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# Youth Scan

April 2008

From the National Youth Council  
"Developing a Vibrant, Highly-Connected, and  
Self-Sustaining Youth Sector, and Nurturing World-Ready Youth"  
Bringing you snippets of youth trends and issues compiled from  
diverse sources such as news reports, journals and press releases,  
Youth Scan aims to help you stay in touch with the constantly evolving youth scene.

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**1. The Contribution of Non-formal Learning to Young People's Life Chances**

*The National Youth Agency, 21 April 2008*

**2. Promoting positive changes in youth**

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*Thaindian News, 25 March 2008*

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**1. The Contribution of Non-formal Learning to Young People's Life Chances**

*The National Youth Agency, 21 April 2008*

New research carried out by The Fabian Society with The National Youth Agency into the contribution of non-formal learning, and the distinctive contribution of youth work, to young people's personal, social and emotional development and to their future life chances, has been published.

The paper describes the impact of non-formal learning on life chances, demonstrating how impacting on self-efficacy, motivation, self-control and interpersonal skills lead to better outcomes in education, employment, health and the local environment. The challenge for policy makers, the research says, is to close the gap in life experiences and outcomes by broadening opportunities for engagement in effective non-formal activities.

The ten recommendations

1. Youth work should play a role in the additional support required to navigate mainstream education and make good choices in the light of the recent 14-19 qualification reforms.
2. The current drive to raise the participation age in education to 18 should recognise that non-formal learning opportunities afforded by statutory and voluntary youth services should remain an option.
3. The new PSA target regime must send a robust message about the priority accorded to youth work.

4. The youth sector needs to work to communicate the importance of investing in young people's participation in educational learning activities.
5. Key worker status should be extended to front-line youth workers as a reflection of the importance and priority attached to the sector by government.
6. High quality services will only be achieved if the government ensures a level playing field for youth work within local authorities, and supports budget managers in ensuring sufficient resources are allocated at the local level.
7. The government should reconsider its position on providing clear national expectations of the level of funding allocated by local authorities to youth work, for example by guaranteeing a minimum level of funding as a proportion of the education budget.
8. The sector would benefit from more opportunities for consultation and collaboration between local authorities and training colleges, to ensure that newly-qualified staff are equipped with the necessary range of skills.
9. More attention needs to be paid to the requirements of the youth work apprenticeship framework.
10. Youth workers have the same right to receive proper professional support as teachers and social workers.

The Report can be viewed at:

<http://www.nya.org.uk/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=93989>

(Source: *The National Youth Agency*, Accessed on 24 April 2008, <http://www.nya.org.uk/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=96858>)

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## **2. Promoting positive changes in youth -- even at-risk youth**

*Published by SAGE in Journal of Adolescent Research, 21 April 2008*

Millions of dollars are spent annually on research to reduce risky and problem behaviors in youth. Conversely, far less has been directed toward research promoting positive development -- particularly in at-risk youth. The May 2008 special issue of the *Journal of Adolescent Research* reports the results of nearly two decades of research at the Miami Youth Development Project (YDP), a community-supported positive youth development program of outreach research.

The research draws on a perspective called Developmental Intervention Science (DIS). This approach suggests new directions for developing affordable youth interventions that also meet the needs of both the community and its youth. The key concepts of the DIS approach include:

- Community supported interventions that meet youth and community needs
- Developing affordable and sustainable interventions in "real world" settings
- Targets risky and problem behaviours while promoting positive self development
- Research that aims to promote both short and long term life course changes

"The Miami Youth Development Project (YDP) represents watershed work in developmental science," observe leading researchers in human development Richard Lerner and Willis Overton in their commentary on the issue. "This special issue of *Journal of Adolescent Research* gives developmental scientists and the youth they seek to understand a potent example of how researchers can transcend the confines of

conceptual reductionism and reliance on a single methodology to help enhance the lives of the diverse young people of America."

The special issue of Journal of Adolescent Research, entitled, "Promoting Positive Youth Development: New Directions in Developmental Theory, Methods, and Research" by William M. Kurtines of Florida International University and colleagues is available for a limited time at <http://jar.sagepub.com/current.dtl>.

(Source: EurekAlert, Accessed 26 April 2008,  
[http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2008-04/sp-ppc041808.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2008-04/sp-ppc041808.php))

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### **3. Generation Z: Rich and Forgotten**

*Marcus, Caroline*

*The Sydney Morning Herald, 13 April 2008*

Welcome to Generation Z, the forgotten generation. Generation Z encompasses children aged 17 and younger, one in five of whom will have some form of mental illness.

One in four will be bullied, most likely over the internet. Also known as the New Silent Generation, it will be the most educated, financially well-off and technologically literate in history.

Zeds are experts at multi-tasking and spend their free time communicating online and texting on their mobile phones. Zeds have older parents, fewer siblings and are more disconnected from their communities than any other generation.

Leading psychiatric expert Professor Ian Hickie believes Australian youth are in the grip of a mental health crisis, but are virtually ignored by federal and state governments and an archaic health system. Professor Hickie is an executive director of the Brain and Mind Institute at the University of Sydney and an executive committee member of the Federal Government's youth mental health initiative, Headspace.

#### **Parents live longer**

Fast food and sedentary habits may result in Zeds being the first generation to have a shorter life span than their parents, new research has found.

Many young Australians are so overweight that the life expectancy of children has fallen by two years - the number jumps to four years for those who are obese by the age of 20, figures from Curtin University's Public Health Advocacy Institute show. The institute has called for tighter government regulations on fast food and alcohol advertising at sporting events.

#### **Mind matters**

20% of children will develop a mental illness between the ages of 12 and 24, Melbourne's Centre for Adolescent Health has found. Professor Hickie said long-term national statistics from Australia showed three-quarters of mental health problems began before the age of 25, with the majority occurring between the ages of 15 and 24. "The more we intervene during this period, the better we do," he said. "Sadly, less than one in four in trouble get help."

#### **Lack of treatment**

The overall suicide rate in Australia has dropped, with a 30-year low in NSW announced last week. However, Professor Hickie said that among the 300 Australians that killed themselves every year, there was evidence male Australians aged 25 to 44 were

"continuing to suicide at very high rates", plagued by mental health disorders they developed as teenagers and which continued into adulthood.

He said a chronic shortage and poor distribution of psychiatrists meant young people could not access treatment.

### **Stress and bullying**

A major contributor to the worsening mental health of Zeds is less support from families, with fewer functioning adults around them, and a lessened sense of community. And they are being bullied in unprecedented numbers, with the anonymity of the internet and mobile phones making it easier and more frequent.

(Source: *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Accessed on 16 April 2008, <http://www.smh.com.au/news/parenting/generation-z-rich-and-forgotten/2008/04/12/1207856908923.html>)

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### **4. Habbo Reveals Results of the 2008 Global Youth Survey of Teens**

*Press Release Newswire, 3 April, 2008*

Habbo, the largest virtual world for teenagers worldwide, unveiled the results of its second Global Habbo Youth Survey. Examining the interests, values, attitudes, online habits of a global audience, the survey reveals teens' current media usage, consumption behavior and brand preferences.

Habbo surveyed 58,486 teens between the ages 11 and 18 from 31 countries and identified five clearly defined behavioral segments amongst respondents. The five groups were categorized as the following:

- *Achievers*: Ambitious, strong-minded and materialistic. They value material success and while they have many friends, they do not consider other people's feelings as much as other groups.
- *Rebels*: Value gathering a lot of experiences in life and enjoy a fast-paced lifestyle. Like Achievers, they want to become "rich and famous," but are not willing to compromise on having fun in order to achieve this goal.
- *Traditionals*: Value having an ordinary life and see themselves as honest, polite and obedient. They are keen to help others but are less ambitious and pleasure-seeking compared to other segments.
- *Creatives*: Share many of the same positive traits as Traditionals, but with a focus on creativity. They place value in getting a good education and being influential in life, but they are also active, social and have an interest in traveling.
- *Loners*: More introverted and less likely than other segments to identify with any specific personality traits. They rarely see themselves as active or self-assured, but are more open-minded in their attitudes compared to Traditionals or Achievers.

Nearly 76 percent of teens globally use the Internet to instant message friends, and, overall instant messaging was the most popular communication tool in most countries.

"According to the Global Habbo Youth Survey, the most popular global Web sites amongst teens are YouTube and MySpace," said Emmi Kuusikko, director of user and market insight for Sulake, Habbo's parent company. "In the U.S., the most popular web sites amongst respondents were MySpace and YouTube, followed by AddictingGames, RuneScape and Facebook.

### About the research

The 2008 Global Youth Survey research was conducted within the virtual world of Habbo with a total number of 58,486 respondents. Conducted between October and November 2007, the survey included 31 countries and statistical weighting was employed to give all participating countries an equal weight in the global results.

More info can be found at: [www.sulake.com](http://www.sulake.com)

(Source: Press Release Newswire, Accessed 27 April  
<http://www.prweb.com/releases/2008/04/prweb827874.htm>)

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### **5. Kids who bully tend to have difficulties with other relationships**

*Thaindian News, 25 March 2008*

Researchers at York University and Queens University have found that students who bully others tend to have difficulties with other relationships, such as those with friends and parents. They also found that targeting those relationships, as well as the problems children who bully have with aggression and morality, may offer ideas for intervention and prevention.

For the study, the researchers looked at 871 students (466 girls and 405 boys) for seven years from ages 10 to 18 asking about their involvement in bullying or victimizing behaviour, their relationships, and other positive/negative behaviours.

The findings:

- 9.9% of the students reported engaging in consistently high levels of bullying from elementary through high school.
- Some 13.4% reported that they bullied at relatively high levels in elementary school but dropped to almost no bullying by the end of high school.
- Some 35.1% of the kids said that they bullied peers at moderate levels. And 41.6% said they almost never bullied across the adolescent years.
- Children who bullied tended to be aggressive and lacking in a moral compass, experienced a lot of conflict in their relationships with their parents, friends and associated with others who bullied.

Lead author Debra Pepler, Distinguished Research Professor of Psychology at York University and Senior Associate Scientist at the Hospital for Sick Children, said that the findings provide clear direction for prevention of persistent bullying problems.

Interventions must focus on the children who bully, with attention to their aggressive behaviour problems, social skills, and social problem-solving skills, Pepler said.

A focus on the child alone is not sufficient. Bullying is a relationship problem that requires relationship solutions by focusing on the bullying children's strained relationships with parents and risky relationships with peers.

The study is published in the March/April 2008 issue of the journal *Child Development*.

(Source: *Thaindian News*, Accessed 27 April 2008  
[http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/entertainment/kids-who-bully-tend-to-have-difficulties-with-other-relationships\\_10031088.html](http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/entertainment/kids-who-bully-tend-to-have-difficulties-with-other-relationships_10031088.html))

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