of their ambition. But from observation of

other case studies in this programme, it is clear that this is an underestimate of what they *could* have achieved if properly supported. Neglecting young people's potential may be an 'easier option' in the short term but clearly does not represent good youth practice such as that exercised by the YWAs as noted above.

■ ***Can differences be determined and understood between more and less disadvantaged groups?***

The degree of benefit brought to young people who are more or less disadvantaged is difficult to measure because 'concrete' levels of achievement are difficult to define and compare. Certainly, there are significant problems in measuring comparative benefit statistically because young people self-report their levels of capability and benefit differently, depending on social, personal and economic circumstance, and upon their existing levels of capability and confidence.

Figure 4.2   YWA Case Study[27]: Nottingham University Hospitals Youth Service

In May 2014 the SAJF team started to work with the Nottingham University Hospitals Youth Service (NUHYS) to support them in their Social Action Journey.

"NUHYS works with young people between 13-25 with long term health conditions and disabilities. The youth service provides the young people with the opportunity to develop both social and soft skills. There are various different issues that young people face in hospital from building relationships with medical staff to having the power and the confidence to say no to a medical procedure that they do not understand."

"The young people involved in the "Young people 4 Change" group in the hospital recognised these issues and decided to start a social action project within the hospital and applied to Think Big. The aim of the project was to come together as a group and research the issues young people were facing across the Children's Hospital as a whole. The young people produced videos around these issues to try and make it easier for young people in hospital to deal with issues they may face whilst in hospital such as what it is like to go to theatre for a young person or to provide information on who can attend the youth club and how to get involved."

"Young people were given the chance to create an App for the youth service, this gave them a platform to show their videos, a safe social space for young people in the hospital to interact and a place to get in touch, in confidence, with a number of professionals they may need outside of the medical team."

"NUHYS found that by enabling the young people to be involved with such a prominent project they have been able to gain skills, build on their confidence and find new friendships. NUHYS have gone on to apply for more funding for other projects for 2015 and have a vision of applying for Think Bigger."

From a statistical point of view, assessing change in young people using self-reported questionnaires is difficult. Analysis from the Think Big programme demonstrates, for example, that young people with stocks of social and cultural capital, higher levels of affluence and substantive levels of academic achievement

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[27] Case studies are edited versions of case notes written by Youth Work Apprentices. They are presented in YWAs own words to demonstrate both the value of the project and what YWAs learned from their own involvement."

rate their level of capability on a variety of social domains differently from those young people who have limited resources. Young people with higher levels of capability, in short, rate their skills at a lower level than young people who actually have more limited capability.

The reason for this is clear. Relatively advantaged young people, in positive and well resourced social and family environments, are more likely to achieve well against conventional measures of success. But such success is not, obviously, handed to them on a plate. Achieving success at GCSEs, A levels and at university does not come easily and young people have to expend much effort and self discipline to achieve their goals. Furthermore they become accustomed to taking calculated risks that they may fail by endlessly pushing themselves across new barriers. Pushing themselves in such ways ensures that they can make reasonably good assessments of their own capability and report them to researchers on Likert scales such as those adopted in this evaluation.

Young people with low stocks of social and cultural capital, short social horizons and limited achievement in conventional terms may have not had their capabilities tested anything like as much as their more successful counterparts. Consequently, they are less capable at measuring their current abilities. This does not mean that their ambitions are necessarily dented nor their self perceptions of their capability suppressed. On the contrary, the evidence points to the opposite: less advantaged young people are more likely to *over-estimate* their capability precisely *because* it has not been tested.

The results of evaluations can, therefore, look somewhat disappointing if read uncritically because they may show that disadvantaged young people 'get worse' in terms of self-reported capability when they finish a programme while the most advantaged appear to 'get a bit better (but not too much because they understand the measure more clearly).

Differences in self reported levels of achievement may be noted by evaluative research, but the interpretation of these differences needs to be carefully thought through if understanding is to be gained. And further, a key element of good youth work is to make effective judgment calls of this nature when assessing both the potential and achievement of young people from more or less advantaged communities.

- ■ ***Are the digital materials developed fit for purpose? Do the young people on the programme use them? Are digital technologies effective in engagement of young people, and what are the limits of digital engagement? How well are they supported in the development of community projects?***

Digital technologies were embraced in the programme to enhance its scope to deliver messages on what constitutes social action to young people. The process was undertaken in several stages. The first stage involved a day's meeting at *Yoomee* at the Electric Works in Sheffield with the NYA programme manager and the PI of the evaluation to scope the approach to the development of digital techniques to engage and guide young people through the project planning process.

Following this key principles about what constituted social action and social benefit were generated in a day conference at The O_2 Think Big Hub in Hoxton by a group of young people in coordination with YWAs, O_2 Think Big staff, and the NYA newly-qualified youth worker and programme manager. The session was facilitated by staff from Yoomee.

The outcome of this work was the generation of materials, available digitally, to support 'ideation' sessions to explore the meaning of the term social action and how it could contribute positively to social issues, via self-generated projects that could produce benefit to young people who devised such projects and to those who took part in them.

The use of such techniques was limited to some extent by simple practicalities (such as the number of tablets for use on the day together with the availability of wifi or a strong enough broadband signal in youth centres to make it work), to the complexities surrounding young people's willingness to engage in the exercise in a constructive and disciplined way.

As noted above, many of the more disadvantaged or marginalised groups of young people had some distance to travel before they were ready to engage fully in the programme. YWAs recognised and felt uncomfortable about the need to use incentives or mild coercion to engage or cajole more marginalised young people in the programme.

Often YWAs had to spend much of their time in ideation sessions devoting energy to the basics of engagement before it was possible to move on to the more technical level of participation demanded by the previously prepared digital tools. Indeed, in some sessions it was not possible to reach this level of engagement using digital technologies as face-to-face methods worked more effectively. In fact digital technologies could become more of a source of distraction than a focus and often less engaged young people resorted to giving close attention to their phones or tablets *rather* than allow themselves to concentrate fully.

Figure 4.3   YWA Case Study: Cadence Café, Atherton

"I started off delivering sessions when I visited a youth music café called Cadence Café in Atherton, in this case I was supporting my manager to run what is now called an exploration session. During this session we explore with the young people the key words of our programme which are COMMUNITY & SOCIAL ACTION. We want to hear what young people's idea of a community is and whether they know or understand the term - social action. Once we've explored what a community is we then look at communities they know or are part of. This gives us the foundations to be able to support the young person is doing some sort of social action because to follow this we look at the issues the communities are facing right now."

"After we have done this the young people are then supported in thinking about how they can try to resolve this issue. For example when we attended Cadence Café one young person saw the issue that not enough people were being supported in writing CV's and that unemployment was high in their area. This young person then ran a social action project in which they delivered a CV workshop from the cafè for all ages. That young person used their skills and abilities to help benefit others which is what our programme is all about - supporting young people to enhance their skills and abilities by using them to run a social action project."

"Going back to the session with Cadence Café... the young people we were working with had developed some fantastic ideas on what they can do to support a local community. So because these young people had managed to create some fantastic ideas we then supported the young people to develop them into a social action project. After the session we gave the young people some time to enhance their project ideas before I returned to support the young people to apply to O$_2$ Think Big for £300 funding which will help them with resources etc to get their projects up and running. The young people at Cadence Café have now completed their projects"

Resistance to engagement can stem from different sources. In the case of young people, who were not generally from socially deprived backgrounds, but were nevertheless socially marginalised by ill-health or disability, engagement was

challenging because of a deeply rooted lack of trust in people who held positions of authority. In one case study, young people in the programme were long-term stay patients in hospital who considered themselves to have very limited autonomy and little voice in shaping their own interests or destiny. It required intensive work on the part of the NYA team to win the confidence and trust of young people – but facilitating their journey towards engagement with the programme was worthwhile.

In sum, those young people who were quicker to get involved and had a willingness invest in the programme were more likely to subscribe to the principles developed for digital engagement. This suggests that there are significant benefits to be gained by investing in such developments, but the likelihood is that engagement by more marginal groups will need more intensive support *before* they are ready to take part.

- ■ *How do young people reflect upon their social action journey, has it changed them in any significant way? Can young people articulate how their project has helped their community? Can young people articulate to others the benefits of engagement?*

The evaluation process provided an opportunity for young people to reflect upon their experiences and the impact their project may have had for beneficiaries and for themselves. The more capable, confident and articulate participants in the Think Big project can generally marshal their thoughts relatively easily in this respect and can explain both the benefits gained and the problems they faced in achieving their objectives.[28] The following short quotations reflect young people's ability to reflect on what they have achieved.

> *"As you progress you get better and better. You want to give back to the community."*

> *"As volunteers we want to, sort of, give something back to the community, build skills and help other people, as well as ourselves…"*

> *"We've done a short film in our youth service club, to show how the club is, and how fun it is, and get it promoted because you want people in the hospital who are all sad and down just to have a bit of fun and be happy for a while. Get that smile on their face."*

> *"I don't think we've done anything quite like this. We learned a lot from this…getting young people to engage in activities and get the confidence to get out there and do it themselves."*

And further, many young people do recognise that their involvement in the project is part of a longer journey over which they have a considerable level of self-determination.

> *"I reckon we're going to get more experience, I reckon we're going to get generally just more knowledge about what you can and what you can't do. If I don't have a job, I would go on to more stuff. I'm going to get anything I can get because it's the best thing to do because it gives me help, I enjoy it and I like learning about people. I'm a people person. It could change my life, really."*

Others were able to articulate the difficulties surrounding resistance to change. The following quotation shows awareness of 'categorical fate' whereby young people block their own opportunities by focussing upon perceived barriers to change and then embed ways of thinking or behaviour which may reproduce feelings of discrimination or disadvantage.

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[28] Such comments have been extensively reported in Think Big evaluation reports, see the main programme reviews Chapman and Dunkerley (2013, 2014).

"We work with young people that have been kicked out of school and they think that in school the teachers don't like us. Most people say that it's because we're black. They take it as racism. But I'm thinking to myself it's not 'cause we're black… You push yourself to be that kind of person. [We] try to get them to understand that point."

The above quotation represents a sophisticated and reflective answer to the question of how social action can affect people if they are amenable to self reflection and change. But many participants in the programme appeared to have little access to or interest in more complex explanations for their social situation. Consequently, marginalised young people found the assessment of personal and community benefit much harder to do and interviews with young people tended to produce relatively shallow or anodyne commentaries on the effect of their involvement.

At best, some young people mentioned that projects had improved their confidence but most struggled to identify other benefits without some prompting about the soft-skills they could have developed.

Helen: "What skills have you got from it that you think you could use?"

Young Person: "I don't know."

Helen: "Have you had to do planning and organising?"

Young Person: "Yeah, we've done quite a lot. We've done loads and it's probably given us a lot of confidence…"

Helen: "So you have got something out of it for yourself as well."

Young Person: "hmmm, I suppose so"

In some cases, young people resisted the idea that they had been involved in projects at all or felt that they had been exploited in some way. The exchange which follows shows how participants attempted to position themselves in relation to the organisation which supported them (which they identified only as O_2) in a derogatory sense, while others could see the advantage of investment in them.

Young Person 1: "One thing that I would say if I was being completely honest, and I wouldn't say it if an O2 person was here, is they're naming all our projects O2 projects when we've really done all the work. All they've done is put a bit of money in. So I don't really think it's fair for them to call it O2 projects when we've done all the work…"

Young Person 2: "I think we should give them a bit of credit for obviously giving us the money…"

Young Person 1: "…it should be our project, funded by O2."

Young Person 2: "We understand that this only happened because of them…"

Young Person 1: "If they hadn't funded us, we would have made it work."

Young Person 2: "The funding made it quicker."

Young Person 1: "Yeah, the funding's really good but I don't think it's an O2 project, I think it's a [... youth organisation name removed...] project"

Young Person 3: "I understand what you're saying. 'Cause I feel like if people hear O2 project then you think 'oh well it was just them with a bit of young people input' when actually it was all of us all the way and they brought in the money."

While more confident participants are eager to tell the story of their successes, more socially marginalised or socially deprived participants were unwilling even to tell significant others that they had played a major role in a project, feeling that efforts to do so may be disbelieved or ridiculed. The exchange which follows, between researcher and young person, indicates that a journey has been travelled towards engagement in social action - but that embedding the benefit of that journey is beset

with difficulties due to lack of confidence and implied lack of trust and support of parents.

> *Young Person: "My Mam and Dad don't know what we've done so I'm going to go home and trick them into saying that I've been told to do this project..."*
>
> *Helen: "You wouldn't need to trick them. Do you not think they'd be supportive if you said 'this is my idea'?"*
>
> *Young Person: "What they would think is that I couldn't do it by myself. So that's why he's the leader" [points at friend]…*
>
> *Helen: "Why do you think that?"*
>
> *Young Person: "Just because they feel like I can't really…like I don't have that amount of responsibility with things."*
>
> *Helen: "So are you doing this to prove to you or to prove to them?"*
>
> *Young Person: "To prove to them."*

Personal development journeys are more easily articulated by young people who have access to ideas about the purpose of voluntary social action know who may be impressed by their participation; and, be aware of the impact it may have for beneficiaries. For young people from families which are supportive of such activity or encourage their children to get involved, the likelihood is that they will already know how to 'talk about' voluntary social action and position their involvement in a positive way. More socially marginalised young people, as the above quotations suggest, may be worried about talking about the experience because they fear a negative response, or may not even consider thinking about the idea of a developmental journey – but rather consider it simply as yet another 'episode' in their lives that has been foisted upon them.

- ■ ***Do young people make a social action journey within the scope of a single Think Big project? What are the prospects of young people engaging in similar or associated programmes in future (including Think Bigger and NCS)? Do the young people feel that they receive adequate recognition for achievements? How does recognition impact on the likelihood of future participation in social action?***
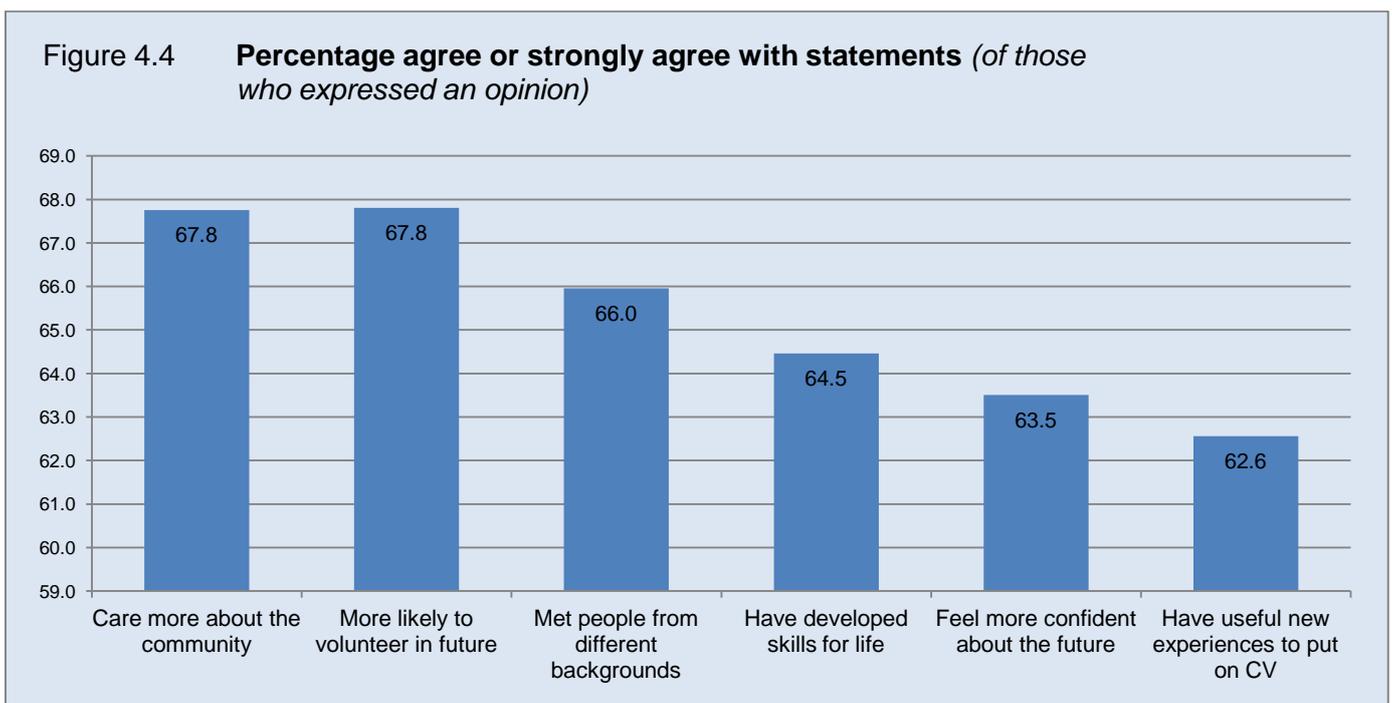
The Think Big programme evaluations over several years have shown that young people want to receive a measure of recognition for their achievements. But the types of recognition they want vary considerably. In some cases, young people are incentivised by tangible symbols of achievement such as a certificate or badge that they can show or refer to when writing a CV for a job, education or training course. For some, more conventional 'celebration events' meet their expectation where they may receive recognition or an award under the gaze of significant others. Some like it when a party is organised where they receive a 'treat' for having successfully completed the programme.

Often, young people want to gain recognition from people in a position of authority in the organisation which has funded them – even if they do not know the person or the encounter is short-lived. And some want a much more personal form of recognition, from people who have watched or helped them make their journey through a project – and that awareness of their achievement from such persons is enough to embed the experience in a positive way. What is clear from evaluation work, however, is that the absence of recognition (no matter what form it may take or preferred) is generally regretted by young people.

It is unlikely that recognition of achievement, in itself, guarantees or encourages future participation in voluntary social action. The quality and depth of experience of doing the project is much more important. However, as project work of this kind represent 'ephemeral events' in young people's lives, it is important to embed a sense of completion either through an identifiable rite of passage such as an award ceremony, celebration, certification or congratulatory handshake.

It is not possible to tell, from the evaluation of the SAJF project how many young people will go on to do social action in future as a result of the programme as it is too soon to measure such commitment. However, research on the Think Big programme over several years, together with research on the Social Action Fund 2 project suggests that many young people express a willingness to do so.

As Figure 4.4 shows, 70% of participants who had completed the Think Big programme at least a year ago state that as a result of involvement, they are more likely to do voluntary social action in future. Such attitudes, as can be seen from the remaining bars of Figure 4.2 are aligned with other indicators of pro-sociality such as caring more about the community, meeting people from different backgrounds, developing skills, feeling confident about the future and having recognisable achievements which can be recorded on a CV.

Figure 4.4   **Percentage agree or strongly agree with statements** *(of those who expressed an opinion)*

While the data presented in Figure 4.4 provide a clear picture that most young people who had been involved in the Think Big programme agree that their involvement has been beneficial, it should be recognised that this is a self-selected sample from all previous participants. The likelihood is that people who responded are particularly interested in thinking about and reporting on their journey through the programme. Those who did not respond may simply be too busy to do so and could give similar answers. But the likelihood is that some young people are more willing to articulate their feelings than others because they have awareness of the discourse surrounding the benefits of voluntary social action for themselves and for society in general.

This may not mean that others have had a less positive experience, as such, but implies that people who are less adept at recognising and articulating the benefits of voluntary social action have a longer journey to make towards regularised commitment to such activity. As noted in the introductory section of this report, research shows that some young people are more likely to engage in voluntary social action because of patterns of socialisation which encourage, expect or demand participation. This is particularly prevalent in, for example, the children of families where parents are involved in faith groups.

A social action journey, in sum, differs depending upon the starting point of the individual who embarks upon it. The distance they travel and the quality and impact of the experience they have cannot easily be measured in a consistent or comparable way as a consequence.

5   Quantitative findings on impact

The quantitative evaluation strategy was devised by the Behavioural Insight Team (BIT). Two questionnaires were devised for the evaluation of the programme (see Appendix 1). The first questionnaire was administered at the beginning of the programme at youth engagement events. The questionnaires were completed on paper or online using Bristol Online Survey using tablets. A total of 147 questionnaires were completed.

The second questionnaire was completed either at celebration events for young people who had completed their projects or in response to email invitations to do so from the National Youth Agency (including an initial request and follow up reminder) and Durham University (which issued two further reminders). A total of 31 questionnaires were completed.

Biographical characteristics of respondents

The following tables present data on the biographical characteristics of respondents from each of the two samples.

Figure 5.1 shows the proportion of males and females in the samples. It can be seen that a gender balance is broadly achieved in each sample, although the proportions of males drops from 55% in the first questionnaire to 45% in the second – showing that females were more likely to complete an end questionnaire.

Figure 5.1 **Sex of respondents**	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents
Female	46.8	55.2
Male	53.2	44.8
N=	139	29

Figure 5.2 presents data on the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) breakdown of the samples. In the larger sample responding to the first questionnaire, about 19% of respondents were from ethnic minorities (8% Asian, 4% Black, 3% Mixed). In the final questionnaire, there were many fewer BAME respondents (3%). The majority of respondents in the final questionnaire were from North East England which may help explain the under-representation of BAME participants.

Figure 5.2 **Ethnicity of respondents**	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1.4	0.0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	4.9	0.0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1.4	0.0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	2.8	3.3
Black or Black British African	1.4	0.0
Mixed	2.8	0.0
White - British	81.8	90.0
White - Irish	0.0	3.3
Other White (please specify below)	0.0	3.3
Other - Any other ethnic group	2.1	0.0
Sorry, but I don't want to say	1.4	0.0
N=	147	31

Figure 5.3 shows the percentage of respondents engaged in education, training and employment. The vast majority of respondents were in full-time training or education: 67-70% across both samples. It is interesting to note that 15-17% of respondents in each sample recorded engagement in voluntary work.

Figure 5.3 Engagement with education, training and employment[29]	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents
Full-time education or training	70.1	66.7
Part-time education or training	7.5	6.7
Apprenticeship, or similar type of training or work experience	7.5	0.0
Full-time work	2.7	10.0
Part-time work	4.8	10.0
Not in education, employment or training	2.7	0.0
Carer	0.0	0.0
Volunteer work	15.0	16.7
Prefer not to say	0.7	3.3
Other	0.7	3.3
N=	147	31

Figure 5.4 presents data on the faith of respondents. At the start of the programme a majority of respondents stated that they had no religion (65%) but the end questionnaire sample had fewer who stated this to be the case (43%). There were

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[29] Percentages do not round to 100% because respondents could tick more than one box on the questionnaire – the percentages therefore represent the proportion of the sample involved in each category and does not preclude involvement in more than one category of activity.

more Christian respondents in the end questionnaire, this is likely to be due to its predominantly white composition and may impact on the extent to which respondents in the end questionnaires positively reported aspects of their experience of voluntary social action (see section 3 for further explanation).

Figure 5.4 **Faith of respondents**	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	18.4	40.0
Hindu	2.0	0.0
Muslim	5.4	0.0
No religion	64.6	43.3
Other	2.7	6.7
Non response	2.7	3.3
I don't want to say	4.1	6.7
N=	147	31

Figure 5.5 presents data on the percentage of respondents who had received free school meals (FSM). This is generally taken as a good indicator of household deprivation. In the first questionnaire sample 27% had FSM at some point compared with just 13% for the end questionnaire sample. Between 17-19% of respondents did not know, or would not say if they had FSMs.

Figure 5.5 **Respondents receiving free school meals**	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents
Never took free school meals	53.7	70.0
Always or sometimes took free school meals	27.2	13.3
I don't know	10.2	10.0
I don't want to say	3.4	3.3
No response	5.4	3.3
Grand Total	100.0	100.0

Figure 5.6 presents data on the proportion young people in the samples who were disabled or had limiting illnesses. Respondents were able to answer positively or negatively to both questions so there is likely to be an overlap between the two percentages: the 'limiting illness or disability' will probably include all cases. In the first questionnaire sample, 14% of respondents were disabled or had limiting illnesses compared with 10% of the end questionnaire sample.

Figure 5.6 **Respondents with disabilities or limiting illnesses**	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents
Not registered disabled	92.4	96.7
Registered disabled	7.6	3.3
N=	144	30
No limiting illness	85.9	90.0
Limiting illness or disability	14.1	10.0
N=	142	30

Participation in social action

A number of questions were asked to assess the extent to which respondents had previously been engaged in particular forms of social action (excluding participation in the SAJF project in the case of the end questionnaire respondents).

Figure 5.7 shows that respondents at the start of the programme were less likely to have never been engaged in: volunteering at a local club or society (36% compared with 18% end sample); raising money for a charity (25% compared with 14% end sample); and, organising a petition (66% compared with 21% end sample).

The end sample respondents were also more likely to have been heavily engaged in voluntary social action in three domains (raising money for a charity and organising a petition, or other types of social action).

With small samples in mind, it is not appropriate to conclude much from these differences. Like as not, the impetus to complete the final questionnaire would be greater from those who were more committed to social action.

Figure 5.7 **Participation in volunteering/social action**	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents
Volunteer at a club etc		
At least once a week	32.2	32.1
At least once a month	14.0	35.7
Less often	17.5	14.3
Never	36.4	17.9
Total	143	28
Raised money for a charity		
At least once a week	5.6	14.3
At least once a month	19.7	39.3
Less often	49.3	32.1
Never	25.4	14.3
Total	142	28
Organising a petition		
At least once a week	2.8	7.1
At least once a month	7.1	25.0
Less often	24.1	35.7
Never	66.0	32.1
Total	141	28
Other form of voluntary social action		
At least once a week	19.0	25.0
At least once a month	16.9	50.0
Less often	28.9	17.9
Never	35.2	7.1
Total	142	28

Figure 5.8 considers the extent to which respondents were influenced by significant others to get involved in social action. In the larger start of programme sample, it is evident that parents (16%), schools 17%) and youth workers (41%) were likely to have the most influence. The pattern is similar for the end questionnaire sample, but respondents were more likely to emphasis strong influence than in the start questionnaire sample.

Figure 5.8 **What factors influenced participation in volunteering / social action**	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents
Close friends		
A lot of influence	11.5	28.6
Some influence	43.2	32.1
This had no influence on me	45.3	39.3
Total	139	28
Siblings		
A lot of influence	5.1	17.9
Some influence	17.4	25.0
This had no influence on me	77.5	57.1
Total	138	28
Parents		
A lot of influence	15.9	20.7
Some influence	39.1	41.4
This had no influence on me	44.9	37.9
Total	138	29
School		
A lot of influence	17.0	29.6
Some influence	27.7	14.8
This had no influence on me	55.3	55.6
Total	141	27
Youth workers		
A lot of influence	41.7	55.2
Some influence	35.3	27.6
This had no influence on me	23.0	17.2
Total	139	29

Figure 5.9 reports on the motivation or attraction to getting involved in social action. In the larger first questionnaire sample, it is evident that learning new skills (44%) and job prospects (46%) are the most likely to be a big influence on taking part. This finding is mirrored in the end questionnaire sample – though to a greater extent. Meeting new people, having fun and making a difference to the local area are also considered to be important factors however.

Figure 5.9 **What factors attracted participants to volunteering / social action**	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents
Fun and exciting		
A lot of influence	35.9	50.0
Some influence	46.5	46.4
This had no influence on me	17.6	3.6
N=	142	28
Meet new people		
A lot of influence	31.9	42.9
Some influence	42.6	39.3
This had no influence on me	25.5	17.9
N=	141	28
Develop new skills		
A lot of influence	44.0	53.6
Some influence	34.8	35.7
This had no influence on me	21.3	10.7
N=	141	28
Improve job prospects		
A lot of influence	46.0	58.6
Some influence	29.5	31.0
This had no influence on me	24.5	10.3
N=	139	29
Help out in the local area		
A lot of influence	27.0	44.8
Some influence	46.7	41.4
This had no influence on me	26.3	13.8
N=	137	29

Behavioural insight team questions on pro-sociality and wellbeing

The approach to the quantitative research was largely determined by the Behavioural Insight Team which garnered, on behalf of Cabinet Office, tried and tested attitudinal questions from a number of sources.[30] Summary data are presented in this section on responses to the start and end questionnaires. Full data tables are provided in Appendix 4 together with details on the composition of aggregated data.

Figure 5.10 presents data on various aspects of pro-sociality. Mean scores are presented for several categories of opinion and are compared for the start and end of the programme. While these data are not strictly comparable due to differences in sample sizes and composition they provide a rough indication of the direction of travel in attitudinal terms. In both dimensions, it is apparent that respondents at the end of the programme had more positive viewpoints in terms of sympathy (feeling bad) and empathy (understanding predicaments of others).

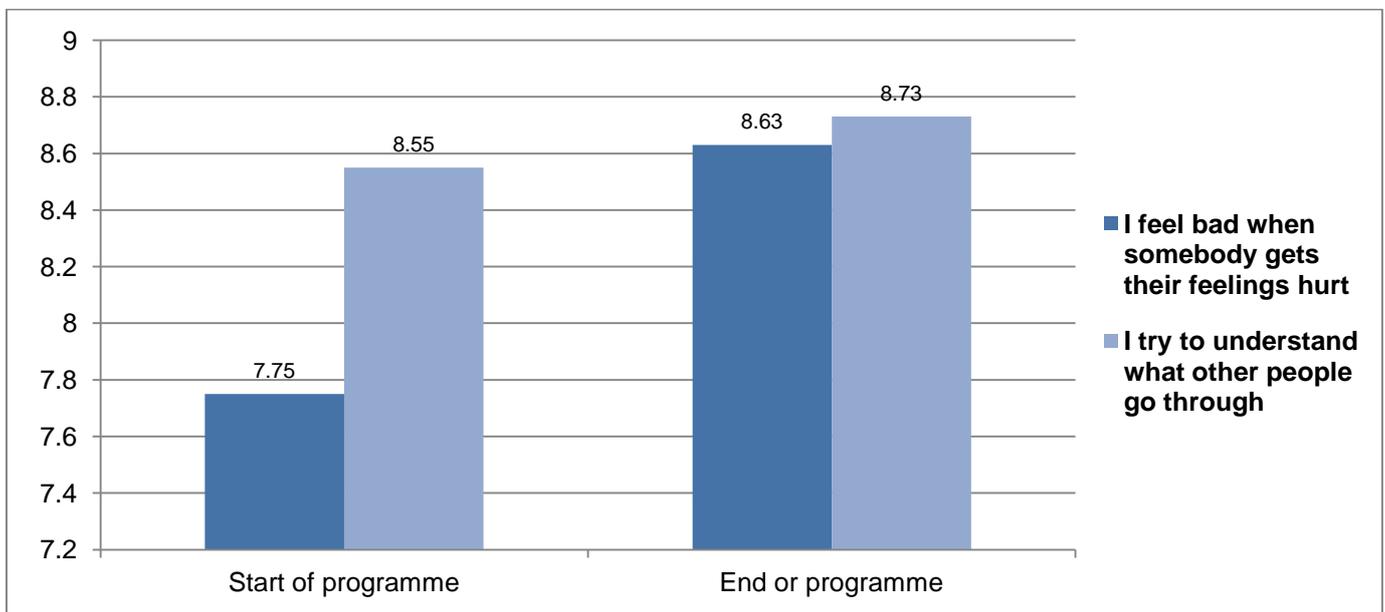Figure 5.10 **Empathy indicators**

Figure 5.11 considers factors associated with self determination and confidence in tackling challenges. It is apparent that there is no difference at the end of programme from the start in respect of 'having a go at things that are new to me'. In the other three domains, it is clear that respondents at the end of the programme seemed to have stronger levels of confidence. It is worthy of note that at start and end of the programme, most young people recorded an ability to find out who to go to for help to resolve a problem (mean scores 8.55 at start - 9.33 at end), do most things if they try (mean scores 8.16 at start – 9.13 at end), or to a lesser extent work out their problems (mean scores 7.52 at start – 8.20 at end).

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[30] See Appendix 4 which details the source of questions.

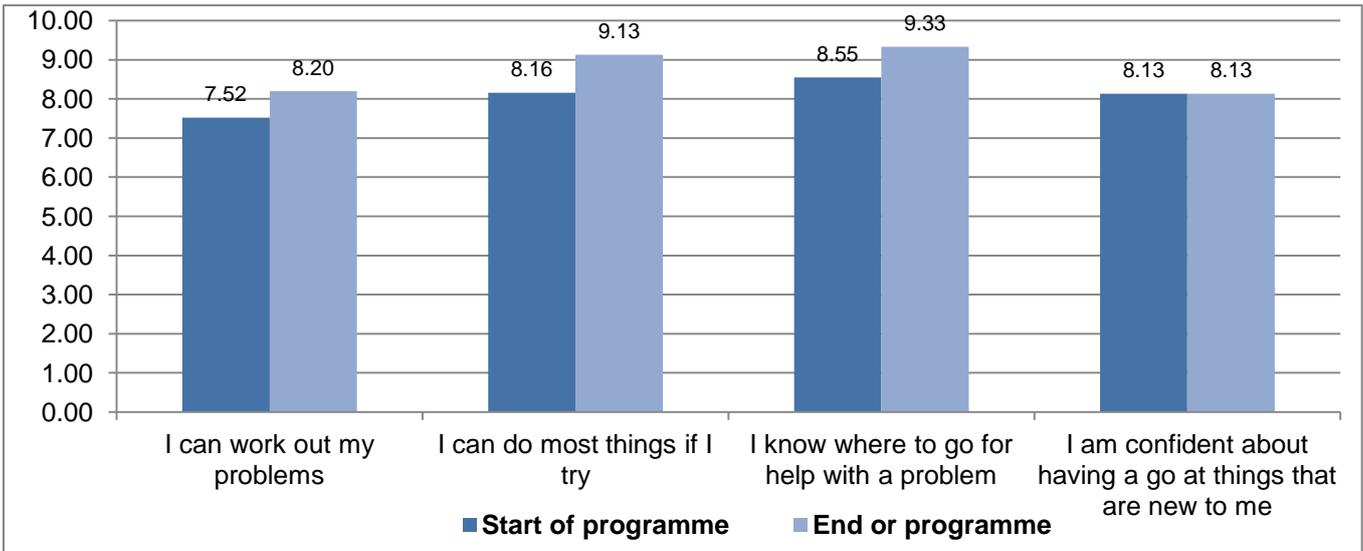Figure 5.11 **Problem solving indicators**

Figure 5.12 presents data on team working and leadership abilities. It is clear from these data that young people are most likely to report that they enjoy working with people of their age – suggesting a strong interest and commitment to team working. The data indicate that such feelings are stronger for those who completed the end questionnaire (mean scores 7.77 start sample, 9.26 end sample).

Respondents who completed the end questionnaires also seemed to be more confident about expressing their ideas or resolving differences of opinion than for respondents at the start of the programme. Working with people with different opinions from themselves was the area of least confidence in both samples, although the mean scores ranging from 78.4 (programme start) – 8.03 (programme end) suggests quite a strong sense of confidence in such activity.
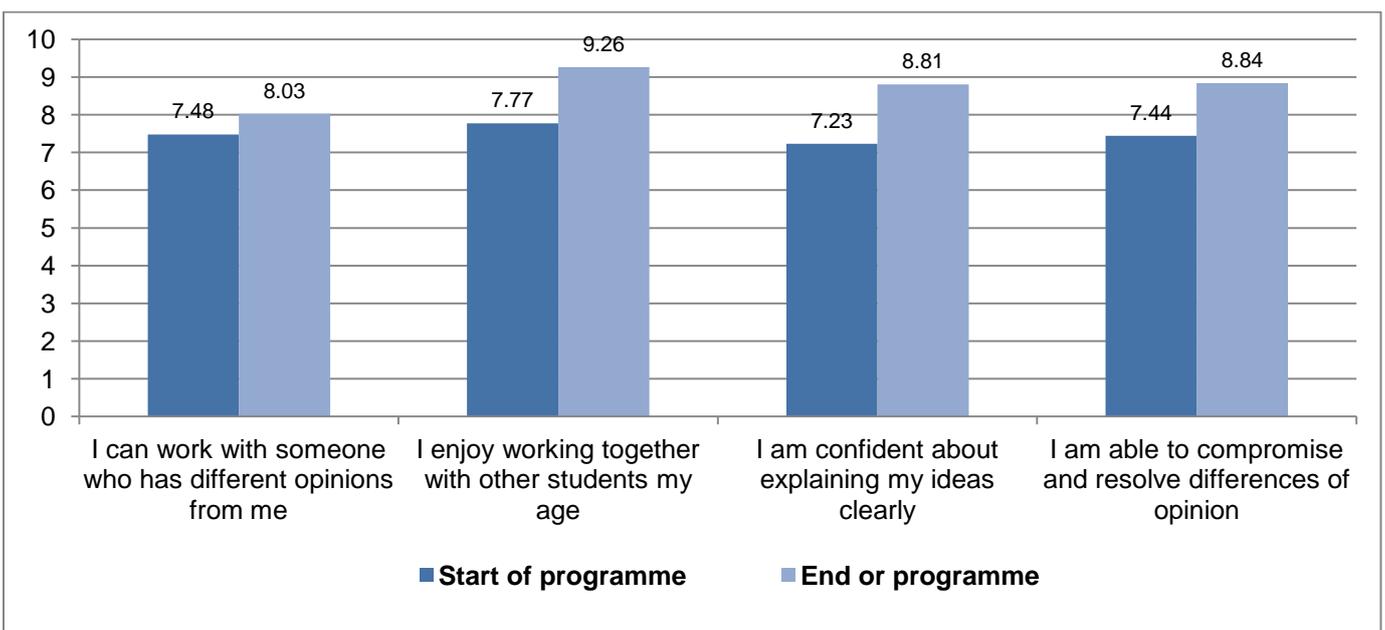
Figure 5.12 **Cooperation indicators**

Figure 5.13 provides broad indicators of the extent of personal resilience of respondents. These data indicate high levels of confidence about personal resilience amongst young people on the programme and suggest that those who finished the programme are particularly confident in most of the domains (with the exception of ability to complete a task once started – which may be partly due to the realisation of how hard it is to do so having taken part in the O2 Think Big programme).

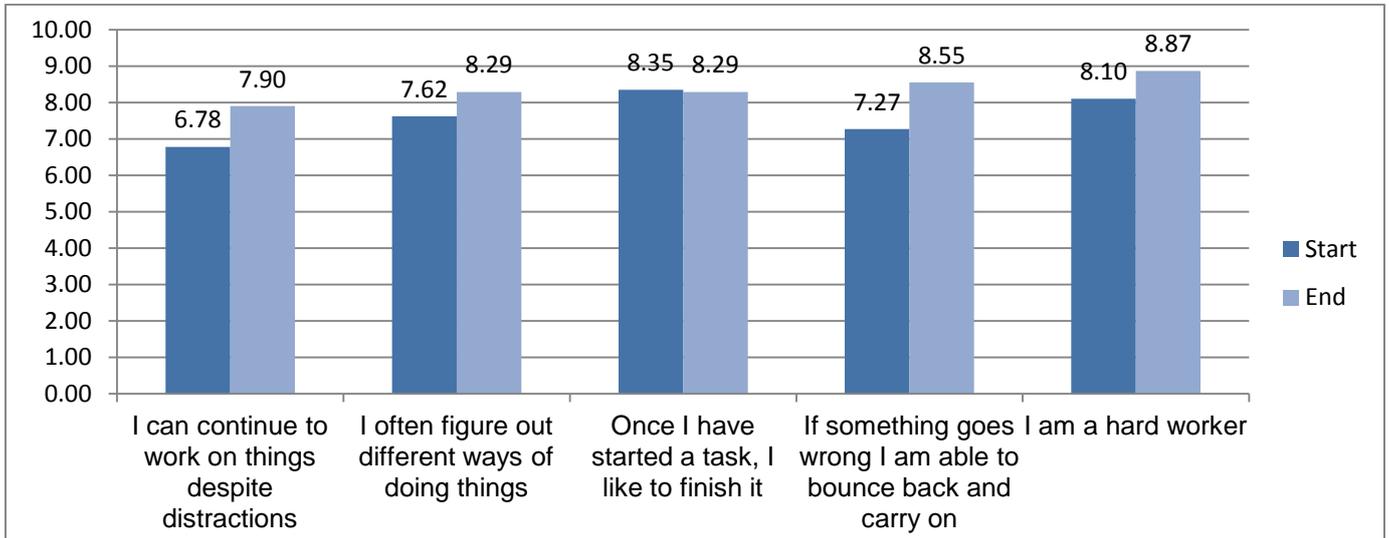Figure 5.13 **Resilience and determination indicators** (Grit)

Figure 5.14 presents data on personal wellbeing of young people in the programme start and programme end samples. While it is difficult to judge the extent to which a programme such as this affects notions of wellbeing, there is some indication of more positive personal attitudes amongst those who completed the programme. The extent to which this is self-selected is not known – i.e. that people who are more confident about themselves and satisfied with their situation are more likely to participate in the final questionnaire. However, the limited differences recorded on anxiety (compared to other factors) suggest that this may be partly due to a programme effect.

Figure 5.14 **Life satisfaction / wellbeing indicators: in priority order***(by end questionnaire)*
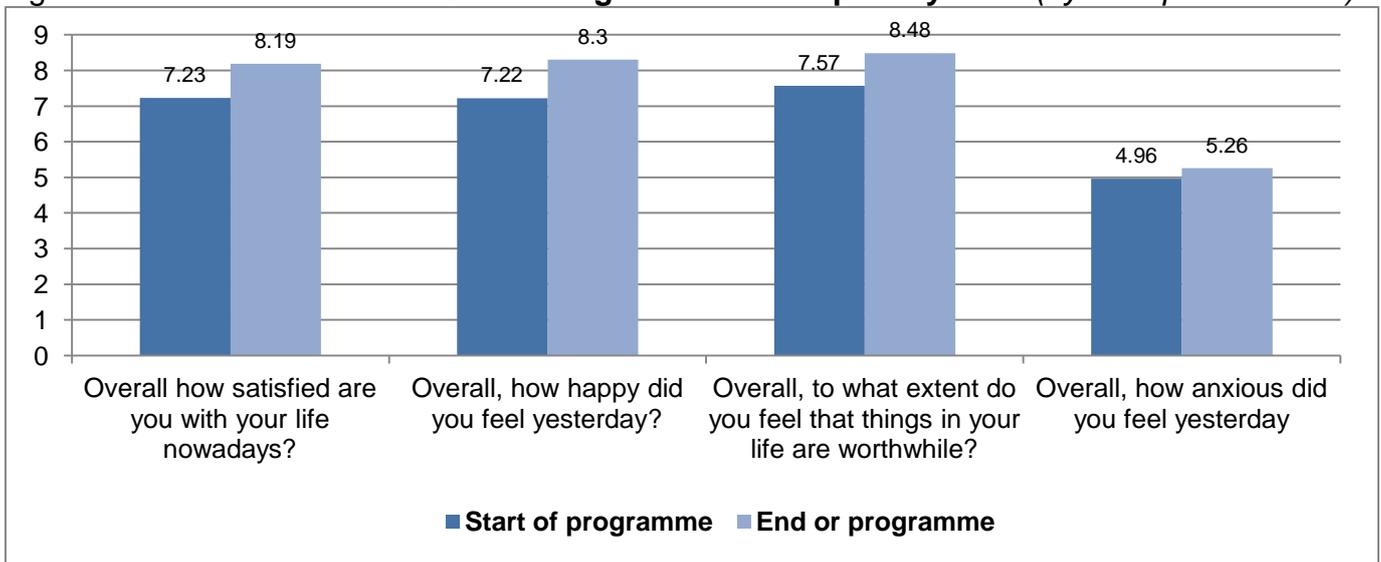
Figure 5.15 presents findings using aggregated factors.[31] The aggregated factors are ordered according to strength of response for the end questionnaire. In each category, the score is higher at the end of the programme than at the start – although this effect may have been produced partly by sample structure and size. In terms of strength of response, it is evident that cooperation, empathy and problem solving are reported as particular strengths. Wellbeing, attainment and grit show weaker responses, but remain at the positive end of the scale.

Figure 5.15 **Aggregated capability, wellbeing and pro-sociality indicators in priority order** *(by end questionnaire sample)*
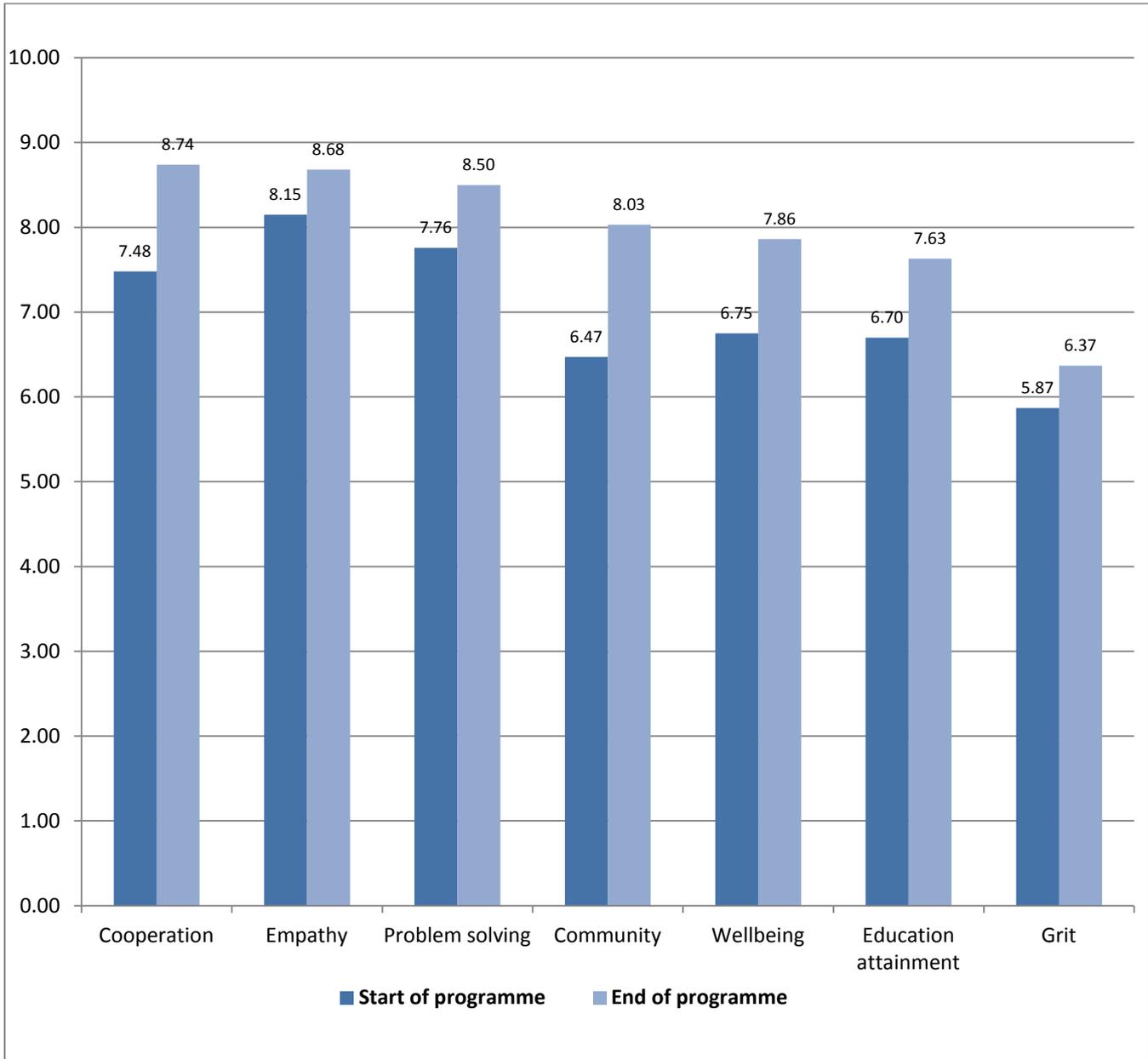
Figure 5.16 presents un-aggregated variables in priority order of strength at the end of the programme. Indicators relating to cooperation, empathy, communication, problem solving and creativity are shown to bring particularly positive responses at the end questionnaire (as is the case with the start questionnaire sample, with the exception of communication which collects a lower score).

End of programme sample indicators tend to be considerably stronger, especially in respect of communication, cooperation, grit and self-efficacy when compared with the start questionnaire sample. These differences may be due to sample structure and size. The exception is leadership, where no discernible difference is shown between start and end samples.

Figure 5.16   **Un-aggregated capability, wellbeing and pro-sociality indicators in priority order** *(by end questionnaire sample)*
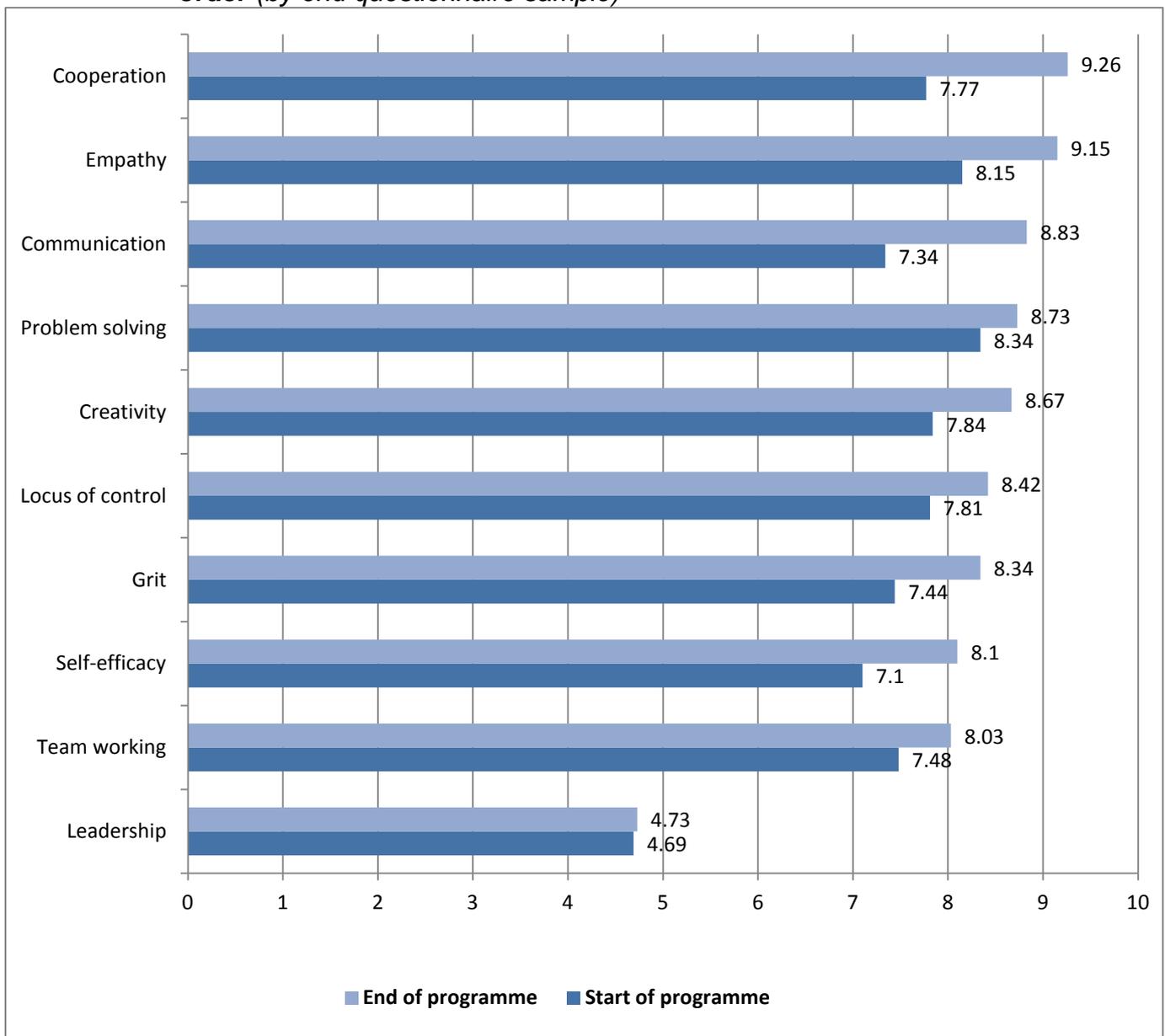
Figure 5.17 presents aggregated wellbeing indictors. These are ordered by strength of response to each indicator at the end of the programme. It is evident that in each domain a stronger response is given at the end of the programme. This could represent an indication of programme effect but such interpretation needs to be made with caution is it may be affected by sample structure and size.

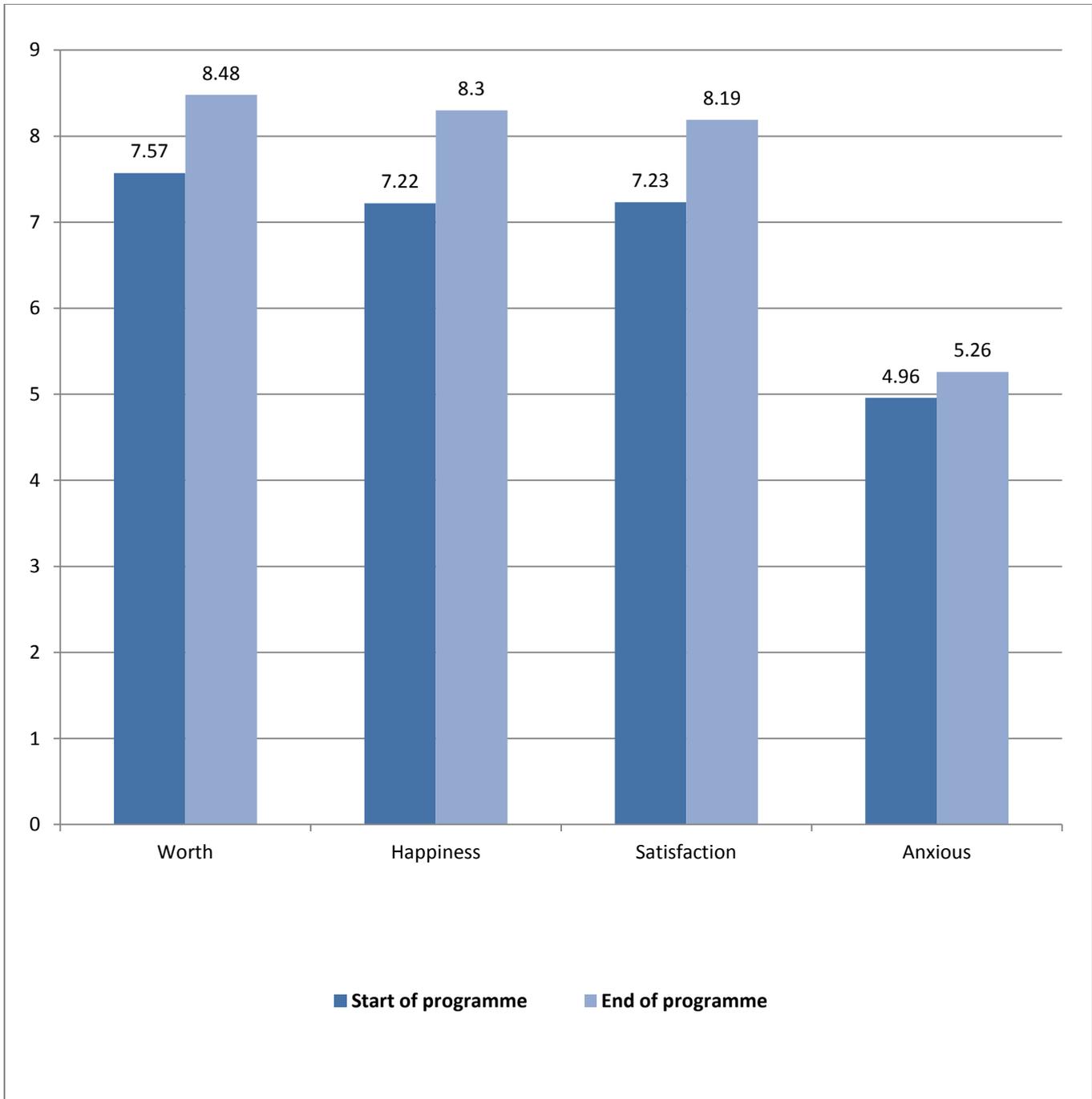Figure 5.17 **Un-aggregated wellbeing indicators in priority order**

Figure 5.18 presents data on range of confidence factors together with indicators of future planning and personal investment. The indicators are presented in priority order of strength for the end questionnaire sample. Higher priority is given to three factors: believing that there is a range of options open to them for the future; studying to gain qualifications; and, having goals and plans for the future.

The data indicate that respondents at the end of the programme are more likely to claim that they have a range of different options open to them, that they feel motivated to act in the interest of their communities and have the potential to make an impact on their world.

There are less marked differences in the following variables: holding goals and plans for the future; studying to gain qualifications; and, attitudes about the factors which affect others' success in life.

Figure 5.18 **Confidence about, plans for and preparedness to invest in the future**
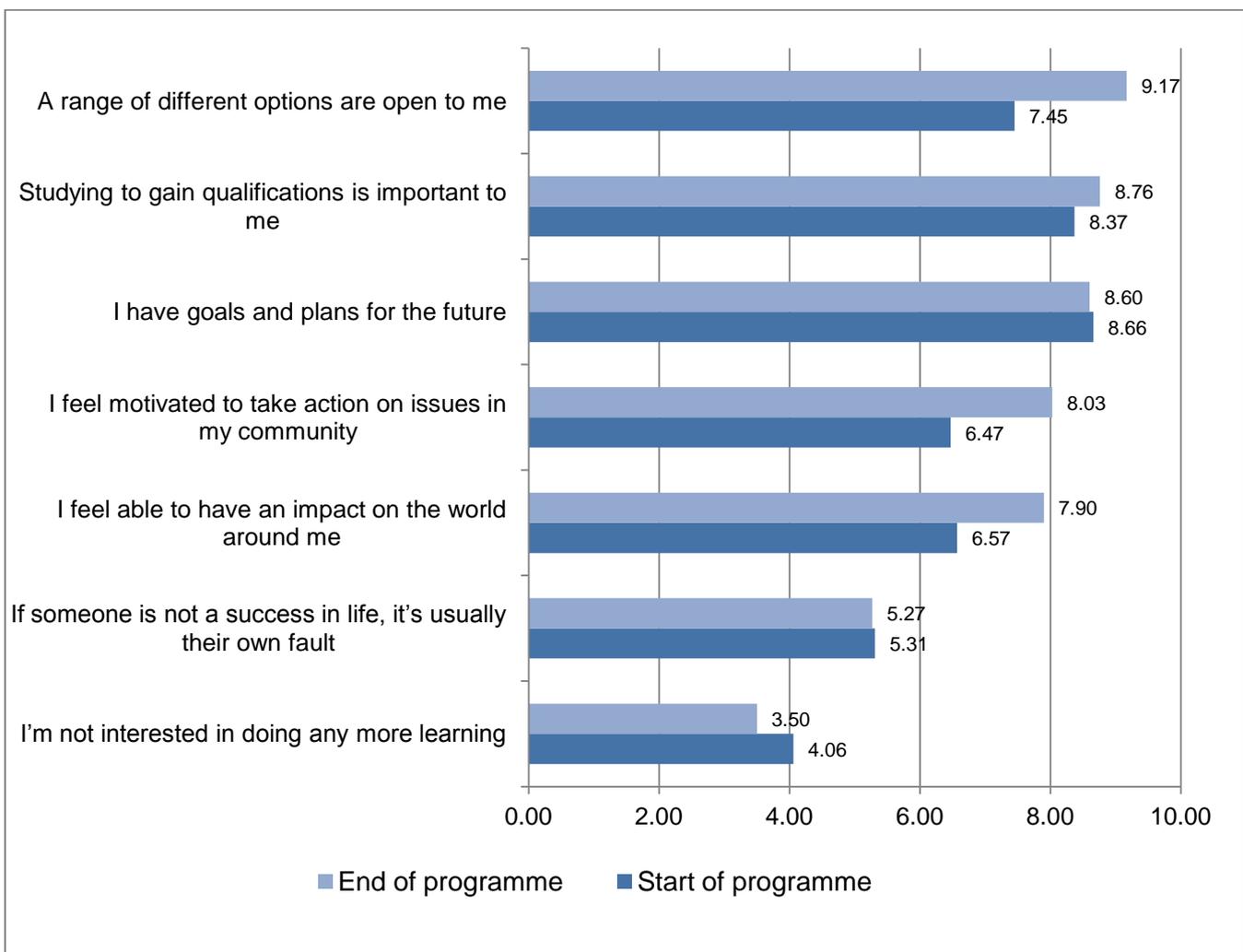
Figure 5.19 presents a second set of indictors on voluntary social action collected in the evaluation on a five point scale *(1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree)*. Key instrumental factors, such as meeting new people, building a CV or learning new skills tend to score highly. However, pro-social motivations are also shown to be strong for those who completed the programme – with most stating that everyone should feel a responsibility to take part in voluntary social action. Few respondents at the start or end of the programme subscribe to the view that they lack confidence to get involved – a higher proportion make this claim at the end of the programme. Similarly, the majority do not claim that they have nothing much to offer in respect to voluntary social action. Few claim that they are too busy to get involved.

Figure 5.19 **Pro-sociality, altruism and instrumentalism indicators** *(Scale: 1=strongly agree, 5-strongly disagree)*
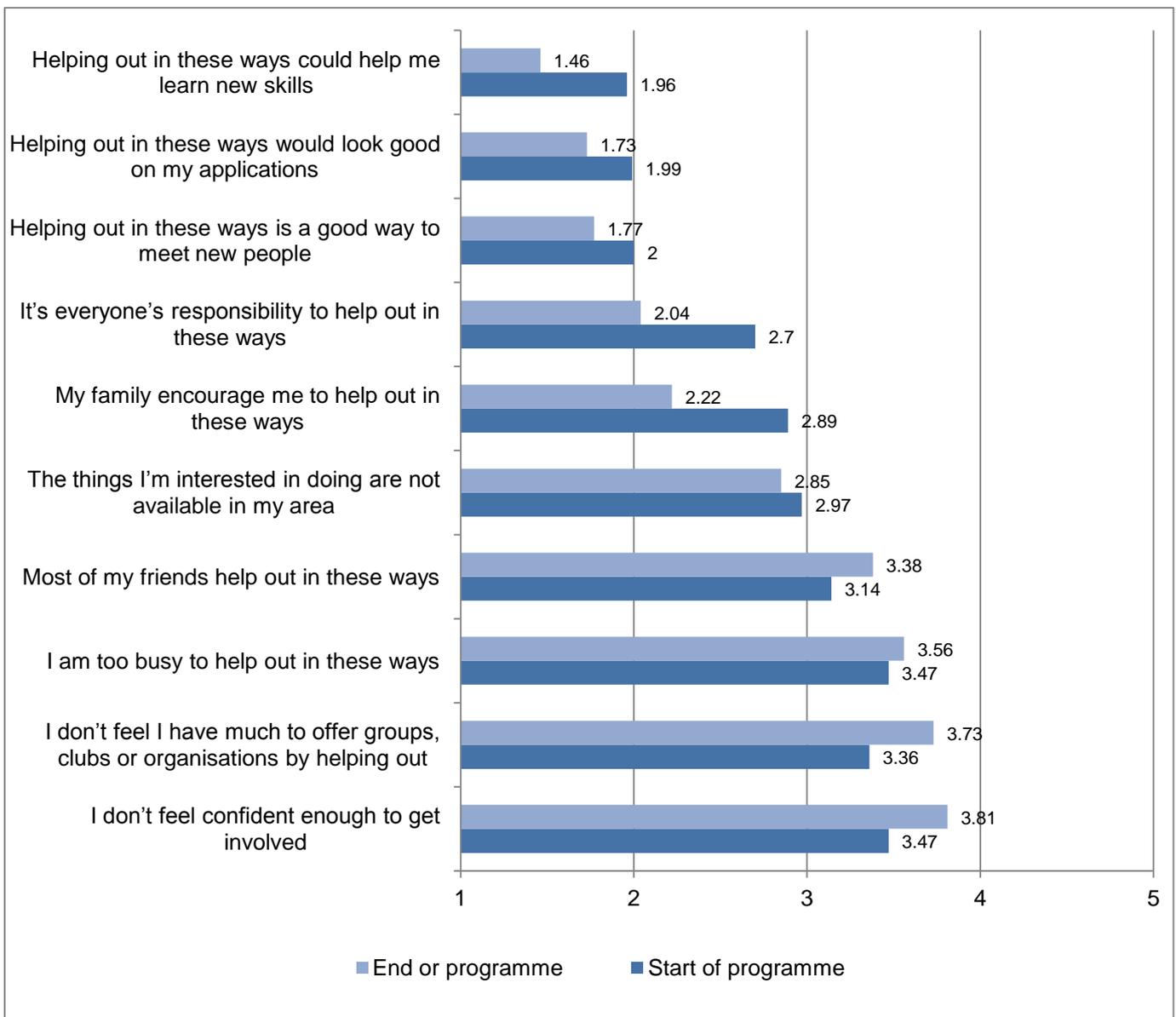
6   Discussion

Voluntary social action is lauded in Western societies because of its positive contribution to building social capital and the maintenance of civil society (Blond, 2010; Norman, 2010; Putnam, 1993, 1995, 2000). Civil society is the location within which most formal voluntary social action takes place. Formal volunteers contribute to the governance of organisations (as trustees, committee members or directors), they help with fundraising or campaigning, or they get involved with front-line work. As an entity, civil society is sustained through the existence of relationships which are built on trust and reciprocity rather than formal or legal constraints. It provides informal mechanisms for conflict resolution, problem solving and co-operation. In sum, civil society provides the arena within which voluntary social action flourishes, often to the benefit of society as a whole but also to the benefit of individuals and interest groups which both gain and can inject social capital into civil society through their association. [32]

If voluntary social action is such a good thing, then why do some people choose not to get involved? Successive governments have invested significantly in the encouragement of voluntary social action on the basis of a belief that there is a large pool of untapped potential. But getting people to volunteer is not a straight forward matter. Citizenship Survey data indicates that levels of formal volunteering at least once a month has been relatively stable for some time as shown in Figure 6.1.[33]

Figure 6.1 **Formal and informal volunteering in England** (percentages)	2001/02	2003/04	2005/06	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
At least once in the last month							
Informal volunteering[1]	34	37	37	35	35	29	29
Formal volunteering[2]	27	28	29	27	26	25	25
Any volunteering[3]	47	50	50	48	47	42	41
At least once in last year							
Informal volunteering	67	63	68	64	62	54	55
Formal volunteering	39	42	44	43	41	40	39
Any volunteering	75	73	76	73	71	66	65

1 Informal volunteering: Giving unpaid help as an individual to people who are not relatives.
2 Formal volunteering: Giving unpaid help through groups, clubs or organisations to benefit other people or the environment.
3 Participated in either formal or informal volunteering.
Source: Citizenship Survey: 2010-11 (April 2010-March 2011), England, Department for Communities and Local Government,
http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/1992885.pdf

The likelihood of taking part in voluntary action varies significantly depending on the situation of individuals (see Section 3). This has led some commentators to argue

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[32] See: Norman, (2010); Blond, (2010); Office for Civil Society, (2010); Her Majesty's Government, (2011).
[33] More recent data on levels of volunteering has been collected using different methodologies and are not therefore comparable. The latest NCVO Almanac data on volunteering is available here: http://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac15/volunteering/.

that there is a 'civic core' of volunteers in the UK. While the objective of bringing people in from the fringes of this core is a priority for government, it is quite difficult to achieve.

> *Research by the Third Sector Research Centre indicates that a relatively small subset of the population – the civic core – is responsible for most of the volunteering; charitable giving and civic participation that takes place. Just over a third (36%) of the adult population provide nearly nine-tenths (87%) of volunteer hours, just over four-fifths (81%) of the amount given to charity, and just over three-quarters (77%) of participation in different civic associations. The contribution of the primary core to volunteering is particularly striking with 9% of the adult population accounting for 51% of all volunteer hours which highlights the significant level of involvement of a committed few. In terms of demographics, people in the civic core are more likely to be middle-aged, have higher education qualifications, actively practice their religion, be in managerial and professional occupations, and have lived in the same neighbourhood for at least 10 years.[34]*

The government has set itself the laudable objective of increasing the number of young people who voluntarily take part in meaningful social action. Currently, about 40% of young people do so[35] and a target has been set to increase this number to 50% by 2020 supported by the iWill campaign which is run by Step up to Serve. But as it has been argued in this report, moving young people into the civic core is not a straight-forward matter.

The Cabinet Office established the Social Action Journey Fund to increase the level of social action amongst young people. In so doing, several programmes were funded to experiment with different approaches to achieving this objective. The National Youth Agency's SAJF project, undertaken in collaboration with the O$_2$ Think Big programme, took as its primary focus the engagement of young people from more deprived or socially marginalised backgrounds. As such, the programme attempted, through the support of youth work apprentices (YWAs), to engage marginalised young people in social action journeys.

This report has argued that not all young people begin at the same starting point in a social action journey and has presented some qualitative empirical evidence to help explain why this is the case. Figure 6.2 presents a diagram to explain the key conclusions from the study. On the right hand side of the diagram, the desired outcome of social action journeys is shown in two bars. The first represents the 'doorway' to voluntary social action – through which, by their own volition, encouragement or constraint, young people can enter. The second bar to the far right of the diagram represents the threshold government is keen to encourage young people to cross – where they make a longer-term personal commitment to voluntary social action in the civic core.

This report has argued that the distance young people have to travel to cross this threshold differs significantly, depending partly upon their social, economic and cultural circumstances, and partly upon their own propensities to do so which may be linked to personality factors. Making a journey of this kind requires young people to be able to imagine a different future for themselves. This in turn requires them to have a measure of self-confidence, determination, imagination and hope.

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[34] See National Council for Voluntary Organisations Civil Society Almanac (2012), London: NCVO: http://data.ncvo-vol.org.uk/. See, for more detail, Mohan and Bulloch, 2012.

[35] Pye, J., James, N. and Stobart, R. Ipsos Mori (2014) Youth social action in the UK – 2014: A face-to-face survey of 10-20 year olds in the UK, London: Ipsos Mori/Cabinet Office.

The diagram identifies three broad positions young people may occupy prior to making a social action journey. This has been devised to explain how young people embrace or reject the prospect of engaging with voluntary social action.

Figure 6.2   **Engaging marginalised young people in positive social action**

Position C: Closest to the threshold of longer-term commitment to voluntary social action

Some young people are already willing to take part in social action and simply need an opening to do so. Young people in this position are more likely to have been successful in the education system and they are likely to have substantial stocks of social, economic and cultural capital. Consequently, they are likely to have broader social horizons, have identifiable or emergent life-ambitions for themselves and, like as not, a measure of empathy for the situation of others.

When making a social action journey, such young people need less support and encouragement as they already have well-tested skills, confidence and have seen the evidence of the outcome of determination. Nevertheless, they are more likely to *have* role models, support and encouragement from families, schools and peers to get involved in voluntary social action and sustain their involvement when they arrive there. Evidence suggests that many young people are likely to occupy this position but do not have the opportunity to achieve what they want.[36]

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[36] It is estimated, for example, that up to 40,000 young people want to take part in voluntary social action via the Scouts but there is insufficient capacity in either organisation presently to meet this level of demand. See Demos Birdwell, J. and Wybron, I. (2014) *Scouting for Skills*, London, Demos.

With stocks of social capital, higher levels of personal confidence, capability and empathy, these young people are more likely to be interested in more abstract social causes and outcomes for beneficiaries, they are also more likely to see direct instrumental benefit in personal developmental terms and be more effective at recognising and articulating such benefit.

Figure 6.2 **What young people get from Think Big: (Position C)**[37]

'A brilliant experience I learnt some skills I never knew before, especially like risk assessments and CRBs...Before we wouldn't have done a risk assessment but now we know to take the legal measures to do such things so we can avoid any legal complications that could arise.'

'Things I found really useful were presentation skills, writing articles and the marketing and publicity side of things, there was stuff that I was kind of like pretty sure about but when you do something and think it's right but then you go and you learn about something else like a new way of doing it, then you're more confident to do it again, so like we've wrote press releases and stuff before without releasing them and then I've come back from the residential and gone maybe I need to emphasise this more and emphasise this less, so it's just learning those sorts of skills.'

'I got quite a lot of careers advice I'd say and just little gems, I wouldn't necessarily say one whole workshop changed my life but I got just a few ideas from things people said to me that really igniting some ideas for the project, so it was definitely worth going.'

'It was great to hone in on what other people were doing and get inspired.'

'It was good to hear about other people's projects and what they were doing and get linked up with them, it was just nice to be around lots of young people who've all got ambition.'

'For me it was meeting other like minded young people making a difference in their community and seeing the drive they have and being inspired by that, that for me was the most important thing, the workshops were good as well, but it just showed there are other people like you with the same ambitions and they have that in common with you, so I thought that was fantastic.'

'It was encouraging to see other people my age with similar goals and outlooks on life, I met some really nice people.'

'Networking because I got to meet other Think Big projects as well and learn about what they were doing and the difficulties they've faced so far and what sort of things I could do if I needed help and that sort of thing, building up a support network and having people to talk to in the same situation as me.'

Position B: Young people who are not far from the border where they may make a longer-term commitment to voluntary social action

Some young people may be less aware of the benefits of engaging in social action and/or may not have identified opportunities to do so. They may be less likely to have role models in or encouragement from families, schools and peers to get involved in voluntary social action.

Being closer to the threshold of commitment to voluntary social action, engagement is likely to be more straightforward if sufficient encouragement and opportunity is provided in effective ways. But it cannot be taken as read that they need the same

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[37] These quotations were collected from the main Think Big evaluation project: see Chapman and Dunkerley (2014) *Opening Doors*, *ibid.*

kind of encouragement as young people in position C. It may be the case that young people are more likely to resist attempts to get them involved in voluntary social action if the objectives of those who encourage or try to persuade them appear to run counter to the expectations of significant others.

These young people are more likely to focus on 'grounded' issues when they engage in social action – drawing upon more immediate needs or experiences due to their shorter social horizons than young people in position C. And because they may have more limited stocks of social capital and lower levels of achievement in other domains, often for personal or situational reasons, they may not be as confident and determined.

The marginal cost of encouraging these young people to engage in voluntary social action will be higher than those young people in position C as they need more support and encouragement. That stated, getting them involved in voluntary social action may be relatively straight forward if interesting opportunities are open to them and they have sufficient and appropriate support and encouragement to take them through their social action journey. It is likely that fewer will capitalise upon their experiences as fully as young people in position C, however, and cross the threshold to engage in longer-term social action entirely of their own volition within the civic core.

Position A: Young people who are more resistant to making a social action journey

Some young people are much further from the threshold where they will engage in voluntary social action of their own volition in the longer term. Indeed, many may actively resist engagement. The marginal cost of moving young people from position A across the threshold of voluntary social action, through interventions such as the SAJF programme is likely to be much higher than for people in position B or C.

While it is recognised that resilience can represent a positive feature of personality, it is shown in this report that young people can be resilient in negative ways and use it to resist engagement in new challenges. Breaking people out of from a position of resistance is not easy to do and requires much more intensive intervention than is the case for those young people who have greater stocks of social, economic and cultural capital.[38]

Young people in this position may have shorter social horizons, limited levels of empathetic understanding and have lower levels of achievement and self-esteem. This can manifest itself in a negative form of resilience which steels young people against the prospect of change or identifying positive futures. The operation of categorical fate further embeds and justifies resistance strategies.

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[38] As shown in section on, the interaction between personal agency and structural constraints can produce limits on young people's awareness of their potential to think about things differently and their consequent willingness to change. See also, for related research on how young people's potential may be limited by these interactions: Birdwell, J., Grist, M and Margo, J. (2011) *The Forgotten Half*, London: Demos. Lee, N. and Ghosh, S. (2011) Off the Map? The geography of NEETs, London: Work Foundation.

Figure 6.3 **Social action journey participant testimonials (Position B)**

"What has Think Big done for you?"

"I got involved in the Think Big Project through my youth group. I'm really shy, don't like talking to others and I don't like to speak in front of people. As a part of our project we did an event on World Mental Health Day, this is something that means a lot to me and I really wanted to get involved. Think Big helped me gain a little bit of confidence, and has gotten me into volunteering for the youth club."

"Would you recommend Think Big to a friend and why?"

"I think so"

"What has Think Big done for you?"

"I have to stay in hospital on a regular basis, I struggle to make friends and find it really hard to talk to new people. Getting involved in the Think Big Project has helped me find a really nice group of friends who I can visit and stay in touch with even after the project is over."

"Would you recommend Think Big to a friend and why?"

"Yes. It is a lot of hard work but it is really worth it, I found it very fun."

"What has Think Big done for you?"

"Think Big has given me the opportunity to gain more confidence in talking to large groups of people. I got involved in the project and was asked to speak on behalf of the group at the creative collisions conference. I was nervous but it was great to talk about the project and let others know that they can do the same."

"Would you recommend Think Big to a friend and why?"

"I would, it is really hard to get involved in projects at the moment because of money. Without Think Big we wouldn't have been able to make our videos and reach the number of young people that we have. It's a real sense of achievement."

Getting young people in position A involved in voluntary social action is therefore more costly and challenging and requires more skillful and sustained intervention by youth work professionals. This is because the role of youth workers is, to a large extent, to compensate for the lack of encouragement and support young people may receive within families, in peer groups and perhaps also in schools. Breaking through barriers may require stronger levels of encouragement and incentivisation for some young people, although some, when given such support will clearly benefit more quickly than others.

The journeys young people from position A have to make towards the civic core require them to traverse many social, economic and cultural hurdles. And it is easy from the perspective of the onlooker to fail to recognise the many leaps forward they may take when compared with the achievements of young people with much larger stocks of social capital.

There may be a temptation to focus primarily on those young people who are closest to the threshold of the civic core because that is where the best results from modest

investment may be garnered. But to take such a course of action would ensure that the civic core remains an enclave occupied by a relatively privileged section of the population rather than for society as a whole. To reach those furthest from the threshold of the civic core would, therefore, require sustained and targeted investment.

Figure 6.4   **Youth Work Apprentice Case Study: Tower House (Position A)**

"Tower House[39] provides a safe and challenging supported living environment for boys and young men between the ages of 11 – 25. Tower house provides resident young people with structure, empathy, understanding and patience from primary carers who work pedagogically. The young people, therefore, feel more secure in the self- contained environment and the chaotic lifestyle that they had become familiar with becomes less appealing. In providing young males with a firm base, they are able to reflect on their past experiences, empower themselves to make positive choices, learn to value themselves and build significant trusting relationships with adults."

"When I visited Tower House I met a group of young males who have found themselves in supported housing all for very different reasons. The young people live and go to school at Tower House and do not really get that chance to see many different people."

"Whilst I was at Tower house we went through possible social action projects, this was fairly difficult as some of the young people's ideas did not fit the criteria for the funding. This caused one of the young people to get very upset; in his anger he threw his chair across the room and left whilst using very negative language. I chose to ignore the reaction and continued to work with the other young men."

"After I had got the others to work on something I went to see if the other young man was ok, I explained about criteria and funding and asked him if he wanted to continue, It turns out he had a really strong idea, that with a little tweaking would be a really good project. Each young person sat with me for two sessions over two days and successfully submitted a project. These young people do not get the chance to showcase their talents very often and it has showed quite clearly that when they do they really shine."

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[39] The name of the facility has been changed to ensure anonymity.

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Appendix 1:   Evaluation method and analysis of data

Data analysis proceeded on similar lines to those used in the SAF and Think Big programme. In summary, however, the following points may be noted:

- Quantitative analysis involved crosstabulated data using independent variables and dependent variables.

- The samples were not randomised, nor a control group established, so statistical tests were not used. However comparative techniques were drawn upon data from SAF and Think Big to test validity.

- It was intended at the outset that findings from the quantitative data would be supplemented by analysis of qualitative data. In previous studies, this process of triangulation helped to explain anomalies in the quantitative findings (such as the tendency of less affluent and less well educated young people to overestimate their skills and attributes when compared with more affluent and better educated young people).

- Quantitative and qualitative techniques were used interactively to explore the journeys young people make through the programme. This draws on conceptual work presented in Section 2 of this report.

- Exploration of the propensity of young people to continue taking part in voluntary social action was explored through quantitative and qualitative indicators. This analysis draws upon evidence from the associated evaluation project for O2 Think Big.

Assessment of the approach to evaluation

Quantitative methods

At the outset of this evaluation, it was stated that there would be significant difficulties in obtaining a good response at the end of the programme. A 'belt and braces' approach was adopted, using paper and on-line questionnaires (on tablets, PCs and laptops) and participants were encouraged to complete in situ by mentors, the qualified youth worker, programme manager and YWAs together with Durham researcher when they met at celebration sessions at the end of the programme.

Additionally, participants were sent two email reminders by NYA staff towards the end of the programme. This was followed up by two further reminders by Durham University to encourage completion of the end questionnaire via Bristol Online Survey. As noted in the revised evaluation programme proposal, in May 2014, while best efforts would be made to collect as much data as possible, 'It must be accepted, though, that response rates to the intermediate and post-programme questionnaires will be very low even if young people are contacted many times.'

It was felt, at the outset, that the questionnaire devised by the BIT was too long for the purpose of the evaluation and deterred many young people from taking part. In the Think Big programme, where better response rates are achieved at the end of the programme (but still only between 30-40% of participants), the questionnaire covers the key areas of achievement and pro-sociality as set against the Young Foundation's core competencies, but does so with just 16 lines of questions (in addition to a limited number of questions on biographical information – but excluding issues such as religion, take up of free school meals). The number of questions in the BIT instrument was much larger.

The difficulty, essentially, for the evaluation approach was the way young people progressed through the programme in practical terms. NYA staff were able to meet most young people at the start of the programme, at Think Big School or other events which were organised specifically for

the purpose. At such events, paper questionnaires could be distributed for completion under supervision, or they could be completed online using tablets. However, once young people started their project journey, their contact was with local youth organisations, schools or other supporters – meaning that structured opportunities to achieve a higher level of return was not possible.

A further problem, for those young people who led Think Big projects, was that they were also subject to evaluation for the Think Big programme. This included three separate online questionnaires which took place at the point of application, once the project was complete and a further more general evaluative online questionnaire undertaken from January to March 2015 on the impact of the programme on their pro-sociality and propensity to continue with social action. In addition, leaders of Think Big projects are subject to regular contact with the Think Big team to record when they have reached each of five milestones in their project journey.

While these factors have reduced the level of response to the SAJF questionnaire substantially, one benefit is that the data collected in the Think Big evaluation can be used to check the validity of the data and produce a measure of additionality as it explored other issues in more detail.

Qualitative methods

The planned approach to qualitative research worked effectively. The following areas of work were successfully completed.

- Four dedicated meetings between the NYA programme team and the principal investigator (PI) to discuss the aims of the project and its evaluation throughout the programme. These meetings, held in Leicester, were used for the PI to have detailed and in-depth discussion on progress in the programme. The sessions were used also to assist the three apprentices to record and recollect their experiences while engaging with young people as the programme progressed. All of the apprentices maintained project diaries to record all aspects of delivery, including both difficult situations which they sought to remedy and clear successes. Case studies were produced by the apprentices as a result of these meetings and subsequent work with their supervising youth worker and the programme manager.

- Six observational sessions were undertaken in Newcastle, Leicester and London of the programme in action. These included inception sessions with new participants and celebration sessions at the end of the programme. At these sessions, individual and group interviews were undertaken by three Durham University researchers. The researchers also undertook planned programmes of observation of the sessions to assess the efficacy of the approach which could then be fed back to the programme manager. A total of 53 young people were interviewed individually or collectively in this part of the evaluation.

- To ensure that the evaluation approach was up to date with key policy and practice principles, the PI arranged several additional meetings with the programme manager and with senior staff at the National Youth Agency. Further face to face meetings were arranged with the following organisations to discuss emerging policy and practice: Rebecca Wyton at Cabinet Office, Lewis Coakley at National Citizen Service, Charlotte Hill at Step-up-to-Serve, Glenn Manoff at iRights. Further telephone and email consultations took place with Bethia McNeil at Centre for Youth Impact at Dartington together with a fellow evaluator on other SAJF programme.

Figure A.1 Mapping methods against project objectives					
Challenging Stretching and engaging, as well as exciting and enjoyable.	**Survey**	**Interviews**	**Observation**	**Group interviews**	**Case studies**
Is the programme exciting, engaging and enjoyable?	*x*	*x*	*x*	*x*	
Does the programme challenge and develop their views about society?	*x*	*x*	*x*	*x*	
Does the programme help them to develop and act on their own ideas?	*x*	*x*	*x*	*x*	*x*
Will they understand what adding value to their communities means?		*x*		*x*	*x*
Youth-led Young people have a key role in owning and shaping the social action (with appropriate adult support).	**Survey**	**Interviews**	**Observation**	**Group interviews**	**Case studies**
Is there evidence to show that the programme is youth led?		*x*	*x*	*x*	*x*
Can differences be determined and understood between more and less disadvantaged groups?	*x*		*x*		*x*
Are the digital materials developed fit for purpose?		*x*	*x*	*x*	
Do the young people on the programme use them? (we may use some on-line or app-based survey analysis to explore these last two questions)		*x*	*x*	*x*	
Socially impactful Creating positive change that is of benefit to the wider community as well as to the young person themselves.	**Survey**	**Interviews**	**Observation**	**Group interviews**	**Case studies**
How do projects differ in terms of objectives and scope?		*x*			*x*
To what extent do young people frame the purpose of projects?		*x*			*x*
How well are they supported in the development of community projects?		*x*		*x*	*x*
Is it evident that projects make a difference to the pro-social attitudes of the young people who organise projects?	*x*	*x*			*x*
Can young people articulate how their project has helped their community?		*x*		*x*	*x*

Progressive Progressing to other programmes and activities.	**Survey**	**Interviews**	**Observation**	**Group interviews**	**Case studies**
Do young people make a social action journey within the scope of a single Think Big project?		*x*	*x*	*x*	*x*
What are the prospects of young people engaging in similar or associated programmes in future (including Think Bigger and NCS)?	*x*	*x*			
Is there a strong likelihood that young people will progress into roles of responsibility such as mentoring or leadership in future?			*x*		
How do young people reflect upon their social action journey, has it changed them in any significant way?	*x*	*x*		*x*	*x*
Reflective Valuing reflection, recognition and reward.	**Survey**	**Interviews**	**Observation**	**Group interviews**	**Case studies**
Are events devised to celebrate the achievements of young people?			*x*		
Do the young people feel that they receive adequate recognition for achievements?		*x*	*x*	*x*	
How does recognition impact on the likelihood of future participation in social action?		*x*		*x*	
Can young people articulate to others the benefits of engagement?		*x*		*x*	*x*
Embedded Becoming the norm in a young person's journey to adulthood and a habit for life.	**Survey**	**Interviews**	**Observation**	**Group interviews**	**Case studies**
To what extent do young people from less advantaged backgrounds benefit?	x	x	x	x	x
In what ways do their learning and action journeys differ?		x	x	x	x
Are digital technologies effective in engagement of young people, and what are the limits of digital engagement?		x		x	x
How are peer mentors prepared? Does the peer mentoring system achieve its objectives from the perspectives of mentors and recipients?		x	x	x	x
Are there discernible developments in young people's skills and confidence that would not otherwise have been developed?	x	x	x		x

Appendix 2: Full BIT data tables

Figure A2.1 **How true do you think the following statements are about you?** *(mean scores on a scale from 0 'I don't agree at all' to 10 'I completely agree').*	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents	Difference
I can work out my problems			
Mean	7.52	8.20	+0.68
Variance	*5.97*	*5.63*	*-0.34*
Standard deviation	*2.44*	*2.37*	*-0.07*
I can do most things if I try			
Mean	8.16	9.13	+0.97
Variance	*5.29*	*2.72*	*-2.57*
Standard deviation	*2.30*	*1.65*	*-0.65*
I know where to go for help with a problem			
Mean	8.55	9.33	+0.78
Variance	*5.79*	*4.02*	*-1.77*
Standard deviation	*2.41*	*2.01*	*-0.4*
I am confident about having a go at things that are new to me			
Mean	8.13	8.13	0.00
Variance	*6.67*	*7.25*	*0.58*
Standard deviation	*2.58*	*2.69*	*0.11*

Figure A2.2 **How true do you think the following statements are about you?** *(mean scores on a scale from 0 'I don't agree at all' to 10 'I completely agree').*	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents	Difference
I can work with someone who has different opinions from me			
Mean	7.48	8.03	+0.55
Variance	*7.30*	*7.77*	*0.47*
Standard deviation	2.70	2.79	0.09
I enjoy working together with other students my age			
Mean	7.77	9.26	+1.49
Variance	*6.63*	*5.68*	*-0.95*
Standard deviation	*2.57*	*2.38*	*-0.19*
I am confident about explaining my ideas clearly			
Mean	7.23	8.81	+1.58
Variance	*7.18*	*6.99*	*-0.19*
Standard deviation	*2.68*	*2.64*	*-0.04*
I am able to compromise and resolve differences of opinion			
Mean	7.44	8.84	+1.40
Variance	*6.44*	*7.04*	*0.6*
Standard deviation	*2.54*	*2.65*	*0.11*

Figure A2.3 **How true do you think the following statements about you are?** *(mean scores on a scale from 0 'I don't agree at all' to 10 'I completely agree').*	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents	Difference
I often figure out different ways of doing things			
Mean	7.62	8.29	+0.67
Variance	*4.45*	*5.11*	*0.66*
Standard deviation	*2.11*	*2.26*	*0.15*
If something goes wrong I am able to bounce back and carry on			
Mean	7.27	8.55	+1.28
Variance	*5.86*	*4.76*	*-1.1*
Standard deviation	*2.42*	*2.18*	*-0.24*
Once I have started a task, I like to finish it			
Mean	8.35	8.29	-0.06
Variance	*6.04*	*9.04*	*3.00*
Standard deviation	*2.46*	*3.01*	*0.55*
I can continue to work on things despite distractions			
Mean	6.78	7.90	+1.12
Variance	*7.83*	*8.60*	*0.77*
Standard deviation	*2.80*	*2.93*	*0.13*
I am a hard worker			
Mean	8.10	8.87	+0.77
Variance	*6.87*	*5.52*	*-1.35*
Standard deviation	*2.62*	*2.35*	*-0.27*

Figure A2.4 **How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents	Difference
Overall how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?			
Mean	7.23	8.19	+0.96
Variance	*5.38*	*4.09*	*-1.29*
Standard deviation	*2.32*	*2.02*	*-0.3*
Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?			
Mean	7.22	8.30	+1.08
Variance	*7.07*	*5.81*	*-1.26*
Standard deviation	*2.66*	*2.41*	*-0.25*
Overall, to what extent do you feel that things in your life are worthwhile?			
Mean	7.57	8.48	+0.91
Variance	*5.74*	*5.93*	*0.19*
Standard deviation	*2.40*	*2.43*	*0.03*
Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday			
Mean	4.96	5.26	+0.3
Variance	*10.17*	*14.00*	*3.83*
Standard deviation	*3.19*	*3.74*	*0.55*

Figure A2.5 **How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents	Difference
If someone is not a success in life, it's usually their own fault			
Mean	5.31	5.27	-0.04
Variance	*7.92*	*11.8*	*3.88*
Standard deviation	*2.82*	*3.43*	*0.61*
I feel able to have an impact on the world around me			
Mean	6.57	7.90	1.33
Variance	*7.45*	*5.96*	*-1.49*
Standard deviation	*2.73*	*2.44*	*-0.29*
I feel motivated to take action on issues in my community			
Mean	6.47	8.03	1.56
Variance	*6.17*	*5.97*	*-0.2*
Standard deviation	*2.48*	*2.44*	*-0.04*
I have goals and plans for the future			
Mean	8.66	8.60	-0.06
Variance	*7.85*	*8.77*	*0.92*
Standard deviation	*2.80*	*2.96*	*0.16*
A range of different options are open to me			
Mean	7.45	9.17	1.72
Variance	*7.24*	*4.21*	*-3.03*
Standard deviation	*2.69*	*2.05*	*-0.64*
I'm not interested in doing any more learning			
Mean	4.06	3.50	-0.56
Variance	*10.79*	*10.05*	*-0.74*
Standard deviation	*3.29*	*3.17*	*-0.12*
Studying to gain qualifications is important to me			
Mean	8.37	8.76	0.39
Variance	*8.36*	*4.90*	*-3.46*
Standard deviation	*2.89*	*2.03*	*-0.86*

Figure A2.6 **How do you feel about these statements about voluntary social action** *(Scale 1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree)*	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents	Difference
I am too busy to help out in these ways			
Mean	3.47	3.56	0.09
Variance	*0.99*	*0.69*	*-0.3*
Standard deviation	*1.00*	*0.83*	*-0.17*
Most of my friends help out in these ways			
Mean	3.14	3.38	0.24
Variance	*1.22*	*1.08*	*-0.14*
Standard deviation	*1.10*	*1.04*	*-0.06*
My family encourage me to help out in these ways			
Mean	2.89	2.22	-0.67
Variance	*1.25*	*1.14*	*-0.11*
Standard deviation	*1.12*	*1.07*	*-0.05*
The things I'm interested in doing are not available in my area			
Mean	2.97	2.85	-0.12
Variance	*1.24*	*0.94*	*-0.3*
Standard deviation	*1.11*	*0.97*	*-0.14*
Helping out in these ways is a good way to meet new people			
Mean	2.00	1.77	-0.23
Variance	*0.75*	*0.41*	*-0.34*
Standard deviation	*0.87*	*0.64*	*-0.23*
Helping out in these ways could help me learn new skills			
Mean	1.96	1.46	-0.5
Variance	*0.72*	*0.25*	*-0.47*
Standard deviation	*0.85*	*0.50*	*-0.35*
I don't feel I have much to offer groups, clubs or organisations by helping out			
Mean	3.36	3.73	0.37
Variance	*1.00*	*0.97*	*-0.03*
Standard deviation	*1.00*	*0.98*	*-0.02*
It's everyone's responsibility to help out in these ways			
Mean	2.70	2.04	-0.66
Variance	*0.85*	*0.81*	*-0.04*
Standard deviation	*0.92*	*0.90*	*-0.02*
Helping out in these ways would look good on my applications			
Mean	1.99	1.73	-0.26
Variance	*0.82*	*0.50*	*-0.32*
Standard deviation	*0.91*	*0.71*	*-0.2*
I don't feel confident enough to get involved			
Mean	3.47	3.81	0.34
Variance	*1.17*	*1.23*	*0.06*
Standard deviation	*1.08*	*1.11*	*0.03*

Figure A2.7 **How true to you think the following statements about you are?** *(mean scores on a scale from 0 'I don't agree at all' to 10 'I completely agree').*	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents	Difference
I feel bad when somebody gets their feelings hurt			
Mean	7.75	8.63	+0.88
Variance	*6.37*	*5.17*	*-1.2*
Standard deviation	*2.52*	*2.27*	*-0.25*
I try to understand what other people go through			
Mean	8.55	8.73	+0.18
Variance	*5.05*	*5.13*	*0.08*
Standard deviation	*2.25*	*2.26*	*0.01*

Figure A2.8 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Start of programme respondents	End of programme respondents	Difference
Overall how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?			
Mean	7.23	8.19	+0.96
Variance	*5.38*	*4.09*	*-1.29*
Standard deviation	*2.32*	*2.02*	*-0.3*
Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?			
Mean	7.22	8.30	+1.08
Variance	*7.07*	*5.81*	*-1.26*
Standard deviation	*2.66*	*2.41*	*-0.25*
Overall, to what extent do you feel that things in your life are worthwhile?			
Mean	7.57	8.48	+0.91
Variance	*5.74*	*5.93*	*0.19*
Standard deviation	*2.40*	*2.43*	*0.03*
Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday			
Mean	4.96	5.26	+0.3
Variance	*10.17*	*14.00*	*3.83*
Standard deviation	*3.19*	*3.74*	*0.55*

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Appendix 3: Summary data table of BIT questions and aggregate variable responses

Figure x Mapping of composite questions										
Local outcomes	Questions for local out-comes	Start question-naire	End question-naire	Source(s)	Aggregates	Questions for aggregates	Start question-naire	End question-naire	Composite start question-naire	Composite end question-naire
Empathy	"Q2_01", "Q2_02"	8.15	8.68	California Healthy Kids Survey. Resilience and Youth Development Module- Internal Assets	Empathy	Q2_01, How true (0 - 10), I feel bad when somebody gets their feelings hurt	7.75	8.63	8.15	8.68
						Q2_02, How true (0 - 10), I try to understand what other people go through	8.55	8.73		
Creativity	"Q4_01"	7.84	8.67	VIA Me Survey (10-17), Via Institute on Character	Problem solving	Q2_03, How true (0 - 10), I can work out my problems	7.52	8.2	7.76	8.50
						Q2_04, How true (0 - 10), I can do most things if I try	8.16	9.13		
Problem solving	"Q2_03", "Q2_05"	8.34	8.73	Personal Development Scale- National Citizenship Service		Q2_05, How true (0 - 10), I know where to go for help with a problem	8.55	9.33		
						Q2_06, How true (0 - 10), I am confident about having a go at things that are new to me	8.13	8.13		
Self-efficacy	"Q6_02", "Q2_06" "Q2_04"	7.095	8.095	California Healthy Kids Survey. Resilience and Youth Development Module- Internal Assets		Q4_01, How true (0 - 10), I often figure out different ways of doing things	7.62	8.29		
						Q6_02, How true (0 - 10), I feel able to have an impact on the world around me	6.57	7.9		

Local outcomes	Questions for local out-comes	Start question-naire	End question-naire	Source(s)	Aggregates	Questions for aggregates	Start question-naire	End question-naire	Composite start question-naire	Composite end question-naire
Team working	"Q3_01", "Q3_02", "Q3_04"	7.48	8.03	Personal Development Scale- National Citizenship Service	Cooper-ation	**Q3_01, How true (0 - 10),** I can work with someone who has different opinions to me	7.48	8.03	7.48	8.74
Cooperation	"Q3_01", "Q3_02", "Q3_04"	7.77	9.26	California Healthy Kids Survey. Resilience and Youth Development Module- Internal Assets		**Q3_02, How true (0 - 10),** I enjoy working together with other students my age	7.77	9.26		
Communication	"Q3_03"	7.335	8.825	Personal Development Scale- National Citizenship Service		**Q3_03, How true (0 - 10),** I am confident about explaining my ideas clearly	7.23	8.81		
						Q3_04, How true (0 - 10), I am able to compromise and resolve differences of opinion	7.44	8.84		

Local outcomes	Questions for local out-comes	Start question-naire	End question-naire	Source(s)	Aggregates	Questions for aggregates	Start question-naire	End question-naire	Composite start question-naire	Composite end question-naire
Locus of control	"Q4_07", "Q6_01"	7.81	8.42	Locus of control- National Citizenship Service	Grit	**Q4_02, How true (0 - 10),** If something goes wrong I am able to bounce back and carry on	**7.27**	**8.55**	**5.87**	**6.37**
						Q4_03, How true (0 - 10), Once I have started a task, I like to finish it	**8.35**	**8.29**		
Grit	"Q4_02", "Q4_03", "Q4_04", "Q4_05", "Q4_06"	**7.44**	**8.335**			**Q4_04, How true (0 - 10),** I can continue to work on things despite distractions	**6.78**	**7.9**		
						Q4_05, How true (0 - 10), I am a hard worker	**8.1**	**8.77**		
						Q4_06, How true (0 - 10), I am good at resisting temptation	**n.d.**	**n.d**		
						Q4_07, How true (0 - 10), I feel responsible for my actions	**n.d.**	**n.d.**		
Leadership	"Q4_08"	n.d	n.d	Personal Development Scale- National Citizenship Service		**Q4_08, How true (0 - 10),** I feel comfortable being a group leader	**n.d.**	**n.d**		
		4.69	**4.73**			**Q6_01, Agree/Disagree (1 - 10),** If someone is not a success in life it's usually their own fault	**4.69**	**4.73**[40]		

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[40] Reversed priority on all statistics in red on pink background

Local outcomes	Questions for local outcomes	Start question-naire	End question-naire	Source(s)	Aggregates	Questions for aggregates	Start question-naire	End question-naire	Compos-ite start question-naire	Composite end question-naire
Community (general)	"Q6_03"	**6.47**	**8.03**			**Q1,** The following list contains some examples of volunteering activities (please choose one)	**n.d.**	**n.d.**		
						Q6_03, Agree/Disagree (1 - 5), I feel motivated to take action on issues in my community	**6.47**	**8.03**		
Perception of community impact	"Q6_03"	**n.d**	**n.d**			**Q7,** Generally speaking, would you say that most people can trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?	**n.d.**	**n.d**		
Community cohesion	"Q6_03"	**n.d.**	**n.d.**			**Q8,** We would like to make a small donation to a charity on your behalf. Below is a list of charities; please choose one.	**n.d.**	**n.d**		
Community (donation)	"Q8"	**n.d.**	**n.d.**		Commun-ity	**Q9,** We are currently working with a national charity that arranges opportunities for young people to <u>help their communities through volunteering</u>.	**n.d.**	**n.d.**	**6.47**	**8.03**
						If you would like to be contacted with opportunities to volunteer, <u>please tick the box below</u>				
Community (volunteer)	"Q9"	**n.d.**	**n.d.**			**Q10,** We are currently working with an international charity that arranges opportunities for young people to <u>help people in the developing world through volunteering</u>.	**n.d.**	**n.d.**		
Community (developing world trip)	"Q10"	**n.d.**	**n.d.**				**n.d.**	**n.d.**		
Trust	"Q7"	**n.d.**	**n.d.**	Community Life Survey 2012-2013- Your Community module		If you would like to be contacted with opportunities to volunteer, <u>please tick the box below</u>	**n.d.**	**n.d.**		
Previous involvement	Q1 (as binary)	**n.d.**	**n.d.**	**N/A**			**n.d.**	**n.d.**		
Frequency of involvement	Q1 (as categoric al)	**n.d.**	**n.d.**	**N/A**			**n.d.**	**n.d.**		

Local outcomes	Questions for local out-comes	Start question-naire	End question-naire	Source(s)	Aggregates	Questions for aggregates	Start question-naire	End question-naire	Compos-ite start question-naire	Composite end question-naire
Education	"Q6_06", "Q6_07"	**5.04**	**6.5**		Education attainment	**Q6_06, How true (0 - 10),** I'm not interested in doing any more learning	**5.04**[41]	**6.5**	6.705	7.63
Attainment	NPD (qualifications earned)	8.37	8.76	National Pupil Database-linked using Unique Pupil Number (UPN)		**Q6_07, How true (0 - 10),** Studying to gain qualifications is important to me	8.37	8.76		
Behaviour	NPD (attendance & exclusions)					**NPD questions**	n.d.	n.d		
Satisfaction	"Q5_01"	7.23	8.19	ONS subjective wellbeing questions	Wellbeing	**Q5_01, Agree/Disagree (1 - 10),** Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?	7.23	8.19	6.75	7.56
Happiness	"Q5_02"	7.22	8.3			**Q5_02, Agree/Disagree (1 - 10),** Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?	7.22	8.3		
Worth	"Q5_03"	7.57	8.48			**Q5_03, Agree/Disagree (1 - 10),** Overall, to what extent do you feel that things in your life are worthwhile?	7.57	8.48		
Anxious	"Q5_04"	4.96	5.26			**Q5_04, Agree/Disagree (1 - 10),** Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?	4.96	5.26		

[41] Reversed polarities for statistics in red on pink backgrounds.

Appendix 4: Comparing SAJF O2 sample with BIT evaluation questionnaire samples

Figure A4.1 **Biographical characteristics of Think Big project leaders**	Open Think Big Projects	SAJF Think Big projects	Other youth organisation Think Big projects	All Think Big Projects
Age				
13-15	4.6	23.0	6.9	6.5
16-18	18.5	42.6	25.6	22.8
19-21	21.3	18.0	24.9	22.7
22-25	55.6	16.4	42.6	48.0
N=	628	61	535	1224
Sex				
Female	52.9	45.0	56.6	54.1
Male	47.1	55.0	43.4	45.9
N=	575	60	488	1123
Ethnicity				
White	63.5	68.3	68.0	65.7
Asian	5.4	5.0	11.7	8.1
Black	22.6	15.0	12.5	17.8
Mixed	6.3	10.0	5.9	6.3
Other	2.3	1.7	1.8	2.0
N=	575	60	488	1123
Region				
East	3.0	11.7	6.1	4.8
East Midlands	5.4	8.3	5.5	5.6
London	33.6	8.3	25.0	28.5
North East	9.0	20.0	7.6	9.0
North West	10.3	20.0	9.2	10.3
Northern Ireland	4.5	0.0	5.3	4.6
Scotland	5.4	0.0	7.2	5.9
South East	6.3	1.7	11.7	8.4
South West	4.2	15.0	7.0	6.0
Wales	5.6	0.0	5.7	5.3
West Midlands	6.6	15.0	5.9	6.8
Yorkshire and the Humber	6.3	0.0	3.7	4.8
N=	575	60	488	1123
Index of Multiple deprivation *(England only)*				
IMD 1-2	36.7	38.2	35.5	36.3
IMD 3-4	22.8	32.7	26.5	25
IMD 5-6	18.6	21.8	16.1	17.7
IMD 7-8	9.7	5.5	13	10.9
IMD 9-10	12.2	1.8	8.9	10.2
	474	55	392	921

As Figure A4.2 shows, there are some variations in the composition of samples when a set of biographical characteristics are compared. The SAJF end sample had a larger number of younger people (aged 13-15) than for the Think Big or SAJF start questionnaire, more females and a lower proportion of BAME participants. This is largely due to the method of data collection where completions were undertaken in situ at celebration and end events.

Figure A4.2 **Biographical characteristics of Think Big project leaders, start and end questionnaire respondents**	SAJF Think Big projects	Start questionnaire respondents	End questionnaire respondents
Age			
13-15	23.0	38.6	43.3
16-18	42.6	33.1	20.0
19-21	18.0	15.2	10.0
22-25	16.4	13.1	26.7
N=	61	145	30
Sex			
Female	45.0	46.8	55.2
Male	55.0	53.2	44.8
N=	60	139	29
Ethnicity			
White	68.3	83.0	93.4
Asian	5.0	7.8	0.0
Black	15.0	4.3	3.3
Mixed	10.0	2.8	0.0
Other	1.7	2.1	3.3
N=	60	145	31

Appendix 5   Survey questionnaires

Durham
University

NYA Social Action Journey Fund Survey (start of project)

Thank you for agreeing to do your Social Action Journey survey for the National Youth Agency. We would like you tell us about yourself before you start the programme so we can find out how you feel about things. We'll ask you to do it again at the end to see if your opinions have changed at all and to see if you liked the programme.

It should only take you about 10 minutes to fill in the survey. Everything you tell us will remain completely confidential and no one will be able to tell it's you.

We'd like to ask some questions about you...

1. We need to know which villages, towns and cities all the people on the project come from: so can you tell us your home post code? *(Please write your post code below e.g. AB11XY)*

2. Are you male or female?

○ Male   ○ Female

3. When were you born? (please put the date in this format DD/MM/YYYY - e.g. 28/06/1986)

4. What ethnic group are you from?

☐ Asian / Asian British
☐ Black / Black British
☐ Mixed ethnicity
☐ White / White British
☐ I don't want to say
☐ Other *(please specify)*:

5. What, if any, is your religion?

- ○ No religion
- ○ Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- ○ Buddhist
- ○ Hindu
- ○ Jewish
- ○ Muslim
- ○ Sikh
- ○ I don't want to say
- ○ Other *(please specify)*:

6. Do you receive Free School Meals (or did you receive Free School Meals in your last year at school)?

- ○ Yes - I always or sometimes took them
- ○ No - I never got free school meals
- ○ I don't know
- ○ I don't want to say

7. Which of the following do you currently do?
(select all that apply)

- ☐ Full-time education or training
- ☐ Part-time education or training
- ☐ Apprenticeship, or similar type of training or work experience
- ☐ Full-time work
- ☐ Part-time work
- ☐ Not in education, employment or training
- ☐ Carer
- ☐ Volunteer work
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other *(please specify)*:

8. Are you a registered disabled person?

- ○ Yes ○ No

9. Do you have a disability (or illness) which stops you from doing the things you want or need to do?

◯ Yes ◯ No

We'd like to know about your experiences of volunteering (or 'social action' as this project calls it)

10. Over the last sixth months, how regularly have you participated in a voluntary social action opportunity, like those listed below, outside of school hours?

	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less often	Never
a. Given unpaid help at a local club, group, organisation or place of worship	◯	◯	◯	◯
b. Raised money for a charity	◯	◯	◯	◯
c. Organised a petition or event to support a local or national issue	◯	◯	◯	◯
d. An activity to help other people or improve the local community	◯	◯	◯	◯

11. What kinds of things encouraged you to get involved in volunteering in the past?

	This had no influence on me	Some influence	A lot of influence
a. My close friends do this kind of thing	◯	◯	◯
b. My brothers/sisters do this kind of thing	◯	◯	◯
c. My parents/guardians/carers encouraged me to take part	◯	◯	◯
d. My school encouraged me to take part	◯	◯	◯
e. A youth worker/organisation encouraged me to take part	◯	◯	◯
f. I thought it would be fun/exciting	◯	◯	◯
g. I wanted to meet new people	◯	◯	◯
h. I wanted to learn new skills	◯	◯	◯
i. I thought it would help with my job prospects / CV	◯	◯	◯
j. I wanted to help out in my local area	◯	◯	◯

How do you feel about yourself and society?

12. How true do you think the following statements about you are? (Please tick one box only on each line)

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely
a. I feel bad when somebody gets their feelings hurt	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. I try to understand what other people go through	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. I can work out my problems	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. I can do most things if I try	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. I know where to go for help with a problem	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. I am confident about having a go at things that are new to me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

13. How true do you think the following statements about you are? (please tick one box only on each line)

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely
a. I can work with someone who has different opinions from me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. I enjoy working together with other students my age	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. I am confident about explaining my ideas clearly	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. I am able to compromise and resolve differences of opinion	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

14. How true do you think the following statements about you are? (please tick one box only on each line)

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely
a. I often figure out different ways of doing things	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. If something goes wrong I am able to bounce back and carry on	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Once I have started a task, I like to finish it	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. I can continue to work on things despite distractions	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. I am a hard worker	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

15. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please tick on box only on each line)

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely
a. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Overall, to what extent do you feel that things in your life are worthwhile?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

16. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (please tick one box only on each line)

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely
a. If someone is not a success in life, it's usually their own fault	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. I feel able to have an impact on the world around me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. I feel motivated to take action on issues in my community	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. I have goals and plans for the future	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. A range of different career options are open to me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. I'm not interested in doing any more learning	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. Studying to gain qualifications is important to me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

17. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?

○   Many people can be trusted

○   Some people can be trusted

○   A few people can be trusted

○   No one can be trusted

That's almost it, thank you for helping us with this study!

We'd like to know more about people's experiences, so if you're willing to take part - let us know how to get in touch with you.

18. Would you be willing to give us your email address so that we can contact you?

19. Would you be willing to give us your mobile number so that we can text or phone you?

20. Finally, can we do just one last check to make sure we understand your opinion on voluntary work?

	Tick once for each row to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement				
	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
a. I am too busy to help out in these ways	○	○	○	○	○
b. Most of my friends help out in these ways	○	○	○	○	○
c. My family encourage me to help out in these ways	○	○	○	○	○
d. The things I'm interested in doing are not available in my area	○	○	○	○	○
e. Helping out in these ways is a good way to meet new people	○	○	○	○	○
f. Helping out in these ways could help me learn new skills	○	○	○	○	○
g. I don't feel I have much to offer groups, clubs or organisations by helping out	○	○	○	○	○
h. It's everyone's responsibility to help out in these ways	○	○	○	○	○
i. Helping out in these ways would look good on my applications	○	○	○	○	○
j. I don't feel confident enough to get involved	○	○	○	○	○

Thank you for completing this survey

If you'd like to contact us about the research, please do.

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NYA Social Action Journey Fund Survey (end of project)

Thank you for agreeing to do your Social Action Journey survey for the National Youth Agency. Now that you have finished your project, we would like you tell us about how it went. It should only take you about 10 minutes to fill in the survey. Everything you tell us will remain completely confidential and no one will be able to tell it's you.

We'd like to ask some questions about you...

1. We need to know which villages, towns and cities all the people on the project come from: so can you tell us your home post code? *(Please write your post code below e.g. AB11XY)*

2. Are you male or female?

○ Male ○ Female

3. When were you born? (please put the date in this format DD/MM/YYYY - e.g. 28/06/1986)

4. What ethnic group are you from?

☐ Asian / Asian British
☐ Black / Black British
☐ Mixed ethnicity
☐ White / White British
☐ I don't want to say
☐ Other *(please specify)*:

5. What, if any, is your religion?

○ No religion
○ Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
○ Buddhist
○ Hindu
○ Jewish
○ Muslim
○ Sikh
○ I don't want to say
○ Other *(please specify)*:

6. Do you receive Free School Meals (or did you receive Free School Meals in your last year at school)?

- ○ Yes - I always or sometimes took them
- ○ No - I never got free school meals
- ○ I don't know
- ○ I don't want to say

7. Which of the following do you currently do?
(select all that apply)

- ☐ Full-time education or training
- ☐ Part-time education or training
- ☐ Apprenticeship, or similar type of training or work experience
- ☐ Full-time work
- ☐ Part-time work
- ☐ Not in education, employment or training
- ☐ Carer
- ☐ Volunteer work
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other *(please specify)*:

8. Are you a registered disabled person?

○ Yes ○ No

9. Do you have a disability (or illness) which stops you from doing the things you want or need to do?

○ Yes ○ No

We'd like to know about your experiences of volunteering (or 'social action' as this project calls it)

10. Over the last sixth months, how regularly have you participated in a voluntary social action opportunity, like those listed below, outside of school hours?

	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less often	Never
a. Given unpaid help at a local club, group, organisation or place of worship	○	○	○	○
b. Raised money for a charity	○	○	○	○
c. Organised a petition or event to support a local or national issue	○	○	○	○
d. An activity to help other people or improve the local community	○	○	○	○

11. What kinds of things encouraged you to get involved in volunteering in the past?

	This had no influence on me	Some influence	A lot of influence
a. My close friends do this kind of thing	○	○	○
b. My brothers/sisters do this kind of thing	○	○	○
c. My parents/guardians/carers encouraged me to take part	○	○	○
d. My school encouraged me to take part	○	○	○
e. A youth worker/organisation encouraged me to take part	○	○	○
f. I thought it would be fun/exciting	○	○	○
g. I wanted to meet new people	○	○	○
h. I wanted to learn new skills	○	○	○
i. I thought it would help with my job prospects / CV	○	○	○
j. I wanted to help out in my local area	○	○	○

How do you feel about yourself and society?

12. How true do you think the following statements about you are? (Please tick one box only on each line)

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely
a. I feel bad when somebody gets their feelings hurt	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. I try to understand what other people go through	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. I can work out my problems	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. I can do most things if I try	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. I know where to go for help with a problem	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. I am confident about having a go at things that are new to me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

13. How true do you think the following statements about you are? (please tick one box only on each line)

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely
a. I can work with someone who has different opinions from me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. I enjoy working together with other students my age	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. I am confident about explaining my ideas clearly	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. I am able to compromise and resolve differences of opinion	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

14. How true do you think the following statements about you are? (please tick one box only on each line)

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely
a. I often figure out different ways of doing things	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. If something goes wrong I am able to bounce back and carry on	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Once I have started a task, I like to finish it	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. I can continue to work on things despite distractions	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. I am a hard worker	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

15. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please tick on box only on each line)

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely
a. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Overall, to what extent do you feel that things in your life are worthwhile?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

16. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (please tick one box only on each line)

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely
a. If someone is not a success in life, it's usually their own fault	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. I feel able to have an impact on the world around me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. I feel motivated to take action on issues in my community	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. I have goals and plans for the future	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. A range of different career options are open to me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. I'm not interested in doing any more learning	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. Studying to gain qualifications is important to me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

17. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?

○ Many people can be trusted

○ Some people can be trusted

○ A few people can be trusted

○ No one can be trusted

How you feel about your project...

18. What was the name of your Think Big project (if you did one)

19. What would you say was your role in leading the Think Big project

- ○ I was pretty much in charge of what happened
- ○ I worked closely with one or two other people in leading the project
- ○ I made a contribution but didn't really take charge
- ○ I just let others make the decisions and did some work on the project
- ○ I never really got fully involved, to be honest
- ○ Other *(please specify)*:

20. Which youth organisation (other than the National Youth Agency) helped you with your project?

21. About how much time, do you think, you spent on your project altogether?

- ○ Less than 5 hours
- ○ 5-9 hours
- ○ 10-19 hours
- ○ 20-29 hours
- ○ 30-50 hours
- ○ More than 50 hours

22. About how many other young people were 'actively' involved in your project

- ○ 1-2
- ○ 3-4
- ○ 5-6
- ○ 7-8
- ○ 9-10
- ○ More than 10

23. Roughly, how many people of all ages in the community benefited in some way from your project?

- ○ Less than 10
- ○ 10-19
- ○ 20-29
- ○ 30-39
- ○ 40-49
- ○ 50-100
- ○ More than 100

24. How do you think the project has changed the way you are?

	Tick once for each row to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement				
	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
a. The project has helped me to try things I would never have tried before	○	○	○	○	○
b. I don't think I'd want to do something like this again	○	○	○	○	○
c. I've learned to use skills in the project I didn't know I had	○	○	○	○	○
d. The project has helped me to look at the world in a different way	○	○	○	○	○
e. As a result of the project I have some new interests and hobbies	○	○	○	○	○
f. I feel more confident about my future since doing the project	○	○	○	○	○
g. Doing the project has helped me meet people with different backgrounds from mine	○	○	○	○	○
h. Doing the project had made me care about my community	○	○	○	○	○
i. I'm much more likely to do organised voluntary work in the future now	○	○	○	○	○

25. Now you have finished your project, do you think you might get involved in any of the following things in the next six months?

	Tick once for each row to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement				
	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
a. I'd be really interested in doing the National Citizen Service programme now	○	○	○	○	○
b. Help out at a local club, group, organisation or place of worship	○	○	○	○	○
c. Help out a neighbour or someone else in your local area	○	○	○	○	○
d. Raise money for charity (including taking part in a sponsored event)	○	○	○	○	○
e. Contact someone (e.g. council, media, school) about something affecting your local area	○	○	○	○	○
f. Organise a petition or event to support a local or national issue	○	○	○	○	○
g. Meet with other people to deal with an issue in your local area	○	○	○	○	○
h. I'd like to do more projects like O2 Think Big where I'm in charge	○	○	○	○	○

That's it, thank you for helping us with this study!

We'd like to know more about people's experiences, so if you're willing to take part - let us know how to get in touch with you.

26. Would you be willing to give us your email address so that we can contact you?

27. Would you be willing to give us your mobile number so that we can text or phone you?

28. Finally, can we do just one last check to make sure we understand your opinion on voluntary work?

	Tick once for each row to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement				
	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
a. I am too busy to help out in these ways	○	○	○	○	○
b. Most of my friends help out in these ways	○	○	○	○	○
c. My family encourage me to help out in these ways	○	○	○	○	○
d. The things I'm interested in doing are not available in my area	○	○	○	○	○
e. Helping out in these ways is a good way to meet new people	○	○	○	○	○
f. Helping out in these ways could help me learn new skills	○	○	○	○	○
g. I don't feel I have much to offer groups, clubs or organisations by helping out	○	○	○	○	○
h. It's everyone's responsibility to help out in these ways	○	○	○	○	○
i. Helping out in these ways would look good on my applications	○	○	○	○	○
j. I don't feel confident enough to get involved	○	○	○	○	○

Thank you for completing this survey

If you'd like to contact us about the research, please do.

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