

SCOPING A QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION

The Campaign for Youth Social Action

June 2013

ORGANISATIONS CONTRIBUTING TO THE QUALITY FRAMEWORK

Institute for Volunteering Research

Founded in 1997, the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) is a specialist research and consultancy agency on volunteering. IVR is part of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). It draws from this policy and practice experience to produce independent rigorous research, further strengthened by academic partnerships with Birkbeck, University of London and Northumbria University. This unique partnership ensures that the research carried out by IVR is both academically robust and grounded in the wider policy and practice context of volunteering. IVR's programme of work around volunteering in recent years has included high level consultancies for the UK government and the United Nations, as well as organisational consultancies for a wide range of voluntary, public and private sector organisations (including, for example, the United Nations, the National Trust, the Natural History Museum, the Baring Foundation, Barclays Plc and the Children's Workforce and Development Council).

ivr.org.uk

The Young Foundation

The Young Foundation is determined to make positive social change happen. We pioneered the field of social innovation with The Open University, UpRising and Studio Schools. We work closely with individuals, communities and partners building relationships to ensure that our thinking does something, our actions matter and the changes we make together will continue to grow.

youngfoundation.org

The Campaign for Youth Social Action

In summer 2012, the Prime Minister asked Dame Julia Cleverdon and Amanda Jordan OBE to lead an independent review into creating a Decade of Social Action for 10 to 20 year olds. At the end of 2012, the Prime Minister supported their interim recommendations. This included the creation of an independent campaign to ensure the quality and quantity of youth social action is raised over time and outside of party politics. In 2013 the Campaign for Youth Social Action was formed to implement that Review. A Cabinet Office Secretariat was part of this cross sector Implementation team.

youthsocialaction.co.uk

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INTRODUCTION

Young people who take “practical actions in the service of others”, or social action, develop knowledge, skills and experience: these should be recognised and valued.

Therefore, in the summer of 2012 the Prime Minister announced an independent review into youth social action, conducted by Dame Julia Cleverdon and Amanda Jordan OBE. Following detailed consultation, they published interim recommendations in “In the Service of Others” (at Annex 2).

The need to continue to inspire a generation to take part in social action rang out. But what was absolutely clear was the dearth of knowledge and understanding about social action, and its value for young people and communities, within much of the education sector and, critically, employers. The report suggested that developing better understanding and recognition of this value would tackle this.

In 2013, Dame Julia Cleverdon and Amanda Jordan OBE embarked upon a unique collaboration across sectors and between research organisations, supported by a Cabinet Office secretariat and the Minister for Civil Society, to deliver a framework which would enable effective communication between young people, social action providers, educational establishments and employers in the first instance.

A Framework Advisory Group, drawn from representatives across the voluntary, business and education sectors, worked together to develop this Quality Framework: the work was driven by the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) and the Young Foundation. IVR focused on achieving a shared definition of social action, supported by a set of six quality principles, while the Young Foundation developed an easily understandable outcomes framework.

From a blend of tools, techniques and ways of working emerged a cross-sector umbrella framework which resonates with employers, educationalists and the voluntary sector. Crucially, this captures the unique and wonderful “double benefit” of youth social action: its benefits to both the community and the individual.

This paper offers an overview of the three key elements that make the Quality Framework, namely: the definition of social action; the set of principles which define great youth social action; and the key outcomes that are created as result of youth social action. The annexes offer a wealth of supporting background detail should that be desired. But the Quality Framework stands alone as an exciting step forward in enabling young people and providers to meaningfully articulate the benefits of their social action.

SUMMARY: SCOPING A QUALITY FRAMEWORK

To improve the quality of youth social action across the board, schools, employers, voluntary sector and social enterprises told us they needed to be clear on three elements:

1. a definition of social action;
2. a set of principles which define great youth social action; and
3. the outcomes of youth social action.

The annexes to this document detail the process by which we developed these three inter-related elements and conclusions. The end products are summarised below for those eager for the conclusion.

A definition of social action:

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.

A set of principles which define great youth social action:

Challenging	Stretching and engaging, as well as exciting and enjoyable.
Youth-led	Led, owned and shaped by young people.
Socially impactful	Creating positive social change that is of benefit to the wider community as well as to the young people themselves.
Progressive	Progressing to other programmes and activities.
Embedded	Becoming the norm in a young person journey towards adult and a habit for life.
Reflective	Valuing reflection, recognition and reward.

An outcomes framework to capture the double benefit to both young people and their communities, which young people create through youth social action:

Benefits for the individual		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	

CHAPTER 1: A DEFINITION OF YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION

By Nick Ockenden and Judith Unell, IVR

“A social action project is a multi-step process in which youth address an issue they care about, learn about it and potential solutions to solve it, then take action to create positive change on this issue.”
(World Savvy)

“Groups of young people who meet on a regular basis, with the aim of bringing about change in policies and/or practices, or raising awareness, at a local, national or international level.” (Roker and Eden, 2002)

Reaching a shared definition of social action was a crucial building block in the development of the Quality Framework, and trickier than it might at first have seemed.

Conversations with key stakeholders and a literature review (Annex 3) highlighted the following important features of great social action. It:

- **enables young people** to positively impact upon their communities *and* to develop personally and socially.
- **is owned and led by young people**, addressing issues that are important to them.
- **benefits communities** at local, regional, national, global or virtual levels.
- **includes a wide range of activities**, which depend on the needs and abilities of participants.
- **creates connections**, including between people from different backgrounds.

The working definition, below, pulls together most of these elements in a way which satisfied the Framework Advisory Group. Our key education and business stakeholders, in particular, reflected that creating a common language with which to describe youth social action will go some way to improving wider understanding and recognition.

Youth social action can be defined as:

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.

CHAPTER 2: SCOPING THE QUALITY PRINCIPLES WHICH DEFINE GREAT YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION

By Nick Ockenden and Kim Donahue, IVR

“The social action quality and outcomes framework will encourage high standards in social action programmes and help provide an exciting range of high class opportunities for young people.” (Ronan Dunne, CEO, Telefonica O2 UK)

Whittling down the many elements our interviewees highlighted as critical to high quality social action was certainly a challenge. However, the aim was bold: to identify the common elements of youth social action so that young people (and recruiters and funders) could pick out great social action programmes. And that these great programmes would, together, form a journey which a young person could follow, moving between social action programmes and activities.

Businesses were extremely supportive of attempts to define social action and consistently emphasised the importance of simple language which can be easily understood across sectors. Education stakeholders highlighted the huge benefits of some kind of kite mark (which could logically stem from the quality principles) which would help ensure coherence, understanding and, recognition.

The most complex element to capture was the balance between youth social action being led by young people, but appropriately supported by adults. Of course the respective capacities of a ten and twenty year old are enormously different. However, we distilled the views of stakeholders and evidence in the literature to develop six core principles that were meaningful.

Six core principles of quality	
Challenging	Stretching and engaging, as well as exciting and enjoyable.
Youth-led	Led, owned and shaped by young people.
Socially impactful	Creating positive social change that is of benefit to the wider community as well as to the young people themselves.
Progressive	Progressing to other programmes and activities.
Embedded	Becoming the norm in a young person journey towards adult and a habit for life.
Reflective	Valuing reflection, recognition and reward.

CHAPTER 3 – OUTCOMES: THE DOUBLE BENEFIT

By Nina Mguni, Young Foundation

“Through youth social action our pupils develop the confidence and resilience to succeed with their school work but also a sense that they can have a hugely positive impact on others in their community. They develop attitudes and behaviours that help them to flourish in the classroom and go on to succeed in work and life. They really are the young citizens we all want to see in our communities.” (Peter Mountstephen, Chair of National Primary Heads)

“Good youth social action has a positive impact on the young person themselves as well as the wider community.” (Hill and Stevens, 2010)

Articulating the outcomes to the individual and society likely to flow from youth social action was the final element of the Quality Framework.

Benefit to the individual

Certainly, the businesses to which we spoke were keen on the outcomes for the individual: they want social action to benefit potential (or existing) employees. They spoke of the difficulties young people sometimes have in articulating the skills they have developed through their social action experiences.

Similarly, education stakeholders consistently emphasised the huge range of positive outcomes for the individual. Many teachers noted increased confidence and skills in problem-solving and communication and also improved attendance and engagement at school and academic attainment. These are extremely powerful and enable young people to achieve and improve their academic, personal and social lives.

We collated the Catalyst Consortium’s *Framework of Outcomes for Young People* and the CBI ‘First Steps’ framework (which outlined the characteristics, values and habits that employers expect from employable young people) to create a combined framework of outcomes from social action for young people (see below).

Combined framework of outcomes for young people	
CBI	Young Foundation
Optimism	Communication
	Creativity
Determination	Confidence and Agency
	Planning and Problem solving
	Resilience, Grit
Emotional Intelligence	Leadership
	Relationships
	Managing feelings, Self control

Benefits to the community

We found a myriad of benefits to the community, from progression into employment, education or training and changes in attitudes towards anti-social behaviour (NCS Evaluation, 2012) to increased social and civic capital (evaluation of vInspired by NatCen, 2010). We pulled these together with outcomes identified by a group of young people currently engaging in social action through UpRising (see Annex 6).

In the end, the range was so huge it would be reductive to make a finite list. However, the examples below are a useful starting point which we hope will be built-on over time.

- Improved health
- Civic participation
- Educational engagement
- Voting
- Sustainability
- Employability
- Safer communities

Outcomes for youth social action – the double benefit

This double benefit, then, required further focus. We considered whether there was a way of linking the benefits to the individual to those to society.

Our conversations suggested that the link is emotional intelligence.

Effective youth social action brings young people into contact with people of different backgrounds and ages building the empathy and understanding: a bedrock of a cohesive society and an effective workforce. Through greater social awareness, young people are able to move from thinking just about themselves, to understanding, serving others and prioritising their own social impact early on in their lives.

Next Steps

To help young people and the organisations they work with (for instance their school, or a future employer) to track progress, we are developing a set of outcomes statements to become a metric which can be tested on the ground and to evaluate over the course of a project. The ambition is for these outcomes to be monitored and recognised as young people transition to adulthood and across a range of activities and programmes.

Support materials will also be developed to create clear guidance so that rigorous double benefit learning outcomes are embedded in programmes and, on their completion, young people can explain their experiences robustly and with relevance to the workplace.

We look forward to the government funded trials which will test these three elements of the Quality Framework on the ground with social action providers, and young people aged 10-20, and eagerly await the outcomes.

CONCLUSION FROM IVR AND THE YOUNG FOUNDATION

During the first half of 2013 IVR and the Young Foundation supported the independent review led by Dame Julia Cleverdon and Amanda Jordan and supported by Cabinet Office to build on the thinking of “*In the service of Others: A Vision of Youth Social Action by 2020*” and undertake a broad consultation and help achieve a consensus on what good youth social action looks like.

Together we reviewed the evidence base, informing development of a working definition of youth social action, good quality principles, existing quality assurance frameworks, and the expected outcomes from participating in youth social action.

We undertook a literature review, held interviews with key stakeholders, surveyed existing quality assurance frameworks and analysed existing evidence on the outcomes of youth social action. Our work was backed up by the campaign team’s extensive consultation with the business and education sectors. This document therefore takes into account a wide range of views and experiences to develop a consensus, and is backed up by detailed annexes.

As a result we identified core principles and features of what we would expect to see in high quality social action, based on current evidence. However, in order to increase the quality and quantity of youth social action we think there is further potential to build a stronger evidence base, including theories of change and more robust evidence on the double benefit, in particular to understand the wider benefits to the individual and society of youth social action.

We therefore support turning this research into action in the form of trials, offering the opportunity to learn and evaluate from new and existing practice and build a stronger evidence base for what works in undertaking youth social action. These trials will be run by the Cabinet Office, in parallel with the independent Campaign for Youth Social Action was launched, led by HRH The Prince of Wales on 27th June 2013. The Campaign’s **mission** is to improve the quality, quantity and frequency of social action for young people aged 10-20.

We recognise that the campaign, and the definitions and principles that underpin it, will evolve and develop over time. Much has been achieved by the Campaign for Youth Social Action to get to this point, and the level of support from such a wide range of stakeholders has been impressive. We would like to thank everyone who took part in the research and consultation, both for their time and their positive contribution.

ANNEX 1: “IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS” INTERIM REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

A vision for youth social action by 2020

Dear all,

In June the Prime Minister asked us: *how can Government, business, the voluntary and education sectors work together to support young people to engage in social action between the ages of 10 and 20?*

Our interim report addressed this question and provided our recommendations to achieve our vision. **Our vision for 2020 is that all sectors will have contributed to making our country a place where the majority of young people are involved in social action and are encouraged, recognised and valued for their contribution to society.** We have defined social action as **practical action in the service of others.**

The time has come for this vision

It has been inspiring to see how attitudes to social action have been changed by the spectacles of the Olympics and the Jubilee. This has been an unforgettable year for our country and we believe there is an historic opportunity to build on the goodwill generated to bring social action into the centre of young people’s lives. This will provide the long lasting legacy that the Olympics aims to achieve by “inspiring a generation”.

There are three other strong platforms which we believe add to the historic opportunity. The first is National Citizen Service (NCS) which has achieved impressive evaluations and delivered up to 30,000 places for young people this year. We believe that the principles and ethos of NCS, and its ambition to be a rite of passage, are central to realising a culture change amongst young people and achieving our vision. The second platform could arise from the considerable opportunities offered by proposed changes to the education system. The plan for a new “A-Bacc” and the raising of the participation age have the potential to create a positive foundation for social action within the education sector and we would like to work with the Department for Education on the development and implementation of these plans. The third platform is the support that the Government has given to establishing more Cadet units in schools, and the support that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has given to increasing the impact of uniformed organisations in disadvantaged communities.

To answer the question we have consulted widely, both locally and nationally, talking to many individuals and organisations across the voluntary, youth, education, faith and business sectors. We have held workshops with business leaders, teachers and young people. Many organisations have supported us with examples of best practice and presented impressive evidence of existing successful programmes. In addition, the sector rose to the challenge of

garnering the views of young people and conducted surveys on our behalf which showed how young people's engagement in social action brings huge benefits to society.

We have been encouraged that all those consulted have identified significant benefits from young people engaging in social action. **The benefits to young people** will come from them having the chance to be valued, having opportunities to tackle difficult social challenges and being recognised for their positive contribution – **“to be seen as the solution not the problem”**. **Businesses** are highly supportive of a focus on academic achievement, but are clear that character development and social action are critical to improving young people's employability and 'work-readiness'. **Communities** will thrive as social action builds connections across social backgrounds and generations and gives young people a stake in the well-being of their neighbourhoods and their future. The **youth organisations** and **VCSE sector**, in which we have seen so much drive and energy, will benefit as they will further innovate to ensure that young people have a range of choices and opportunities to engage.

The major barriers to realising this vision

Despite the historic opportunity that exists, our consultation identified a number of major barriers to our vision being realised:

- **Little sense of progression for young people between social action opportunities.** By further working together, youth organisations could help define a sense of a journey for young people so that when they finish one opportunity there is a better transition to another. There are also sections of the decade, such as the transition between primary and secondary school, where there is a shortage of initiatives to engage young people in social action.
- **Businesses and schools want to be more supportive, but are often confused by the range of initiatives and are unclear which programmes are the best.**
- **Social action opportunities are often not promoted to young people in the most attractive way.** Many are unengaged and social action is not a prominent part of youth culture. In other countries, the media helps to celebrate social action; we have heard widespread concern that young people are negatively portrayed by the British media. Young people do not feel that their participation is sufficiently recognised by society, be that business, the media or the education system.
- **Absence of a long term vision that inspires the public.** Achieving culture change on this scale requires all sectors to have a sense of long-term certainty before they invest and get behind something.

Recommendations to achieve the vision for 2020

- **Work with youth organisations to create an easy to navigate “service journey” for young people.** This would identify existing quality opportunities for young people from 10 to 20 and organise them around the three key transition stages in a young person's life: 10 to 14, 14 to 16 and 16 to 20. It would encourage collaboration between organisations and use technology to make the handover between opportunities more seamless and produce a sense of increasing challenge and progression. National Citizen Service at 16 would be a central universal moment in this journey, but one that is embedded in a decade of other opportunities.

- **Identify gaps in the decade “service journey” and encourage all sectors to provide or scale up programmes to fill these.** Raise and recognise the quality of social action programmes. By working with the sector to define and recognise good quality social action programmes at the three transition stages, this should provide a light touch way to drive up quality and spread best practice. It would also encourage all sectors to provide programmes which allow young people to develop and progress through the three stages. For example, an award was recently launched by BITC to identify best practice from the employers’ perspective. The challenge is to create a framework which is credible and lends recognition as an “Intel inside” brand without being hampered by overbearing accreditation and bureaucracy. We will work with the different sectors to tackle this challenge as the framework is developed.
- **Embed social action in schools.** The plans for a new baccalaureate qualification at A-level involving voluntary work and the raising of the participation age have the potential to transform demand for social action opportunities within schools.
- **Ensure that social action is driven by young people.** Create an inspirational network to encourage and help young people to identify opportunities and provide support in the key transition stages from the ages of 10 to 14, 14 to 16 and 16 to 20. This will not only make social action more visible and attractive to young people, but will also encourage collaboration within the sector.
- **Develop a culture of celebrating social action by promoting and publicising across a variety of media platforms.** It is important to develop a culture where young people are not presented as a problem and where positive role models are encouraged. This could be achieved through a national TV celebration of the social action achievements by young people, as in Canada and Ireland.
- **Measure progress and benefits of investment in the 2020 vision,** We believe that much evidence of participation in social action already exists across the sectors. We hope to pull this together to enable progress over the next eight years to be tracked.
- Having heard from the Prime Minister of his support for the recommendations we are excited to begin embedding social action in young people’s lives. We will firstly commission the framework and collate existing data on current levels of social action activity. We will then plan to run pilots in 2013 followed by a national roll-out in 2014. We ask that you continue to support us as we move into the next phase.

DAME JULIA CLEVERDON AND AMANDA JORDAN OBE

ANNEX 2: DEFINITION AND PRINCIPLES: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview of literature on youth social action

By Judith Unell, March 2013

1. Working definitions

While definitions of youth social action exist in the literature, there does not appear to be one generally used formulation. Youth social action has developed in many different social contexts and cultures in response to the activities of young people themselves. Definitions have therefore tended to evolve from the ground up. A quick examination of some current definitions does, however, reveal substantial agreement about the components of youth social action.

Roker and Eden (2002) describe youth social action in terms of *“Groups of young people who meet on a regular basis, with the aim of bringing about change in policies and/or practices, or raising awareness, at a local, national or international level.”*

A report of an American Youth Leadership Programme in Bangladesh (World Savvy) says that: *“Social action projects go beyond volunteering and service learning, where people help others in need and learn about social issues in local and global communities. A social action project is a multi-step process in which youth address an issue they care about, learn about it and potential solutions to solve it, then take action to create positive change on this issue.”*

A report by Youth Action and the Centre for Social Action at De Montfort University (2009) uses slightly different terminology but is clearly describing the same kinds of objectives and processes as in the first two definitions: *“Youth action volunteering is different to placement volunteering and is commonly referred to as way of supporting young people to develop and lead their own group-based volunteering opportunities. The participative process allows them to have more choice or say over what volunteering they do. This involves giving young people opportunities to play a key role in the design, delivery and evaluation of their projects.”*

Reviewing the literature, Morsillo and Prilleltensky (2007) observe that there are two principal types of social involvement by young people. One is civic engagement which is primarily ameliorative in that it does not challenge the status quo. This would seem to correspond to the placement volunteering identified in the previous paragraph. The second is ‘transformational’ in that *“it strives to alter the conditions that lead to social problems in the first place. This approach does challenge the status quo and is more explicitly concerned with changing political structures. This can take many forms, such as young people organizing social action campaigns or being involved in youth consultation processes with local government.”*

An account by Arches and Fleming (2006) of two youth social action projects in the UK and the USA accepts the principle that: *social action is concerned with facilitating a process whereby people collectively learn to discover those parts of their lives that they can change. There is a recognition that social change can most effectively be carried out within the context of a group and that individuals are more powerful when they act collectively. Social action is group action.*"

These definitions have a common interpretation of youth social action as:

- Group-based, involving young people in working together and supporting each other towards agreed goals. While some groups may be locally-based and depend upon face-to-face communication, digital communications free young people to take collective action nationally, internationally and globally.
- Activist in nature. Young people identify an issue of common concern to the group, and work to achieve positive change. Once again, this may be an issue arising from their immediate environment, such as school or community, or it may be something that concerns them at a national or international level.
- Following a step-by-step process. A planned process is integral to youth social action. The young people take responsibility for each stage of planning and activity directed towards an agreed objective.
- Owned by young people. While appropriate adult facilitation is critical, the action is driven and managed by young people themselves. In pursuing their goals, young people acquire real-life experience of managing social change.

Accounts of youth social action also emphasise that the process is as important as the achievement of goals. Through working together towards meaningful, self-defined objectives, young people are able to develop skills, confidence and a sense of self-efficacy.

2. Youth social action and youth volunteering / participation

Is youth social action different from youth volunteering and other types of social participation by young people? It is perhaps best seen as a dimension of youth volunteering, co-existing with more traditional forms of individual and collective volunteering by young people. A report sponsored by Nat Cen and others (2009) on young people, volunteering and youth projects noted that youth action had become a 'major trend' in voluntary participation by young people.

A discussion paper by the Institute for Volunteering Research has examined the nature of volunteering in some depth and reveals its multi-layered reality. The authors begin by defining three core characteristics of volunteering about which there is general agreement: volunteering is an activity which is **unpaid, undertaken through an act of free will, and of benefit to others**. Within these very broad parameters (each of which is more ambiguous than it first appears), is an enormous diversity of volunteering types. The paper goes on to consider different cultural interpretations of volunteering, among which is 'volunteering as activism'. "*Rather than being seen as a resource to be managed by an organisation in order to deliver a cost-effective service to the public, volunteers here are the organisation, working together to meet shared needs and address common problems.*" This type of volunteering is typically community-based, mediated through small groups, highly informal (e.g. rejecting set recruitment or management procedures) and rooted in the values of self-help and mutual aid.

Youth social action is undoubtedly rooted in the activist tradition and its values but in countries like the UK cannot be regarded as a spontaneous, self-organising social phenomenon since, like other forms of youth volunteering, it is dependent upon sympathetic adult facilitation and usually takes place in settings, such as schools and youth facilities, which provide adult leadership and protection for young people. The empowering of young people through social action is designed to take place within a safe environment where adults are available to offer advice and expertise, and to step in to help resolve difficulties when needed.

Questions about the place of youth social action within or alongside mainstream youth volunteering tend to be framed by adults, whether policy-makers or those active in the field. An interesting question is whether young people engaged in social action perceive themselves to be volunteers. There seems to be very little specific evidence about this in the literature. Evidence from adult interviews which formed the basis of the Pathways to Participation report suggests that 'being part of something' was a powerful motivation for people to get involved and that they were attracted to activities that had personal meaning and value, as well as a positive potential for change. They did not necessarily describe themselves as volunteers, and indeed formal volunteering was just one of many avenues for participation. Further investigation is needed in order to see whether this way of seeing their involvement is also characteristic of young people.

3. Adults as enablers of youth social action

It is clear from the literature that successful youth social action requires expert and sympathetic facilitation by adults. In the most comprehensive field-based study of youth social action to date, Roker and Eden (2002) found that adult facilitation was crucial to the stability and longevity of youth social action groups. Without this support, groups tended to become fragile and liable to collapse. Wilson et al. (2007) describe a photography-based social action project for early adolescents (10—12 years) in six Californian schools serving low income communities. Each group was co-facilitated by a high school student and a university student, each receiving 30-60 hours of training for their role. This intensity of adult support was considered essential because of the age of the participants, their lack of experience in gathering and interpreting evidence, and their difficulties in working constructively in groups.

Even in less structured projects, sustained adult facilitation appears necessary in order to maintain impetus and boost the confidence of the young people. Morsillo and Prilleltensky note that social action is a challenging way of working with young people because social change demands considerable effort and a long-term commitment.

4. Examples of activities undertaken as part of youth social action

The range of specific activities undertaken within youth social action is enormous. Some examples taken from the literature include:

- Putting on a music and dance event at a shopping mall with a view to making an application for setting up a community theatre;
- Organising children's activities for a refugee cultural festival;
- Young lesbian and gay people putting on a drama about homophobia for a local teacher's forum;

- Drawing up a programme for community improvement in a deprived neighbourhood, consulting with other young people and presenting the programme to a government agency;
- Mounting a campaign for the provision of a community basketball court;
- Planning a grow-to-eat food initiative;
- Organising a school-wide litter-clearing campaign.

Common to all these initiatives is a process in which, typically:

- Young people are recruited to a social action programme by adult enablers;
- The young people work together in small groups, with adult support, defining the issue or problem that concerns them. They might use photography, film or artwork to illustrate the issue, and these media can be used as part of a wider consultation with other young people or the community at large;
- Priorities are set in a democratic manner and an action plan drawn up.
- The young people work together on the action plan within an agreed timetable that culminates in a defined end-point, whether this is a performance, a presentation or another kind of event.
- Often the young people are supported in feeding the learning from their completed projects into on-going campaigns and networks.

5. Outcomes for young people and communities

Several research studies have specifically enquired about the gains made by young people and the benefits to communities arising from youth social action. They have generally relied upon self-reporting by young participants rather than independent measurement. Findings from four studies featured in this review indicate a degree of consistency in the personal, social and community outcomes achieved:

- Young people themselves felt that they had learned to use new skills, had greater self-confidence and had a more focused outlook as a result of participating in the social action process. All referred to the communication and group skills they had developed. They believed that they had made their communities safer and cleaner. (Arches and Fleming, 2006)
- Young people reported a greater awareness of community issues and how to effect change. They gained community participation skills –such as how to organise meetings and negotiate bureaucracies. Linked to this, they identified an enhanced sense of social control and responsibility and an increased sense of hopefulness about their capacity to make change happen. They also became more confident about expressing themselves and being assertive. Their communities were judged to have benefited from enhanced youth participation. (Morsillo and Prilleltensky, 2007)
- Group participation had a positive impact on young people’s self-confidence and sense of self-worth. Another key impact was on young people’s self-identity, helping them to develop a sense of who they were and their place in the world. The young

people were also enabled to develop a variety of skills and abilities, including use of information technology, organisational skills, team-working, negotiation, and conflict resolution. While many young people were sceptical about national politics, their experience of social action led them to believe that they could make a real difference locally. (Roker and Eden, 2002)

- An important dimension of young people's participation in youth social action was the opportunities it presented for them to interact with other young people from different social backgrounds. This changed their attitudes and encouraged them to learn from each other. Young people felt that meeting others had enhanced their personal and social development through gaining self-confidence and a better understanding of people. (Youth Action Network and Centre for Social Action, De Montfort University, 2009)

These findings suggest that youth social action can be a powerful medium for enhancing the life experience of young people through enabling them to bring about social change.

ANNEX 3: LIST OF EXISTING FRAMEWORKS

We reviewed 50 quality frameworks currently in use - both generic quality marks and those relating to youth involvement and participation. Existing quality assurance frameworks tend to target organisations or youth projects, and there are a range of awards and accreditation for young people and youth workers.

ORGANISATION	QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK
Action for Communities in Rural England	ACRE standard
National Youth Agency	Act by Right
ASC	Adventure Service Challenge
Ambition UK	Ambition Quality
Student Voice	Audit Tool
QAA	Benchmarks for youth and community work
City Year	Civic Leadership Competencies
Sport England	Clubmark
ASDAN	Community Volunteering Qualifications
ASDAN	CoPE
Duke of Edinburgh	DofE Award
EFQM	EFQM Excellence Model
National Youth Agency	Hear by Right
Investors in Diversity	IID
Investors in People	IIP
YMCA	Insynch Standards
National Youth Agency	Integrated Services for Young People
Volunteering England	Investors in Volunteers
ISO	ISO 9000/9001
Greater London Volunteering	London's Volunteer Management Charter
Matrix	Matrix

National Youth Agency	NYA Quality Mark
NAVCA	Performance Standards and Quality Award
Charities Evaluation Service	PQASSO
Institute for Outdoor Learning	Professional Accreditation
Community Foundation Network	QA2
Play England	Quality in Play
London Youth	Quality Mark
Action for Advocacy	Quality Performance Mark
Charity Commission	Quality Standards Endorsement Programme
Youth Action Network	REACH
Children's Rights Alliance England	Ready Steady Change materials
NCVYS	Sound Systems
NOS	Standards for Youth Work
The Challenge Network	The Challenge
Volunteering England	VCQA
Community Matters	Visible
Skills Third Sector	Volunteer Managers NOS
ASDAN	Volunteering Short Course
Unltd	Young Advisors Toolkit
Participation Works	Young Inspectors
NCVYS	Young Partners Award
UK Youth	Youth Achievement Awards
Project Oracle	Youth Evidence Hub
British Youth Council	Youth on Board Awards
British Youth Council	Youth Voice Standards
Youthmark	Youthmark

KEY
Participant Focus
Delivery agent QA
Provider Org QA
Youth Project or Club QA
Programmes not listed in summary
Focus of framework

ANNEX 4: CONSULTATION PROCESS

Supported by a Cabinet Office secretariat, the Campaign for Youth Social Action undertook a wide consultation process to test whether and how a quality framework could be created.

This included:

- Telephone interviews led by IVR with key social action organisations and individuals.
- A high-level review of relevant literature on youth social action led by IVR.
- A workshop with the uprising network.
- Three framework advisory group meetings bringing together VCSE, employers and education.
 - Aldridge Foundation
 - ARK
 - City Year (Generation Change)
 - Envision (Generation Change)
 - National Grid
 - NCVYS
 - O2 Telefonica
 - Ofsted
 - Student Hubs (Generation Change)
 - The Challenge (Generation Change)
 - Scouts
 - UK Youth
- A Generation Change forum meeting of social action providers.
- An education workshop at Teach First with 14 education institutions attending.
- Teach First forum consultations with 75-100 teachers.
- A business roundtable at Clarence House in partnership with UK Youth and BITC.
- A conference, convened by UnLtd, about how to join the dots between sectors and role of social enterprise and entrepreneurs in youth social action.

In addition, there have been numerous individual meetings with voluntary sector organisations, social enterprises, schools, colleges, universities and businesses.

ANNEX 5: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON DEFINITION AND GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES AND FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

Good practice principles

We asked stakeholders about what good quality youth social action looks like and also about the key elements of good practice. There was considerable overlap with some of the definitional elements:

- Young people self-defining what they want to do and receiving facilitative adult support to achieve it.
- Accessible and affordable.
- A good social mix among the young people involved to build a sense of social connectedness.
- Sustainable – not just a one-off experience but normalised as part of school and university life.
- Young people are properly equipped (e.g. with skills, tools, knowledge and attributes) for whatever course of social action they have chosen.
- Generally a collective activity, although there may be individual actions within that. Group activity keeps it more critical and reflective, and a group process assists in the development of ideas.
- Genuinely challenging and reflective, with direct feedback to young people.
- Space for young people to fail as well as to succeed, and to learn from that.
- Firmly based in communities rather than isolated. Work must be of genuine value to the community and part of a broader plan.
- Good supervision to make sure young people stay on track and are learning along the way.
- Choice of settings and multiple opportunities for becoming involved.
- Supportive social networks to help young people deal with set-backs and conflict as well as to celebrate achievements.

During the education workshop, the group (of 14 education institutions) considered the following principles important.

- Should start with the individual.
- Make it meaningful.
- Sustained action.
- Youth-led and genuinely appealing to young people.
- Challenging – a blend of different types of social action approaches is valuable and provides different experiences and learning outcomes.
- Celebration of achievement is important.
- Measuring impact (for example, time commitment). Young people like measurable too – to see what they've achieved and be able to record it.
- Passion/ownership to real community issues.
- Inclusive/diversity.
- Young people leading their own personal development.
- Should recognise the breadth of social action – which could include in the home.

Umbrella frameworks

We reviewed 50 quality frameworks currently in use - both generic quality marks and those relating to youth involvement and participation. Existing quality assurance frameworks tend to target organisations or youth projects, and there are a range of awards and accreditation for young people and youth workers.

We identified some complementarities between existing frameworks, such as:

- Youth-led processes.
- Duty of care to young people and safeguarding.
- Reward, recognition and celebration.
- A focus on organisational systems and procedures.
- Inclusivity and accessibility.
- Ensuring that participants do not experience economic barriers to participation.
- Flexibility.
- Training and skill-building elements.
- Building confidence and self-esteem.

The current frameworks fall into the following categories:

- Organisational quality / excellence.
- Youth project quality marks.
- Awards or accreditation for young people.
- Benchmarks or accreditation for youth workers.

While we found a great deal of diversity, some features were identified as key to future quality frameworks:

- Focus on safeguarding and duty of care to young people.
- Scaled approach that is based on the size of the organisation.
- Many frameworks involved a fee to attain a quality mark and are independently verified but this may be a barrier for smaller organisations.
- Involving young people in the design, development and monitoring of frameworks.
- Recognising any quality marks that have already been achieved and linking with current frameworks.

Our research has led us to two distinct quality frameworks:

1. A mark of excellence for programmes or projects based on a set of principles and that meet certain minimum requirements based on their size (budget or staffing) which links with other existing frameworks:
 - Safeguarding, legal requirements and the duty of care to young people.
 - Governance and leadership.
 - Requirements related to employing staff.
 - Requirements related to financial management and accountability.
 - Requirements for registered charities.
 - Requirements for Companies.
 - Reflective practice and learning.
 - Equality and diversity.
 - Accessibility.
2. A badge for young people who attain and progress through a journey of youth social action which would look more like a passport and be able to track progress.

ANNEX 6: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON OUTCOMES CONSULTATION

About Uprising

UpRising is an independent charitable organisation that works with talented young people, equipping them with the skills, knowledge and confidence to transform their communities for the better (and so, becoming UpRisers). The UpRising Leadership Programme opens pathways to leadership for talented young adults from diverse backgrounds in the UK.

The UpRisers identified the following outcomes:

Benefits to individual	Benefit to community
Developing social connections	Employability skills
Broadening aspirations	Impact on others/the community
Confidence	Social interactions
Working with others	Crime and community safety

Outcomes discussions with schools

During the consultation, education stakeholders have consistently emphasised the diverse range of positive outcomes that social action can deliver, both to the individual and to the community. These outcomes differ for each individual and each social action project, and may not always be immediately recognisable or quantifiable. Yet they can be extremely powerful and enable young people to achieve and improve both in the academic, personal and social lives. A variety of key outcomes were identified by stakeholders at the education workshop, including:

- Independence – fostering independent thinking and learning.
- Passion – relating to student concerns.
- Adaptability – taking students out of their comfort zone – risk taking.
- Enterprise and risk taking

- Political/socially awareness.
- Young people as change-makers.
- Empowerment.
- Lifelong commitment to social action/change.
- A connection with the community.
- A social action narrative – some kind of timeline so that young people recognise, communicate and have pride in their journey.
- Assertiveness.
- Agency.
- Understanding that they can give something back.
- Ability to manage others.
- Collective accountability.
- Clear end point.
- Resilience.
- Confidence.
- Employer recognition.
- Social action supports progress and achievement.
- Understanding of what social action.
- Understanding that communities face a variety of challenges and what those can be.
- Can often include changes in the family e.g. greater respect – changed perceptions of one's own family member.

Case studies of UpRisers

UpRisers have identified the following outcomes resulting from their youth social action. The case studies below also illustrate the outcomes associated with youth social action.

Benefit to the individual:

- Developing social connections
- Broadening aspirations
- Confidence
- Working with others

- Employability skills

Benefits to others:

- Social interactions
- Crime and community safety

Case studies

Arun

“I was an UpRiser last year. My definition of youth social action (YSA) is helping someone for the betterment of the individual e.g. that they are happier as a result. And there is a demonstrable change in the person or the community. But it doesn’t have to be in the community, it can be globally or online.

My mum had cancer and the neighbours helped. I was 14 years old and my parents had separated. The neighbours helped with everything. They helped with cooking, they came to the hospice and helped us go to the church. This showed me how important it was to help people.

I didn’t define what I wanted to do as YSA at the time. We wanted to develop a social enterprise. We wanted to shape social cohesion and integrate communities. This was in the post-riots background. We were the three faiths forum. The three faiths forum wanted to raise awareness about asylum seekers. There was a catholic person, that was me, a Jewish person and a Muslim. We established a connection and launched an event at SOAS. It was about raising awareness about the issues so that people understand asylum seekers better - that asylum seekers have often experienced rape and been beaten”.

Natasha

“It is about identifying something important to you, identifying a problem that you would like to solve, that you seek a commitment to make a difference. I started a campaign to raise issues about Islamophobia, and the victims of Islamophobia. We did a survey and the results went to a local MP. There is now a hotline and the police are registering Islamophobic attacks, not just categorizing them as racial attacks.

I belong to a community that is criticised and attacked and I have had family members that were killed abroad. I wanted to give the voiceless a voice. I wanted to help those that didn’t have the power and confidence to seek support.”

Sotez

“I was given the name Sotez, because it meant ‘fresh new beginning’ my dad had experienced the Bangladeshi war of independence. My other name means ‘light’. My dad fought in the war of independence in Bangladesh, he was a politician.

It is about social relationships for me. It is about taking action for the betterment of the individual community. I am involved in mentoring, teaching, volunteering. I teach on UpRising. It is about developing others.

I was the kind of kid that if my classmates wanted an extension on the homework, they would come to me. My parents have taught me how to deal with power. I come from an educated working background. I am now training people to deal with power.

I noticed that at the parents' evening, the teachers would speak to BME parents slowly and loudly. My mum looked like a simple housewife, I told her to play along with it and then tell the teacher off afterwards so they don't presume in future.

I spent three years in university unfulfilled. The moment I left university, I felt that politics was something that I could change. I wanted to do social action, so I am now an organizer for London Citizens."

Fayyadh

"Youth social action is about taking ownership and responsibility for what is happening in your community. Teaching people to not rely on the institution or establishment. It is about taking risks and sticking your neck out, as well as developing innovative ideas - that you collectively come together and make a change and this leads to power. I want to change something and do good.

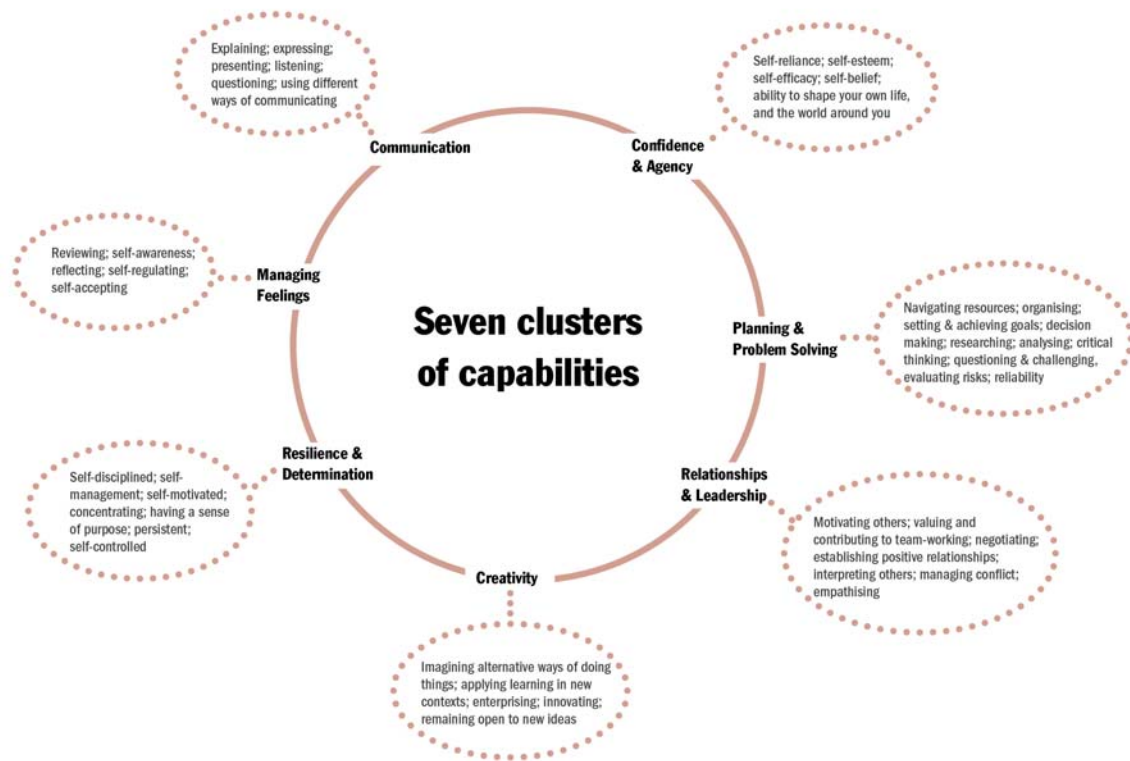
Why? It was my family, I learnt from my parents and older brothers and sisters, who took a different path. I am from a mixed background. My dad is Sudanese, my mum is part Afghan, part Pakistani, part Yemini. Both my parents grew up in Bangladesh and my mother tongue is Urdu. I have never lived in a cultural bubble because of my background. I also have had religious values instilled in me. I understand other people's faiths and backgrounds.

I asked myself what can I do to have some value in my life? I got a scholarship to go to the Philippines, to teach in a rural community. I was teaching young people about coral reefs. Before university, I went to South Africa. I lived there with a family. I worked in a surgery and a soup kitchen. I later interned for a councillor in Bow. I was shocked at the issues that I found in Bow.

As an UpRiser we developed an idea to raise financial literacy among the young black community. We found research which showed that they weren't as financially literate. We went into schools and we found that they didn't know about credit cards and charges or banking more generally.

I valued working with UpRisers. I found that I had a first-hand role to play and skills that I can use to the betterment of others. I am more satisfied with what I am doing".

Framework of Outcomes for Young People as a foundation (McNeil, Reeder and Rich, 2012). *The Framework of Outcomes for Young People* links seven social and emotional capabilities to the achievement of other, longer term outcomes for young people, such as educational attainment, employment, and health. This link is supported by compelling research evidence and the seven clusters are shown below.



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ANNEX 8: LIST OF USEFUL WEBSITES AND LINKS

- *CBI First Steps report, 2012* <http://www.cbi.org.uk/campaigns/education-campaign-ambition-for-all/>
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