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Youth Scan

February 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.

Feb 2008

For this month's issue of Youth Scan, we highlight selected youth research studies and youth developments:

Students' Happiness Index Stands at 53

The Korea Times, 21 Feb 2008

Most secondary students feel unhappy about their daily lives due to the heavy pressure to study, a survey showed. The overall happiness index came in at 53.08 out of 100, according to a survey conducted by the Government Youth Commission (GYC) and the National Youth Policy Institute (NYPI), Thursday.

Reflecting their stress, nearly 90 percent of secondary students said they are unhappy with their academic achievement. The commission surveyed 5,951 secondary students last May. The happiness index showed that male students were happier than their female counterparts and younger students were happier than older ones.

The survey consists of 40 questions in six categories; academic achievement, economic well-being, satisfaction with self, safety, social relationships and emotional well-being.

- Only 11% of the respondents said they were satisfied with their school scores; 12.4 percent of male students and 9.9% among female students.
- 60% were not satisfied with their economic situation, while 89 percent said they believe they belong to the middle class.
- More than 70% said they were not happy with their appearance. More female and younger students were unhappy about their appearance than their male counterparts and older students. Also, 60% were unsatisfied with their personality.
- Nearly 70% said they didn't have a good relationship with their teachers and only 16% said they were willing to talk about their troubles with them. More than 90% were found to have no problems with their peers.

(*The Korea Times*, Accessed on 25 Feb 08,
http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2008/02/113_19378.html)

Meddling Parents of Grown Children pay a dear price

USA TODAY, 8 Feb 2008

Parents who stay close to their grown children have a positive influence well after they've left the nest, but those who overdo it and meddle too much endanger their relationship, several new studies suggest.

Findings by researchers at Brigham Young University and analyses of larger, nationally representative surveys by the non-profit research group Child Trends are among an early round of studies on the relationship between parents and young adult children, often referred to as "emerging adults." Most prior findings on parent-child relationships have been based on children or adolescents.

"You still do matter, even though your kids aren't under your roof," says Laura Padilla-Walker, a Brigham Young professor of human development. "It's still important for you to know what they're doing." She was the lead author of two recent studies about emerging adults, published online in the *Journal of Adolescence* and the *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*.

One such study of 200 undergraduates and parents from four colleges around the country found that parental knowledge is associated with fewer risky behaviors in their children, including drinking, taking drugs and risky sexual activity.

But while the effects of monitoring are "generally good in middle and late adolescence, they have negative repercussions in early adulthood," says Jacinta Bronte-Tinkew, a senior scientist and the lead author of a Child Trends parental monitoring study. Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, a psychologist at Clark University who coined the term "emerging adulthood," says these young adults "guard their independence zealously." "If they felt parents were intruding too much, they'd just tell them less," he says. "If parents are still intruding and monitoring them closely, there will be resentment and conflict."

Sociologist James Côté of the University of Western Ontario in Canada, who has also studied young adults, is concerned because much of the research has focused on college students, who he says are a "select group to start with." That's one reason the new studies from Child Trends — yet unpublished — are particularly significant.

They take a broad look by analyzing data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, which includes responses from more than 4,000 young people who were ages 12-14 initially, and then again at age 20. These are nationally representative longitudinal surveys that followed a diverse group.

Elizabeth Hair, a senior research scientist and lead author of one Child Trends study, found that higher levels of parental monitoring and more family routines translated into less risk-taking behavior for their young adult kids. "What is very important is that parents' involvement be age-appropriate," says Kristin Moore, a senior scholar who worked on all the new Child Trends research.

(Source: USA Today, Accessed on 21 Feb 08, http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2008-02-06-meddling-parents_N.htm)

Uniting to prevent Youth Crime in London

Government News Network, UK, 5 Feb 2008

A London coalition is bringing together the agencies tackling youth crime in the capital to see what more can be done to help young people stay safe and prevent them from getting

involved in crime. The London Youth Crime Prevention Board (LYCPB), which was set up in the summer of 2007, is uniting key players in community safety and children's services to put in place new measures to reduce the flow of young people into crime and violence.

Board members include representatives from the Metropolitan Police Service and the MPA, schools, the voluntary sector, the Association of London Directors of Children's Services, London Councils' elected members, the Chief Executives' London Committee, the Youth Justice Board, the London Criminal Justice Board, the Greater London Authority, National Strategies and Government Office for London.

This programme focuses on strengthening three of the key "safety nets" for keeping young people safe and out of trouble:

Schools

The establishment of a new benchmark for London schools doing a good job in helping children to stay safe, keep out of trouble, and make a positive contribution to their community. This benchmark will be linked to a new London award that will celebrate and spread best practice by schools working in partnership with the police and other key services.

Pupil Referral Units

The Board sees Pupil Referral Units as a critical site for prevention work. It is now looking at options for getting all provision in London up to the highest standard, as they are a last potential safety net for children at risk of falling out of the schools system altogether because of their behaviour.

The Youth Justice System

Aims include developing greater opportunities for diversion of low-level offending away from the youth justice system, as well as being more effective in tackling more serious offending, speeding up the justice process and making it more responsive and understandable to young defendants and victims, and promoting the positive contributions made by young people to the criminal justice service.

LYCPB wants to establish a simple public index of crime suffered and committed by children and young people in London to give an accurate idea of progress being made and the challenges ahead. LYCPB is looking at options for improving how young people's experiences as victims of crime are recorded and responded to, as victimization makes it more likely that children get drawn into committing crime as they move through their teens.

(Source: *Government News Network*, Accessed 20 Feb 08,
<http://www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=350417&NewsAreaID=2>)

Less is More: Young People Who Watch Less TV are more involved in Politics and their Communities

The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, 11 Dec 2007

Youth between the ages of 15 and 25 who watch less TV are more likely to be involved in civic engagement activities like voting and volunteering, a recent study by The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE) concludes.

The research is based on The 2006 National Civic and Political Health Survey, which was conducted from April 27 to June 11, 2006. The survey sampled 1,700 young people ages 15 to 25, and 550 adults ages 26 and older.

The research found that in nineteen different civic activities young people who watch TV less than two hours a day participated in more civic activities than their peers who watch between two and four hours a day and those who watch four or more hours a day. Most notably light TV viewers were more likely to be involved in solving community problems (23.9%), raise money for a charity (30.9%) and be an active member of a group (21.3%).

The data also looked at TV consumption by youth who are completely disengaged, participating in no civic activities whatsoever:

- o 17% of all young Americans qualify as completely disengaged;
- o Light and moderate TV watchers fell below the national average with only 15.7% and 12.7% fitting into this category; Among heavy watchers, more than 20% were completely disengaged.

Impact of TV on Youth Civic Engagement

- o Light TV watchers were most likely to voice their political opinions and contact their public official, boycott and sign petitions while heavy watchers were the most likely to contact the broadcast and print media;
- o Heavy TV watchers (8%) were more likely to donate money to a candidate/party than light TV viewers (4.4%) and the moderate group (6.8%). This may be attributed to those who watch more television see more campaign advertisements prompting them to donate.

(Source: CIRCLE, Accessed on 22 Feb 08, Download full report at <http://www.civicyouth.org/>)

National Survey of Young Australians 2007: Key and emerging issues

Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, 4 Dec 07

Mission Australia released their report "National Survey of Young Australians 2007: Key and emerging issues". It's their 6th consecutive annual survey of young Australians aged 11 to 24 years and seeks to identify the important and emerging issues of young people.

The survey's areas of focus include: what young people value; what concerns them; where they turn for advice and support; their engagement in community activities; and whom they admire.

Priority issues that emerged from the report are:

Body image:

The level of concern regarding body image, including for both genders and across all age groups, highlights the need for multi-layered responses and the involvement of many organisations and individuals, including families, schools, governments, community organisations and the advertising and media industries.

The environment:

The survey highlights that this is clearly a significant issue of concern for many young people.

Mental health issues:

These continue to be prominent issues of concern in particular for young adults, with the need for strategies to help them cope with stress as well as their concern about depression. Related to this is the significant level of concern about bullying/emotional abuse shown by younger respondents, especially those aged 11 to 14 years.

Alcohol and physical/sexual abuse:

The level of concern from young males regarding alcohol suggests the need for ongoing education and programs regarding this issue. Similarly, strategies that help young women deal with physical/sexual abuse are required. Both of these areas may well require gender-specific program and policy responses.

(Source: *Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies*, Accessed 26 Feb 08,
http://acys.info/youth_facts_and_stats/attitudes/attitudes2007/mission_australia_survey2007)
(Download full report from Mission Australia at:
<http://www.missionaustralia.com.au/youthsurvey/>)

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