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Youth Scan

March 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.

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1. A Portrait of "Generation Next":

How Young People View Their Lives, Futures and Politics
Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 9 January 2007

A new generation has come of age, shaped by an unprecedented revolution in technology and dramatic events both at home and abroad. They are Generation Next, the cohort of young adults who have grown up with personal computers, cell phones and the Internet and are now taking their place in a world where the only constant is rapid change.

They are generally happy with their lives and optimistic about their futures. Moreover, Gen Nexters feel that educational and job opportunities are better for them today than for the previous generation. At the same time, many of their attitudes and priorities reflect a limited set of life experiences. Marriage, children and an established career remain in the future for most of those in Generation Next.

More than two-thirds see their generation as unique and distinct, yet not all self-evaluations are positive. A majority says that "getting rich" is the main goal of most people in their age group, and large majorities believe that casual sex, binge drinking, illegal drug use and violence are more prevalent among young people today than was the case 20 years ago.

This report takes stock of this new generation. It explores their outlook, their lifestyle and their politics. Because the boundaries that separate generations are indistinct, the definition of Generation Next -- and other generational groups mentioned in this report -- are necessarily approximate. For analysis purposes, Generation Next includes those Americans between the ages of 18 and 25 years old.

Meet Generation Next:

-- They use technology and the Internet to connect with people in new and distinctive ways. Text messaging, instant messaging and email keep them in constant contact with friends. About half say they sent or received a text message over the phone in the past day, approximately double the proportion of those ages 26-40.

-- They are the "Look at Me" generation. Social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace and MyYearbook allow individuals to post a personal profile complete with photos and descriptions of interests and hobbies. A majority of Gen Nexters have used one of these social networking sites, and more than four-in-ten have created a personal profile.

-- They maintain close contact with parents and family. Roughly eight-in-ten say they talked to their parents in the past day. Nearly three-in-four see their parents at least once a week, and half say they see their parents daily. One reason: money. About three-quarters of Gen Nexters say their parents have helped them financially in the past year.

-- They are somewhat more interested in keeping up with politics and national affairs than were young people a generation ago. Still, only a third say they follow what's going on in government and public affairs "most of the time."

-- Their heroes are close and familiar. When asked to name someone they admire, they are twice as likely as older Americans to name a family member, teacher, or mentor. Moreover, roughly twice as many young people say they most admire an entertainer rather than a political leader.

-- Asked about the life goals of those in their age group, most Gen Nexters say their generation's top goals are fortune and fame. Roughly eight-in-ten say people in their generation think getting rich is either the most important, or second most important, goal in their lives. About half say that becoming famous also is valued highly by fellow Gen Nexters.

(Source: *Pew Research Center for the People & the Press*, Accessed on 16 March 2007, <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=300>)

2. Polls Say Wealth Important to Youth

Associated Press, 22 January 2007

New polls show that the obsession with material things is growing -- and that being rich is more important to today's young people than in the past. UCLA's annual survey of college freshman found that nearly three-quarters of those surveyed in 2006 thought it was essential or very important to be "very well-off financially." That compares with 62.5 percent who said the same in 1980 and 42 percent in 1966, the first year the survey was done. Another recent poll from the Pew Research Center found that about 80 percent of 18- to 25-year-olds in this country see getting rich as a top life goal for their generation.

Young Americans' obsession with material things recently caused talk show host Oprah Winfrey to vent her frustrations, when asked why she chose to build a school in South Africa instead of this country.

"If you ask the kids what they want or need, they will say an iPod or some sneakers," Winfrey told Newsweek, referring to visits with students in inner-city school. "In South Africa, they don't ask for money or toys. They ask for uniforms so they can go to school."

Indeed, researchers say materialism is an obsession that cuts across socio-economic lines for American youth.

"Our kids have absorbed the cultural values of more, easy, fast and fun," says David Walsh, a psychologist who heads the National Institute on Media and the Family in Minneapolis. He's also author of the new book, "NO: Why Kids -- of All Ages -- Need to Hear It and Ways Parents Can Say It."

As his book's title suggests, he believes parents have played an integral role in encouraging their children's materialism. His research found that, when adjusted for inflation, parents are spending 500 percent more money on kids today than just one generation earlier.

Ann Fishman, a generational marketing consultant in New Orleans, also has found that baby boomer and Gen X parents are much more likely to spend money on their children than parents who lived through the Great Depression and World War II. Today, she notes, young people are known for their collective billion-dollar spending power, much of it thanks to money they get from their parents. "They have a different idea of what's necessary," Fishman says of young people. "For them, a cell phone is normal; an iPod is normal; a Game Boy is normal."

Some see the heightened expectations setting up inevitable disappointment.

"There are a lot of young people hitting 25 who are making, say, \$35,000 a year, who expected they'd be millionaires or at least making six figures," says psychologist Jean Twenge. She's a professor at San Diego State University and author of "Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled -- and More Miserable Than Ever Before."

They're also entering adulthood with more college loans to credit cards debt. No wonder, Twenge says, we hear so many 20somethings talking about the "quarter-life crisis."

"We're telling them they're special and they can do anything they want -- and then they're growing up and finding out that's not true," Twenge says.

Tim Barello, a 24-year-old New Yorker, agrees that his generation has gotten caught up in wanting "more and more and more." Having grown up on Long Island's wealthy North Shore, he thought he'd arrived when he got a job as a publicist and was able to rent an apartment in an exclusive apartment building in Manhattan.

"To be completely honest," he says, "I don't even appreciate everything I have sometimes. Yes, I have a nice apartment, a great job, a great degree, great clothing. But I feel empty inside rather often."

So he's changing his focus and this week, began classes at the American Academy for Dramatic Arts to pursue his dream of acting -- even if it means giving up the cushy life.

"There is so much more to life," he says, "than materialistic possessions."

(Source: Boston.Com, Accessed on 16 March 2007,
http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2007/01/22/polls_say_wealth_important_to_youth/?rss_id=Boston.com+%2F+News)

3. Service-Learning and Mentoring Work, Panel Tells National Service Board *Corporation for National and Corporation Service, 7 February 2007*

Mentoring can make all the difference in an at-risk child's life, according to Veronika Gilliland, a senior at California State University, Northridge, who told her story to the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community at their winter meeting. Gilliland said that she would not have attended college had it not been for the influence of her first mentor, who was a college student herself. "As a teenager I didn't see myself in college. My first mentor opened my eyes and encouraged me."

Gilliland found her first year of college difficult, but her attitude changed and her career plans solidified when she became a mentor herself. Gilliland now has her eyes on grad school and a career that includes working with young people living in difficult situations.

Richard Rush, President of California State University, Channel Islands, and Chairman of California Campus Compact, underlined the importance of service-learning to the more than 1,000 member colleges of Campus Compact, noting that 98 percent of the members offer service-learning in the curricula and that 1.9 million students performed service on member campuses in 2006. Rush added that Learn and Serve America grants "leverage enormous results" on college campuses.

Wayne Meisel, President of the Bonner Foundation, echoed Rush's statement, but cautioned that service-learning "too many times is episodic." After taking a service-learning course one semester, students may move on to other courses that lack a service-learning component. "We've tried to create an academic journey," through the Bonner Scholars programme, he said, which requires participants to be involved in service-learning throughout their college years.

The launch of a new web portal geared at colleges and universities was also announced. The web page on <http://www.nationalservice.gov> provides links and information to help higher education institutions further their civic mission including training resources, research, student recognition opportunities, and grant information. The page also lists the 69 colleges and universities that match the Eli Segal AmeriCorps Education Award that AmeriCorps members receive after completing a term of service.

(Source: *Corporation for National and Corporation Service*, Accessed on 19 March 2007, http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/newsroom/releases_detail.asp?tbl_pr_id=647)

4. Youth Leading the Way in Europe: **An initiative to get young people to be more involved in local government policy-making is to be launched later.** *BBC News, 7 February 2007*

Some local politicians believe Northern Ireland's youths are already showing the way to their European contemporaries. Belfast's Youth Forum is one of 10 participation programmes being showcased across Europe. It is part of a toolkit offering advice to cities on how to interact better with young people. The Urbact Young Citizens' Project Best Practice Toolkit aims to and increase their participation in decision making.

According to Belfast Lord Mayor Pat McCarthy, the toolkit outlines seven themes which cover best practice in Europe for the participation of young people without being inflexible. The seven themes are: understanding, participation, diversity, motivation, communication, credibility, sustainability and resources.

About Northern Ireland Youth Forum (NIYF)

Any young person (14-25) can get involved in the NIYF which has been around since 1979. The Department of Education established the organisation to represent the views of young people throughout Northern Ireland to Government, policy-makers and other relevant bodies.

NIYF is a youth-led organisation that:

- Believes youth have ideas and opinions worth listening to.
- Does something when other young people are ignored and overlooked.
- Gets other young people involved in changing things that could be better in their school, community, home, government etc.

Five most important things that the NIYF does:

- **Working with YOU** (e.g. increase young people's awareness about their rights so they can change things for themselves)
- **Speaking up, Fighting for and Making change** (e.g. stand up for youth rights in organisations like District Councils to make sure youth are included in their work)
- **Getting YOU involved** (e.g. go out and meet other young people from all over Northern Ireland to inform what they think needs to change)
- **Getting the message out** (e.g. provide opportunities for other young people to meet face to face with senior politicians)
- **Increasing resources and improving effectiveness** (e.g. work with funders to get the money needed to for their work)

(Source: *BBC News*, Accessed on 19 March 2007,
http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/northern_ireland/6336365.stm)

(Source: The Northern Ireland Youth Forum, Accessed 19 March 2007,
<http://www.niyf.org/home.cfm>)

5. US Co Launches Fund for Young Entrepreneurs

Rediff News, 7 February 2007

Youth Employment Summit Inc, a US-based non-profit organisation launched a global fund to provide seed capital and business development support to young entrepreneurs across the world. The corpus size of the fund stands at \$425,000 to begin with, which would be raised to \$25 million in the next three years, YES Inc president Poonam Ahluwalia told reporters in Mumbai.

Besides sponsoring entrepreneurs through seed funding and loans, the fund would provide focused business management and technical skill training to the youth, which would enable them to produce and present viable business plans that would attract local financing. The goal of the YES Fund is to build a coalition of partners all over the world to work on creating markets... unleashing entrepreneurship, she said.

The fund would provide seed capital to young aspiring entrepreneurs (ages 18-35), who want to open their own start-ups in the IT sector. Other targeted sectors for youth entrepreneurship

would be renewable energy, water and sanitation, rural development and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS.

Besides seed funding, it would also provide loan and loan guarantee, Ahluwalia added. Talking about the sponsors she said, \$150,000 commitment has come from Swiss Development Corporation and global software giant Microsoft has given \$100,000, while garment manufacturer Levis Strauss given a grant of \$25,000.

(Source: *Rediff News*, Accessed on 19 March 2007,
<http://www.rediff.com///money/2007/feb/07fund.htm>)

**6. EntrepreneurshipWeek USA Kicks Off Largest Nationwide Celebration Of Entrepreneurship:
Next Generation of Entrepreneurs Participate in Events to Engage Their Innovative Spirit**
EntrepreneurshipWeek USA, 15 February 2007

EntrepreneurshipWeek USA kicks off later this month in what may be the nation's largest organized event to celebrate entrepreneurship, with activities designed to inspire, educate and prepare young people to consider entrepreneurship and innovation in all aspects of their lives. Activities are scheduled in all 50 states and nearly every major city in the United States.

Entrepreneurs, government officials, university and non-profit leaders, educators and economic development officials, representing more than 1,000 organizations and universities from across the country, have organized and will host activities during EntrepreneurshipWeek USA -- Feb. 24 through March 3, 2007.

Several nationwide educational, policy and mentoring/networking events will serve to highlight EntrepreneurshipWeek USA, including two national contests that ask aspiring young entrepreneurs to pitch their big ideas on **www.EntrepreneurshipWeekUSA.goingon.com**, a social networking Web site of EntrepreneurshipWeek USA.

Other national events include a policy summit in Washington, D.C. that will examine key policy areas with a view toward promoting economic growth and innovation, as well as lowering barriers that make it harder than it should be for individuals to form and sustain businesses. The Kauffman Foundation will release a white paper that outlines those key policy areas in order to prompt and further public debate. Additionally, the National Governors Association will conduct a news conference in support of policy measures to help spur entrepreneurial activity.

The Kauffman Foundation, in partnership with Arizona State University, Starbucks, The New York Times, and the Society for College and University Planning, also will be hosting a complimentary live webcast, "Entrepreneurs and Higher Education: Catalysts for Advancing Sustainability," March 1, 2007 from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. EST. The webcast will explore the role of entrepreneurs and higher education in adopting and promoting sustainable practices.

In Kansas City, home of the Kauffman Foundation, more than 100 area partner organizations will team up to host over 60 events throughout the metropolitan region. Events range from two day-long conferences for hundreds of entrepreneurs, and a two-day conference that will bring together the leaders of technology transfer from all Big 12 universities. Events at area colleges and high schools include panel discussions, entrepreneur fairs of student businesses and support organizations, student competitions, kindergarten lemonade stands and job shadowing days where students spend a day with area entrepreneurs.

These events are only the beginning. From students competing in the Entrepreneur Idol contest in Philadelphia, PA, to the Lemonade Stand event in Charleston, WV, where eight fifth grade classes will be selling lemonade at the state capitol, to the Cleantech Innovation Competition in Denver, CO, EntrepreneurshipWeek USA is taking the nation by storm.

With the theme, "What's Your Big Idea? Take it On!," the EntrepreneurshipWeek USA initiative is designed to serve as an inspiration for young people to think creatively and to turn their ideas into action -- whether that means starting a new business, developing an innovation for an existing company or solving a problem that makes society better. On a national basis, the week is sponsored by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Inc. magazine and The New York Times.

"Educating our young people about entrepreneurship and reinforcing the value that entrepreneurs and innovators bring to our economy is critical to America's long-term prosperity -- more so now than ever before," said Carl Schramm, president and CEO of the Kauffman Foundation.

According to Kauffman Foundation research, 41 percent of children ages 9 -12 say they would like to start their own business. "Young people have a natural desire for the independence and control that come with owning a business and being their own boss," Schramm said.

Additionally, entrepreneurship is a driving force of the U.S. economy. During the past 15 years, businesses less than five years old have accounted for about 70 percent of the net job creation in the United States. However, while America presently maintains the edge as an entrepreneurial society, there are clear signs of massive economic competition from abroad. Future Americans will need to be generating more ideas and better innovations if the United States is to stay ahead of the large populations of educated citizens in emerging and globally savvy economies.

(Source: *EntrepreneurshipWeek USA*, Accessed on 19 March 2007, <http://www.entrepreneurshipweekusa.com/newsroom/releases/070215.asp>)

7. What if young people ran the county?

Ministry of Youth Development, New Zealand, 19 February 2007

What if young people ran the county? The answer to this question will be played out at New Zealand's fifth Youth Parliament from 8-11 July 2007. The Ministry of Youth Development is looking for Youth MPs from all over New Zealand aged 16-18 years to replace existing MPs during this period. Youth MPs will get to debate mock legislation, engage in general debate, ask oral questions of cabinet ministers and sit on select committees.

Youth Parliament aims to help young people gain a stronger understanding of the workings of Parliament and gives them an opportunity to express their views and opinions to politicians, the government and the public. Christopher Bishop, a former Youth MP, really valued his experience. "Youth Parliament is more than a just a feel-good public relations exercise... Youth Parliament was a teenager's think-tank, a diverse cultural melting-pot of ideas, opinions and beliefs. I was proud to be a part of it; proud to contribute, proud to listen and proud to feel some of the great mana surrounding the event."

Along with Youth MPs, the Ministry will be selecting 10 Youth Press Gallery members to report on Youth Parliament debates, select committees and the general happenings of Youth Parliament and these will be published in mainstream newspapers, radio and television stations as well as the Youth Parliament website.

Youth Parliament is organised by the Ministry of Youth Development in consultation with the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minister of Youth Affairs and New Zealand's 121 MPs. Young people from around New Zealand are chosen by their local MP to be a Youth MP. During Youth Parliament Youth MPs have the opportunity to debate a mock Bill, engage in general debate, sit on Select Committees, ask parliamentary questions of Cabinet Ministers and take tours within the parliamentary complex.

Objectives of Youth Parliament

- Give young people the opportunity to have their views heard by key decision-makers and the general public.
- Help young people to understand and actively participate in parliamentary processes.
- Help young people learn how to influence governmental decision-making as active citizens.
- Help young people to understand how decisions are made and how young people can be involved in influencing their worlds.

(Source: *Ministry of Youth Development*, Accessed on 19 March 2007,
<http://www.myd.govt.nz/ayv/youthparliament/youthparliament.aspx>)

(Source: *Scoop Independent News*, Accessed on 19 March 2007,
<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO0702/S00249.htm>)

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