

Youth Scan

January 2007

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.

In this issue:

1. Research Backs Community Approach to Participation

Participation Works, December 2006

2. Social Networking Websites and Teens: Over half (55%) of online teens have web profiles; MySpace dominates networking world.

Pew Internet & American Life Project, 7 January 2007

3. Teaching Appreciation Diminishes the Impact of Materialism

Harris Interactive, 8 January, 2007

4. Positive Activities for Young People

The National Youth Agency, 8 January 2007

5. China Teens Casual about One-Night Stands: Poll

Reuters, 12 January 2007

1. Research Backs Community Approach to Participation

Participation Works, December 2006

A national evaluation of Neighbourhood Support Fund (NSF) projects has shown the benefits of community based approaches to involving young people in project decision making.

The NSF was launched in September 1999 and aimed to work with 13 to 19-year-olds who were disaffected and disengaged or at risk of dropping out, in order to re-engage them with education, employment or training. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) provided £90million over 6 years for 665 NSF projects.

The Community Development Foundation, which managed 79% of the 665 NSF projects that took place between 2000 and 2006, has found that almost 50,000 young people participated in its projects. Seven out of ten young people taking part in the projects were recorded as having a positive outcome.

As part of a 'community approach', most NSF projects encouraged young people to be involved beyond their role as participants. Research found that in most NSF

projects, young people had informal involvement in the management of their own activities.

The evaluation also found that:

-- Young people's involvement helped organisations to better cater for needs in their community, build links with those young people to help intergenerational relationships, and create a sense of belong between the young people and the community.

-- The community organisations' links and networks provide additional opportunities for young people's activities, such as getting involved in youth councils and forums and with the UK Youth Parliament.

-- The community-based nature of the projects helped both to recruit and to retain young people.

(Source: *Participation Works*, Accessed 14 January 2007, <http://www.participationworks.org.uk/News/December2006/ResearchBacksCommunityApproachtoParticipation/tabid/208/Default.aspx>)

2. Social Networking Websites and Teens: Over half (55%) of online teens have web profiles; MySpace dominates networking world.

Pew Internet & American Life Project, 7 January 2007

More than half (55%) of all online American youths ages 12-17 use online social networking sites, according to a new national survey of teenagers conducted by the Pew Internet & American Life Project. The survey, conducted by telephone from 23 October 2006 through 19 November 2006 among a national sample of 935 youths, asked about the ways that teenagers use these sites and their reasons for doing so.

Older teens, particularly girls, are more likely to use these sites. For girls, social networking sites are primarily places to reinforce pre-existing friendships; for boys, the networks also provide opportunities for flirting and making new friends.

Among the key findings:

-- 55% of online teens have created a personal profile online, and 55% have used social networking sites like MySpace or Facebook.

-- 66% of teens who have created a profile say that their profile is not visible to all internet users. They limit access to their profiles.

-- 48% of teens visit social networking websites daily or more often; 26% visit once a day, 22% visit several times a day.

-- Older girls (ages 15-17) are more likely to have used social networking sites and created online profiles; 70% of older girls have used an online social network compared with 54% of older boys, and 70% of older girls have created an online profile, while only 57% of older boys have done so.

Teens say social networking sites help them manage their friendships

-- 91% of all social networking teens say they use the sites to stay in touch with friends they see frequently, while 82% use the sites to stay in touch with friends they rarely see in person.

-- 72% of all social networking teens use the sites to make plans with friends; 49% use the sites to make new friends.

-- Older boys who use social networking sites (ages 15-17) are more likely than girls of the same age to say that they use social networking sites to make new friends (60% vs. 46%).

-- Just 17% of all social networking teens say they use the sites to flirt. Older boys who use social networking sites are more than twice as likely as older girls to say they use the sites to flirt; 29% report this compared with just 13% of older girls.

(Source: *Pew Research Center Press Release* by Amanda Lenhart and Mary Madden, Senior Research Specialists, Accessed on 14 January 2007, <http://pewresearch.org/obdeck/?ObDeckID=118>)

3. Teaching Appreciation Diminishes the Impact of Materialism

Harris Interactive, 8 January 2007

The January issue of Harris Interactive's newsletter on youth, "*Trends and Tudes*", focuses on the role of materialism, gratitude and generosity in the lives of youth. Between 18 to 26 October 2006, Harris Interactive conducted an online survey of 1,213 American children and teenagers (ages 8-18), examining the role of thankfulness in offsetting the negative social effects of materialism.

Results indicate that materialism does not have a uniform effect in children's lives, and its negative consequences are in fact mediated by other factors. Increasing materialism among youth does not immediately translate into less generous behavior; rather, gratitude plays an important role in influencing their level of generosity.

Buying things is a priority

Results indicate that both tweens (ages 8-12) and teens (ages 13-18) would rather spend time buying things than anything else:

-- 76% of tweens and 62% of teens say they really enjoy going shopping;

-- 71% overall say they would be happier if they had more money to buy more things for themselves; and

-- About half of tweens (51%) and teens (48%) say that when they grow up, they'll be happier if they have more money.

What makes youth happy?

There are some differences between what things make teens and tweens happy, although money is most likely to make both groups happy:

-- Much of the teen focus is on technology, such as CDs (67%), their own cell phone (65%) and their own computer (63%), as well as money (74%).

-- Tweens are most likely to say money (65%), presents (63%), having popular video/computer games (60%) and their own computer (57%) makes them happy.

-- 91% of tweens and 77% of teens say that Mom makes them happy. Overall, Friends (85%), Grandma (69%), Dad (67%) and pets (58%) round out the top five of those people and pets that make youth happy.

Generous and thankful tweens and teens

Although youth seem focused on money and possessions, they also enjoy helping others and are appreciative of the things and people in their lives:

-- Three-quarters of youth or more say that they like to help new kids at school (91% of tweens, 81% of teens), raise money for needy people (86% of tweens, 79% of teens), spend time helping others (83% of tweens, 81% of teens), share their favourite things with other people (81% of tweens, 75% of teens) and do favours for friends or family even when they're busy (77% of tweens, 75% of teens).

-- Overall, tweens are slightly more likely than teens to say that they have a lot to be thankful for (92% vs. 86%, respectively), but the large majority of both groups feel this way.

Summing it up

According to one of the researchers, Aric Rindfleisch, Associate Professor of Marketing at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, "Our results indicate that while materialistic young people display reduced generosity, those who are thankful for their family, friends and possessions are less likely to display these negative effects. This suggests that although parents may be able to do little to squelch materialistic messages, they may be able limit the adverse effects of materialism by cultivating a sense of thankfulness and gratitude in their children."

(Source: *Harris Interactive*, Accessed on 11 January 2007, <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/allnewsbydate.asp?NewsID=1141>)
(*Trends and Tudes Newsletter* Accessed on 11 January 2007, http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters_k12.asp)

4. Positive Activities for Young People

National Youth Agency (UK), 8 January 2007

From 8 January 2007 local authorities are required to provide positive activities for young people under Section 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The statutory guidance published today requires local authorities to:

(A) Secure access for young people to 'positive activities'

The national standards for positive activities outlined in the guidance include:

- Access to two hours per week of sporting activity
- Access to two hours per week of other constructive activities in clubs, youth groups and classes which contribute to their personal and social and spiritual development
- Opportunities to make a positive contribution to their community
- Recreational, cultural and sporting experiences
- A range of safe and enjoyable places in which to spend time.

(B) Take account of young people's views on activities and facilities available to them

Local authorities are required to ascertain from young people their views on provision. They must then ensure that these views are taken into account.

(C) Publicize the local offer, and keep the information up-to-date

Local authorities are required to provide a comprehensive, accurate and accessible information service for young people regarding existing local positive activity provision. The guidance also provides information on partnership working, needs analysis, addressing barriers to participation and measuring progress.

About this legislation:

In the 2005 Green Paper, 'Youth Matters', the UK government proposed legislating to clarify local authorities' role in securing young people's access to positive activities. 'Youth Matters' was published on 18 July 2005 and the subsequent public consultation ended on 4 November 2005. With over 19,000 responses from young people, this is one of the largest responses to a government consultation from any one group.

The public consultation found that:

- Services do not always meet the needs of individual young people;
- The various organizations providing services and help for young people do not work together as effectively or imaginatively as they should, with the result that money and effort are wasted;
- Not enough is being done to prevent young people from drifting into a life of poverty or crime;
- Services are failing to exploit the full potential of the internet, mobile phones and other new technologies; and
- Teenagers and their parents do not have enough say in what is provided.

Aims and outcomes

The Government response, "Youth Matters: Next Steps", was published on 8 March 2006 and sets out the framework for empowering young people. The overall aim is to ensure all young people meet the five outcomes of *Every Child Matters*, a new approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. The UK government's aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

Four key approaches:

- Engage more young people in positive activities and empower them to shape the services they receive;
- Encourage more young people to volunteer and become involved in their communities;
- Enable young people to make informed choices about the next stage of their lives; and
- Provide more individual and intensive support for each young person who has serious problems or gets into trouble.

According to the Department for Education and Skills, Regulatory Impact Assessment, some of the desired outcomes of the government initiative are to:

- Increase participation in constructive activities and young people's influence over provision designed for them
- Improve quality of activities provided for young people by local authorities
- Improve information advice and guidance for young people
- Improve targeted support for young people at risk

(Source: *Department for Education and Skills* website:

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2007_0002 , Accessed on 11 January 2007)

(Source: *The National Youth Agency*, Accessed on 11 January 2007,

<http://www.nya.org.uk/Templates/internal.asp?NodeID=94255>)

(Source: *Every Child Matters Website*, Accessed on 15 January 2007,

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/aims/>)

(Source: *Youth Matters Green Paper*, Accessed on 15 January 2007,

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/youth/>)

5. China teens casual about one-night stands

Reuters, 12 January 2006

More than half of China's high school students find nothing wrong with one-night stands and an overwhelming majority of girls would not reject a boyfriend's demands for sex, a poll suggests.

Some 6.2 percent of the survey's 2,300 high school students in Xuanwu, a downtown district in the Chinese capital of Beijing, had already had a sexual experience and the average age of students losing their virginity was 15, the China Daily said.

"The new generation is open-minded about sex," Zhang Meimei, a professor at Capital Normal University who was involved in the survey conducted last year, was quoted as saying. "We can only conclude that it is a result of a fast-changing society."

Of the 1,300 girls asked if they would agree to sex when asked by a boyfriend, only six gave a definite "no". "The typical answer: 'As long as he loves me, it's OK'," the newspaper said. About 200 respondents of both sexes said they would have a one-night stand if the opportunity arose, it added.

Such liberal attitudes to sex have sparked concerns over safe sex, with more than 40 percent of respondents who had had sex saying they did not use contraceptives for their first time, the China Daily said. Underage girls accounted for about a quarter of the 1.5 million abortions in mainland China every year, and teenage pregnancies were on the rise, the newspaper said.

(Source: *Reuters*, Accessed on 14 January 2007,
http://today.reuters.com/news/articlenews.aspx?type=oddlyEnoughNews&storyid=2007-01-12T142218Z_01_N1B447083_RTRUKOC_0_US-CHINA-SEX-STUDENTS-1.xml)

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