CITIZEN POWER: UNLOCKING YOUNG PEOPLE’S POTENTIAL THROUGH VOLUNTARY SERVICE
# Citizen Power: unlocking young people's potential through voluntary service

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Foreword

William Jefferson Clinton, 42nd President of United States of America

The first Democratic president in six decades to be elected twice, led the U.S. to the longest economic expansion in American history, including the creation of more than 22 million jobs and established the Corporation for National and Community Service and AmeriCorps program.

After leaving the White House, President Clinton established the William J. Clinton Foundation with the mission to improve global health, strengthen economies, promote healthier childhoods, and protect the environment by fostering partnerships among governments, businesses, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and private citizens to turn good intentions into measurable results.

In 1991, shortly after I announced my candidacy for President, I received an invitation to visit what was then a small Boston-based program called City Year.

Two young Harvard graduates, Michael Brown and Alan Khazei, had found a way to create a new kind of citizen service program that brought together bright, passionate young people from every background to work together on the pressing problems facing their communities. The afternoon my longtime friend Eli Segal and I spent with the group was not just inspiring, it confirmed for me what I had seen time after time as Governor of Arkansas and in my travels throughout the country—that young people everywhere were yearning to make a difference, and that if we gave them new opportunities to serve, we could unleash their enormous potential for good.

I believed that citizen service would breathe new life into our democracy and revitalize the spirit of civic action that is older than the republic itself. So on the campaign trail, I began talking about national service and the three big ideas behind it: opportunity, responsibility, and community. It became one of the biggest applause lines at every single campaign stop. Americans were hungry for it.
After I was elected, I worked with Congress and the brilliant Eli Segal to create AmeriCorps. The idea was simple. If young people invested in their country, their country would invest in them. We would provide grants on a competitive basis to nonprofit organizations like City Year to serve as the delivery system, offer young people a small living stipend, and, after they completed their year of service, give them a scholarship to help them pay for college or pay off student loans. As established by the pledge that each AmeriCorps volunteer recites, the focus would be on “getting things done.”

Since it was founded just over two decades ago, more than 830,000 people have served in AmeriCorps, contributing more than 1 billion hours of service to improve the lives of citizens and our country as a whole. Together, those AmeriCorps alumni have earned more than $2.4 billion to put toward their higher education. Many of them have been the first in their family to go to college. AmeriCorps has made that dream possible.

In the United States, during the transition from one administration to the next, there is a tradition that the outgoing President meets with his successor. After my election in 1992, President George H.W. Bush asked me to continue to support his service initiative, Points of Light, and I did. On the day of President George W. Bush’s inauguration, I asked him to continue to support AmeriCorps, and he did. In fact, he expanded the program by 50 percent over the course of his two terms in office. Today, President Barack Obama continues to find new ways to sustain the role that service plays in our civic identity.

The idea of serving others does not belong to one political party or one nation. The values that are the foundation of AmeriCorps are universal. City Year volunteers work to improve lives in Little Rock, the site of my Presidential Library, just as they continue to empower people in Johannesburg, where we established City Year South Africa at the invitation of President Mandela in 2005. I am also proud that City Year is growing in the U.K.

In this interdependent world, we all have a vital stake in helping other people succeed. Giving all our young people the opportunity to be active citizens of their countries and the world beyond will help us to do that, and in the effort, to shape a future we can be proud to share.

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Introduction

AnnMaura Connolly, Chief Strategy Officer and Executive Vice President, City Year, Inc. and President of Voices for National Service

Sophie Livingstone, CEO, City Year UK and Co-Chair, Generation Change

Every day in the UK and the US we see first-hand the power of young people to make a difference through a year of full-time service. Their energy, idealism and commitment to volunteering as near-peer role models, mentors and tutors in schools in our deprived inner-cities is simply inspiring. And they are making a tremendous difference, helping children to fulfil their potential.

We are building on our countries’ proud histories and traditions of volunteering and citizen service. In the U.S., national service enjoys bipartisan support in the White House and Congress. The last four Presidents have developed and expanded citizen service opportunities,
including AmeriCorps, which has mobilized more than 830,000 Americans to address the pressing needs facing their communities and the nation. In the UK, all major party leaders and HRH The Prince of Wales came together to launch Step Up To Serve, to make volunteering and social action a normal part of growing up in Britain. From the hundred-year-old Scouts to those recently spurred to join Free the Children’s first ‘We Day’ in the UK, more children and young people are undertaking the double benefit journey of developing themselves and their communities through service.

City Year’s vision is that one day the most commonly asked question of a young person will be “Where did you do your service year?” This set of essays seeks to shine a spotlight on their passion and potential to address some of the considerable social challenges which lie ahead; to recast them as a solution, rather than part of the problem, and to empower them to become involved in the society in which they want to live. The contributions explore experiences on both sides of the Atlantic and consider the growing consensus that young people should have the chance to develop character through social action. A volunteer service year can offer a unique rite of passage on the path towards adulthood, bridging the gap between education and employment which has claimed the hopes and aspirations of too many young people in recent years, and leverage their talent and enthusiasm to drive social change, such as reducing educational inequity.

We believe that in 2015, any UK government should seize the moment to build a continuum of service into the lives of children and young people, to culminate in the opportunity to take part in a year of full-time volunteer service. In the words of Robert F. Kennedy, “Few will have the greatness to bend history; but each of us can work to change a small portion of the events, and in the total of all these acts will be written the history of this generation.”

“It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson
“Community empowerment is essential to reengaging people and volunteering has a crucial role to play in community empowerment.”

David Skelton, Director, Renewal
CHAPTER 1

Setting the scene: the UK’s social challenges

In this chapter, David Robinson, Co-Founder of Community Links, makes his case for public service reform and Matthew Taylor, Chair of the Social Integration Committee, explains the challenge of creating social integration in the UK. Vivian Hunt from McKinsey & Company reflects on youth unemployment as a policy challenge and finally, David Skelton of Renewal considers how we galvanise the local communities that connect us together as a nation.
We need to reclaim our common humanity, mutual trust and a willing kindness.”

Nine months from now and the media will be full of debate about the forthcoming election. By then, of course, the policy promises will be fixed and the story lines agreed. If we in the voluntary sector have a view, and we surely should, then now is the time to share it. Here’s mine:

Public services have changed, are changing and will change more radically and more fundamentally between 2010 and 2020 than in any other decade since the 1940s. Demographic change is increasing need at the same time as expenditure is being reduced and many services are shrinking. In combination, these trends are creating a spiral of decline. As the remaining resources are sucked into managing the greatest needs, earlier-stage interventions are abandoned – spending on prevention fell by almost 10 per cent between 2010/11 and 2011/12 – and more problems are becoming more difficult, when instead they might have been prevented entirely. Effective services fall into a tailspin, leading to crisis management, with inevitable consequences.

Eighty per cent of the deficit reduction strategy is staked on cost-cutting and there is a long way to go. The Institute for Fiscal Studies estimates that 69 per cent of the cuts to current spending will still be outstanding at the end of this financial year – there is no precedent for administrative cost-cutting on this scale in the UK. Christopher Hood and Ruth Dixon have shown that even the most effective period of cost reduction yielded less than one-fifth of the goal being pursued by the present government.

In short, cuts without fundamental systems reform disrupt and disfigure without resolving or transforming. They generate more needs and more expensive needs, may well fail to deliver the short-term savings target, and are very likely to be storing up problems that will only become increasingly complex and expensive.
We need now more than ever to challenge and change culture, systems and structures, to take a different approach. It must be grounded in an understanding not just of the economic context but of the nature of the society that we are becoming, and it must articulate a more effective, sustainable and equitable alternative.

The report into management and care at Mid Staffordshire hospital published in February 2013 revealed ‘the unnecessary suffering of hundreds of people’, ‘a lack of care, compassion and humanity’ and a ‘system which put corporate self-interest ahead of patient safety’. Three weeks later, Professor Bruce Keogh started work as the new NHS national medical director promising that hospitals would be fined if they failed to provide the best care.

Care driven by fear of punishment? The prospect is discomforting but it isn’t new. Talk to social workers, teachers, probation officers and care workers and you will find that regulations and systems, impersonal transactions and a fear of risk and reprisal shape the culture in which they all work. Public services are being reduced to a set of transactions when the real need is for a more personal relationship, for common sense and human kindness.

Now listen to those who use the services and those who do not. For some, family, friends and neighbours are more than adequate but for many they are not – moments of joy go unshared, battles are faced alone. More than a million pensioners enjoy less than 30 minutes’ social contact in any given week, despite our understanding that social isolation increases the risk of death in older people by 26 per cent. Our public services must change. And so must our communities.

England is more segregated than at any time since 1966. Weak communities and social isolation are widely considered to be one the greatest challenges facing Britain today. Just one in five people know their neighbours well; one in 10 claim to be too shy to say hello, even though 95 per cent believe that knowing their neighbours better could have a positive impact on their community.

It is not a ‘new normal’ that we need to embrace but some part of the ‘old normal’ that we need to reclaim – our common humanity, mutual trust and a willing kindness. A piecemeal, programmatic response is one option, layering specific initiatives and isolated pilots over a failing system, more sanctions, inspections, enforcement, more waiting for trouble, more belated reaction and – ultimately and inevitably – more failure.

Any future government should grasp the scale of the challenge and the importance of bold, whole system reform. It should structure its narrative around the shared values which give our lives meaning, identity and purpose. It should align its vision with the deep-set rhythms of our daily lives, talking about opportunities and transitions and making readiness its primary goal. It should prevent the preventable and champion relationships as the organising principle at the heart of all our public services.

Then, because governments can lead and enable but cannot achieve anything alone, it would co-design, co-produce and co-locate, fostering cooperation in our communities, services and politics, and changing the structures and the behaviours that right now are getting in the way.

Big things are happening in the world around us. This is not a time for tinkering but for a principled commitment to a process of change that is kind, collaborative and just.
Social integration: a challenge in a diverse society

Matthew Taylor, Chair, Social Integration Commission and Chief Executive of the RSA

“Social integration results in people living shared and more connected lives.”

The UK is becoming increasingly diverse. For many, conversations about diversity centre on ethnicity. This is understandable given how ethnically diverse we are and the fact that the proportion of British residents who are members of a minority ethnic group is projected to rise to 38% by 2050. Furthermore, according to the Migration Observatory, Britain will be the second most ethnically diverse country in the OECD within the next 40 years.

But we all know that diversity covers a much broader terrain than just race. Age diversity is equally a part of the debate and will become more important over the next 30 years, with half the UK’s population projected to be at divergent ends of the age spectrum by 2040. The issue of income diversity also needs to be acknowledged as the gap between the richest and poorest members of our society will widen over the coming decades if trends continue to follow the pattern of the last 40 years.

When one accepts diversity as being multi-faceted, encompassing more than ethnicity, it becomes apparent that increasing diversity presents many social challenges. One of the biggest challenges, often overlooked, is that of helping people of different ages, ethnicities and social backgrounds to mix – which we refer to as social integration. Used in this context, integration is not referring to the process which supports recent migrants in adjusting to a new way of life. Neither is integration simply about helping those on the fringes of society to be drawn further in.
Rather, it is the opportunity for all groups of people to develop diverse friendships and networks with one another. Social integration results in people living shared and more connected lives and is thus a subject for the mainstream, impacting all of us as individuals, members of communities and citizens of wider society.

But achieving social integration in a diverse society is not without its challenges. With many of our social institutions becoming more exclusive (50% of pupils on free school meals in the UK attend just 20% of schools) there is an increasing lack of space where different people can mix with one another, and build relationships. The decline in the popularity of traditional ‘mixing’ institutions, such as the church and trade unions, has also resulted in fewer opportunities for people to meet and spend time with those who are different to them.

Not only is a lack of ‘mixing’ spaces a barrier, evidence and experience suggests that humans have always had an identifiable bias towards the company of people from parallel backgrounds, with whom they share common interests. As our country becomes more diverse by age, income and ethnicity, we run the risk of becoming more segregated along these lines as people actively choose to spend time with those most similar to themselves.

A further barrier to social integration is confusion over what it looks like in practice and how it impacts our lives. The word integration has been used to describe a number of different things; from government policies proposing compulsory English lessons for new migrants, to national mass community lunches, to targeted assimilation programmes aimed at combatting religious extremism. This has led to integration often being viewed as an experience people have either as a member of a minority group or only during times of celebration or crisis. What is needed is a picture of what integration looks like for the mainstream; in our schools, our workplaces and on our streets. Some great work has been done in this area, (see IPPR’s ‘Everyday Integration’ project and ‘Mapping Integration’ by Demos), but there is still more work to be done.

It is for this reason that we are launching the Social Integration Commission; a year-long national enquiry exploring key questions around increasing diversity and integration. The Commission will seek to consolidate the integration debate, highlighting its relevance on a personal, public and policy level.

The need to integrate people of all ages and from all backgrounds will become even more important as we become more diverse. But how do we make this happen? Social action carried out on a regular basis is one way to achieve this and an important starting point. Through the work of the Social Integration Commission, we look forward to collaboratively coming up with new and creative responses to this crucial social challenge.
Localism: empowering communities

“...volunteering has a crucial role to play. It empowers young adults as active citizens, replacing the feeling, often heard in some poorer areas, of powerlessness in the face of impersonal forces, with one of power and control.”

David Skelton, Director, Renewal

Empowering communities and local people needs to be a guiding principle of modern politics. It’s no longer enough for Whitehall to dictate and expect something to happen.

The man in Whitehall certainly doesn’t know best today and the truth is that he never did. As Nye Bevan famously said, “the purpose of getting power is to be able to give it away.” Manchester and Newcastle’s problems are best understood and solved in Manchester and Newcastle, not Whitehall.

A prosperous country needs prosperous, thriving towns and cities in every region of the country. Now more than ever, prosperous cities are those with real power, strong civic leadership and a compelling vision for their locality. Investment in infrastructure, through Local Employment Partnerships, is also crucial to making this happen. This is about more than giving more power to leadership figures. It is all about really empowering local communities and local people, particularly in those communities that have become disengaged from politics.
And disengagement is a sad reality in many communities, particularly those towns and cities that are still to recover fully from deindustrialisation. In some constituencies in 2010 turnout was as low as 44 per cent. The class gap in voting and engagement has become a chasm. In 1992, the gap between working class and middle class turnout was 6 per cent, by 2010 that had grown to almost 20 per cent.

This disengagement isn’t restricted to politics. Many people also feel disengaged from those institutions that once held communities together and, in many cases, feel that they haven’t enjoyed the benefits of previous recoveries from recession. In too many cases, the education system has let down the people who needed it the most. In 2009, just 19 per cent of white British boys on free school meals achieved five or more good GCSEs, including English and Maths, compared to 51 per cent of white British boys not eligible for free school meals. Educational inequality has been a driver of disengagement and a root cause of poverty for too long. But the programme of education reform to ensure all children – regardless of their background – can access the best that education has to offer gives us real hope for the future.

What has all of this got to do with City Year UK and volunteering? Pretty much everything. Community empowerment is essential to reengaging people and volunteering has a crucial role to play in community empowerment. City Year UK is a really impressive organisation that is making a real difference to people’s lives in some of our most deprived communities. It creates role models, reinvigorates institutions and empowers young people.

Of course, there is always more to do to tackle the issues of disengagement. Bold education reform needs to continue to ensure that everybody is able to make the most of their potential. The pupil premium and the extension of academies have an explicit focus on improving life chances for the poorest. We should continue to focus on ensuring this is a recovery that works for everybody, with secure jobs and decent wages. And we have to make sure that enough houses are built to tackle the housing shortage that drives inequality. City Deals and education reform also represents a real devolution of power from Whitehall to local communities.

But volunteering has a crucial role to play. It empowers young adults as active citizens, replacing the feeling, often heard in some poorer areas, of powerlessness in the face of impersonal forces, with one of power and control. Programmes like City Year UK also give young people an integral role in society and a leadership role in their community that they continue to play long after they’ve left their position. They have a role to play in boosting social mobility and ensuring that people from different backgrounds mix – City Year UK should be congratulated that 50 per cent of their volunteers come from deprived backgrounds.

The rise in volunteering since 2010, driven by Government encouragement and support, is something we should all welcome. And programmes like City Year UK are real leaders in the field - making a real difference to young people and their communities. Hopefully these programmes will continue to expand - empowering people, strengthening society and overcoming social barriers.

Volunteering is no panacea to long-standing and deep rooted problems of disengagement, but it can make a real difference. It’s an essential part of what’s becoming an empowerment of local people and local communities. Voluntary citizen service can help reinvigorate a sense of civic engagement and that’s something we must welcome.
Youth unemployment: getting our young people into work

Vivian Hunt, UK Managing Partner, McKinsey & Company, UK and Ireland

“...helping us all rise to this urgent challenge - how to ensure our young people make the most of all the opportunities in today’s global economy.”

It is hard to find a greater challenge affecting society and the global economy than the high levels of youth unemployment.

Wherever you look around the world youth unemployment is at crisis levels. Globally almost 13% of youth, 78 million young people aged 15 to 24, are looking for a job, but can’t find one. The situation in the EU is more stark – with 25% unemployed.

And here in the UK one in seven young people aged 16 to 24 are not in employment, education or training – almost one million people. The sense of alienation among some young people is inescapable. Perhaps this is not surprising, when two million children grow up in households where no-one works. These children are more likely to fail at school and add to the already too high levels of youth unemployment.

At the same time employers worldwide are struggling to find qualified employees. A McKinsey survey of Education to Employment transitions in the EU* found that almost 30% of employers reported difficulties filling positions due to the lack of appropriate skills. Although the situation in the UK is less serious, with only 18% attributing recruitment problems to skills shortages, we still face a skills crunch in vital STEM disciplines – demand for young people with these skills is set to exceed supply by 50%. Too many young people lack the right skills in a world that has too few skilled workers.

Employers are most dissatisfied with the shortfalls in soft skills, such as critical thinking, oral and written communication, negotiation, and networking.
The problem is rooted in the divergent perceptions of three key groups. Educational institutions, employers and the youth themselves are living in parallel universes. Three-quarters of the educational institutions we surveyed believe that their graduates are ready for the job market. But almost two-thirds of employers and young people disagree. Little wonder that fewer than half of Europe’s young people believe that post-secondary education has improved their employment prospects. School leavers are increasingly questioning the value of further education, with 34% of the young people in the UK not going into further studies citing cost as the main reason. Around a quarter of UK youth said they were not interested in further education, as compared with only 7% in Germany.

UK youth emerged from the survey as among the least well informed, when making key educational choices. There is also a strong bias against vocational education. Two thirds of the young people told us that society valued academic over vocational training. Only 12% gained a post-secondary vocational qualification, even though over 70% thought that vocational training would be the more useful for securing employment.

Of the eight countries surveyed, the UK reported the lowest proportion of young people undertaking work placements – below 40%, although, encouragingly, the number completing apprenticeships is now growing quickly.

**What can we do about this?**

Youth unemployment is a critical issue for our society and economy. We must help the younger generations acquire the skills they need more effectively. That requires greater co-operation and communication between employers, government and education providers, with a greater focus on boosting work readiness.

Secondly, business needs to do more to help educators in the following areas: shaping the curriculum, providing additional teaching capacity, offering experience of the world of work, developing the soft skills, and providing career counselling and guidance. Nothing drives educational performance more than the quality of teaching and school leadership, from the early years onwards. It is during early years learning and primary education that the seeds of employability are sown. Business should do what it can to support school leaders and teachers at this level too.

Thirdly, young people need to be able to access a broader choice of programmes, not just through school and university education, but also vocational education, work readiness programmes and apprenticeships. Support structures need to be put in place to allow the best of these programmes to achieve real impact at scale.

A year of service or voluntary activity is one effective way to address the gap and help young people develop the soft skills and sense of social responsibility valued by employers. As well as delivering social impact, programmes like City Year UK are helping us all rise to this urgent challenge – how to ensure our young people make the most of all the opportunities in today’s global economy.

* "Education to Employment: Getting Europe’s Youth into Work“, McKinsey Centre for Government, January 2014. A survey of 5300 young people, 2600 employers and 700 post-secondary education providers across 8 EU countries (France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, UK).
“...everyone would win if more young people had the chance to step up to a year of service.”

Michael Lynas, CEO, NCS Trust
CHAPTER 2

Transatlantic experiences: young people as the solution.

In this chapter key White House staff members and advisers outline the importance of the service agenda to four US Presidencies and their consensus on the power of young people and volunteering.

In the UK, Amanda Jordan OBE outlines a new campaign, Step Up To Serve, which aims to double the number of 10 to 20-year-olds taking part in social action by 2020 and Michael Lynas of NCS Trust explains how young people are increasingly engaged in youth social action and the huge potential of Generation ‘C’. Finally, the founders of Free the Children explains how it celebrates the power of young change-makers and in 2014 celebrated the first UK ‘We Day’.
Gregg Petersmeyer is Founder and CEO of Personal Pathways LLC. Mr Petersmeyer was appointed by President George H.W. Bush as the Founding Director of the White House Office of National Service.

“I have spoken of a thousand points of light, of all of the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the Nation, doing good.”

President George HW Bush

President George Herbert Walker Bush, the 41st President of the United States of America, first spoke of “a thousand points of light” in his speech accepting the presidential nomination at the 1988 Republican National Convention in New Orleans.

He talked about the extraordinary array of volunteer organizations across America, which he said was “a brilliant diversity spread like stars, like a thousand points of light in a broad and peaceful sky.” He used the image again in his inaugural address on January 20, 1989:

“I have spoken of a thousand points of light, of all of the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the Nation, doing good. We will work hand in hand, encouraging, sometimes leading, sometimes being led, rewarding. We will work on this in the White House, in the Cabinet agencies. I will go to the people and the programs that are the brighter points of light, and I will ask every member of my government to become involved. The old ideas are new again because they are not old, they are timeless: duty, sacrifice, commitment, and a patriotism that finds its expression in taking part and pitching in.”
Soon after taking the oath of office, President Bush established and asked me to serve as the Director of the very first White House Office of National Service. He then created as part of that office the first daily Presidential recognition program from the White House.

Six days a week, a citizen or group of citizens would be chosen as the daily “point of light” for that day. Their stories were deeply moving and inspiring, real examples of the power a person can have to change the world, and our goal was to highlight them to encourage others to get involved in their communities.

President Bush also created the first Commission on National and Community Service, an independent federal agency authorized under the National and Community Service Act of 1990. The Commission was charged with finding and providing federal support to innovative new models of service in four key areas: service learning for school aged youth; higher education service programs, youth corps and national service demonstration models. Those were the early days of the modern national service movement in America and several of those models, including City Year, later inspired the creation of AmeriCorps after President Clinton was elected in 1994.

President Bush believed so deeply in the power of citizens to make a difference, he spearheaded the creation of the Points of Light Foundation, which sought to engage the private sector and others outside government as key partners in expanding and promoting service. Today, Points of Light still carries on his legacy and continues the tradition of awarding a daily point of light to ordinary Americans. It’s now part of a growing movement in both our countries. Among the most recent signs of this include the launching of Step Up To Serve last November by HRH the Prince of Wales standing side-by-side at Buckingham Palace with Britain’s three main political party leaders and Prime Minister David Cameron announcing from 10 Downing Street in April the establishment of U.K Points of Light Awards. President Bush remains an enthusiastic supporter and champion for the cause of service in America and throughout the world.
The US Story

Shirley Sagawa, Former Deputy Chief of Staff to First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and Former Managing Director, Corporation for National and Community Service

“...more than 830,000 Americans have served in AmeriCorps since 1994.”

When President Clinton ran for office in 1992, he pledged that “every American who borrowed money for college would have the option to pay it off with a year or two of national service.” In the first 100 days of his presidency, he proposed legislation to fulfill this pledge.

With strong bipartisan support, Congress passed the National and Community Service Trust Act, and President Clinton signed it into law less than six months later. This legislation created a new agency to administer national service funds and enabled adults of all ages to serve full-time or part-time and receive money for college or to pay back student loans.

In September, 1994, the first members were sworn into federally funded AmeriCorps programs run, in most cases, by competitively selected nonprofit organizations that matched a large portion of the program costs with donations from foundations, corporations, and individuals. They pledged to “get things done” to make “our people, safe, smarter, and healthier, . . . strengthen our communities,” and “faced with conflict, . . . seek common ground.”
AmeriCorps members come from all backgrounds, from low-income youth who earned their high school equivalency while they learned job skills through the service to law school graduates who provided civil legal assistance to the poor. Most AmeriCorps members serve children in schools, afterschool, or youth programs. And most serve through local nonprofits and public agencies, although some served with national organizations, such as City Year, Teach For America, and Habitat for Humanity. Although many AmeriCorps members perform direct service, some help to build the capacity of nonprofit organizations. For example, the average AmeriCorps member was responsible for recruiting and managing twelve community volunteers.

As AmeriCorps grew, it became an important way that young adults became exposed to careers in helping fields, from education and law, to public health and community development. Longitudinal research shows that former AmeriCorps members are significantly more likely than the comparison group to enter careers in public service such as teaching, public safety, social work, and full-time military service. They also significantly increased their work skills and civic engagement through AmeriCorps, and developed a stronger connection to their communities.

When President Clinton left office, 50,000 members were serving with AmeriCorps, in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. They would join over 200,000 alumni, who not only had earned close to $1 billion in education awards, but would, as they had pledged, “carry this commitment with [them] this year and beyond.”

Over all, more than 830,000 Americans have served in AmeriCorps since 1994. Together they have earned over $2.4 billion in education awards and transformed countless lives and communities.
John Bridgeland is President & CEO of Civic Enterprises.

Mr Bridgeland has served under Presidents Bush and Obama. President Obama appointed Mr Bridgeland to the White House Council for Community Solutions and under President Bush, Mr Bridgeland served as Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council in the first term, and then as Assistant to the President of the United States and first Director of the USA Freedom Corps after 9/11.

The tragic events of 9/11 awakened a new civic spirit in America. President George W. Bush called on all Americans to give two years of service to their country and created a Presidential Council and White House Office called “Freedom Corps” to coordinate efforts across his Cabinet Departments and Agencies and in partnership with the Peace Corps and Corporation for National Service. So what was innovative and new?

The first step was to collect and report good data by creating within the U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics an annual “Volunteering Survey in the United States.” The Survey showed that 59 million Americans served the year after 9/11 and grew to an historic high of 65 million Americans by the end of 2005. The Volunteering Survey also showed rates of volunteering by age, race, ethnicity, marital status, educational level and employment status. It also showed what types of volunteering Americans performed, through what institutions (religious, non-profit, workplaces), and for what period of time.

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”

Martin Luther King Jr

The US Story

Chapter 2 / Transatlantic experiences: young people as the solution / The US Story
In the United States, Presidents from both Democrat and Republican parties have worked to give more Americans a civilian counterpart to the military with this bargain - if you serve your country for a full year working through City Year, Habitat for Humanity, Teach for America or other nonprofits, you will receive a small living stipend and financial support to defray the cost of college. This is a smaller version of the GI bill that provided the financial support to educate an entire generation in the U.S. to move into the middle class.

To take just one example that now represents a powerful partnership between Britain and the U.S., this year there are 2,500 City Year participants in the U.S. serving in 236 schools, reaching 150,000 students. Because of their work, America is making significant progress in boosting attendance, improving discipline, and increasing math and reading performance in some of the lowest-performing schools. National service is indeed a solution to America’s high school dropout epidemic, which claims about 1 million students a year with huge costs to them, taxpayers and society.

Teams of 18-25 year olds will dedicate a year of their lives to serve as role models and mentors, focusing all of their energy and commitment to supporting children to fulfill their ambitions. They are dream-makers, helping to keep youth on track to graduate from school and fulfill their promise in a workforce that needs their skills. But they also represent something larger - the potential of an army of citizens who could solve other social problems at low cost to the taxpayer and transform millions of lives, including those who give a year to their country.

The U.K. and U.S. share a historic bond. Now is the time for that bond to be strengthened over an idea that both countries should further embrace - large-scale national service to unleash the talents of a generation whose nations desperately need them.
The US Story

Wendy Spencer is the CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service

“That’s the beauty of national service – the ability to improve lives while transforming communities through the power of our people.”

Whenever I read stories that attempt to rank how well a nation is doing in one way or another, I feel as though something is missing. It’s not that these rankings are unimportant; it’s just that it leaves me cold to see a country’s well-being described through pie charts and bar graphs.

Naturally, as the CEO of the federal agency that leads national and community service in the United States, I am a little biased in this belief. However, my years of experience serving with volunteers have proven to me time and time again that the strength of our nation comes from the voluntary acts of its citizens.

All of us in the U.S. national service movement strongly believe in the power of the people to bring about change in areas where it is needed most. Sometimes the change is simple, such as the personal connection a service member makes with another person that builds the bonds of community. At other times, the results are greater, like when a tutor works with a struggling student and teaches her to read, opening the doors to better economic opportunities down the road.

Another great thing about national service is that we are not only helping those who face some of life’s greatest challenges. Anyone who volunteers knows the joy and satisfaction that comes from this kind of service, and that’s because selfless acts not only help the people being served but also benefit those providing the service. And we have found in our studies that those serving make connections and learn valuable skills that can help them find a job later. National service is a victory for all of the parties involved.
In the U.S. we have been fortunate to have bipartisan support from Presidential leadership that believes in the value of people and has provided the opportunities for them to answer a call to service. The Corporation for National and Community Service is primarily a grantmaking agency that works with the nonprofit sector and faith-based organizations to support these good works and continues some efforts that have been in place for almost 50 years.

Additionally, we are expanding our reach through public-private partnerships and interagency cooperation to provide more opportunities for service each year.

All told, our 75,000 AmeriCorps members and 315,000 Senior Corps volunteers serve in 60,000 locations across our nation and mobilize an additional 4 million volunteers. These programs tap into the power and knowledge of our citizenry, regardless of whether they have a lifetime of experiences to draw from or are just beginning to find their way in the world.

That last part is especially important, as the majority of our AmeriCorps members come from a pool of young adults who are eager for this opportunity to serve their nation. We send these AmeriCorps members into tough situations for a service year as poverty fighters, disaster responders, firefighters, teachers, and peer counselors — just to name a few of the ways our members serve — and they bring an energy and creativity to their assignments that is impressive, to say the least.

Even better, the service year provides a reward that goes beyond the good works being done. Our AmeriCorps members earn a scholarship that can be used to reduce college costs or repay student loans. So the service year not only benefits communities, it increases economic opportunity for our members by encouraging post-secondary education and reducing student debt. Their service experiences also increase the civic activity and awareness of our AmeriCorps members while transforming their lives for the better whether they came to us as a high school dropout or a college graduate.

That's the beauty of national service — the ability to improve lives while transforming communities through the power of our people. These Americans give a year or more to serve their nation, but they get so much more in return — the chance to learn, lead, grow, explore new opportunities, and become stronger citizens. And the nation is made stronger because of their service.
Getting young people to Step Up To Serve: creating a social action journey for young people

“Amanda Jordan OBE, Co-Founder of the Step Up To Serve Campaign

“I have always been convinced that practical action in the service of others is of benefit both to the individual and the community. So much incredible work has already been done in the UK.”

HRH The Prince of Wales

In 2012, the Prime Minister asked Dame Julia Cleverdon and myself to review how the Government, business, voluntary and education sectors work together to support young people to engage in social action between the ages of 10 and 20.

In response to the review we received overwhelming support and enthusiasm from across a range of sectors. Most importantly, it provided compelling examples that young people’s engagement in social action brings huge benefits to society.

2012 was an unforgettable year for our country. The Olympics and the Jubilee demonstrated to the world the value of social action in the UK. It was clear to Julia and I that this was the perfect opportunity to set the cornerstone to deliver a long lasting legacy and inspire young people to achieve long term culture change. We set out our vision that by 2020 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.

The resulting Step Up To Serve campaign was launched on the 21st November 2013. HRH The Prince of Wales and the three main UK political party leaders came together on the day to show their support for young people who are active in their communities and pledge their commitment until 2020. Leaders from across British Society pledged to take action to develop more opportunities and encourage more young people to participate in their communities.
The hundreds of pledges we continue to receive from across the business, education, faith, public, youth and voluntary sectors are critical to achieving the campaign’s collective goal.

The Step Up To Serve campaign is a strategic, long-term, cross-sector initiative, which we believe will unlock the potential of youth social action. The Campaign’s vision is for all young people between the ages of 10-20, wherever they live and whatever their background, to engage in meaningful social action – practical action in the service of others. At the end of this journey we hope that young people will be recognised as part of the solution to the challenges facing our society and not part of the problem. Young people committing to a full-time year of service is a powerful example of this.

Our ambition is to double the number of young people taking part in social action by 2020 and so to create a habit for a lifetime. With HRH The Prince of Wales as Patron and with all party support working together we can achieve this.

Ed Miliband MP, Leader of the Opposition, said:

“I want to see volunteering in the service of others become an accepted and central part of the experience of growing up in Britain. It helps young people build new skills and it’s a great way for them to meet new people and help others in their community.

“We have the chance to unlock so much potential in this country, and that is why Step Up To Serve is a brilliant campaign. Something as important as this deserves to be above party politics, so I’m delighted to join with other party leaders in pledging my support today.”

The Prime Minister, David Cameron, said:

“I want to see more volunteering, more philanthropy and more of the Big Society – people stepping up and taking part.

“National Citizen Service is a vital part of the campaign the Prince of Wales is launching today. It has been a massive success, with more than 40,000 young people getting involved, making a difference and giving something back to their community.

“This kind of service is above party politics. I want to make sure that this government and every future government is encouraging volunteering and service amongst young people. That’s what National Citizen Service achieves.”

The Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, said:

“One of my biggest priorities has been to help Britain’s young people achieve their full potential, regardless of where they were born or went to school.

“The skills young people learn outside the classroom are equally as important to help them build lasting careers. Through social action young people can see for themselves the powerful difference they can make to their own lives, and the people around them in their wider community. And it’s not only individuals who are doing this – 150 companies have signed up to my Business Compact to volunteer in schools, providing inspiration and career opportunities to young people from all walks of life.

“I’m proud to support the Step Up To Serve campaign which I see as an essential piece of the jigsaw to harness young people’s energy, enthusiasm and ambitions to build a better future for themselves and Britain.”
Over the years that I have been involved with National Citizen Service (NCS), I’ve heard some people argue that we should change our name. “National Citizen Service – three times wrong,” they say, “It’s just not cool – especially the ‘service’ word”. Some others have gone further and claimed it’s not just the name that’s the problem: today’s young people just don’t want to Step Up To Serve.

At NCS Trust, we think they’re wrong and the evidence is backing us up. In its first three years, NCS has attracted 70,000 participants and is growing by about 50% a year. Our young people have collectively given over 1.5 million hours of service to their community, and led thousands of social action projects around the country.

Presented with this evidence, the critics said that our graduates were the exception, not the norm: the good eggs in a rotten basket. The recent report, ‘Introducing Generation Citizen’, that NCS published with Demos proves them wrong. It finds that the popular stereotypes of young people as at best feckless and at worst feral are completely wrong. Instead, today’s teenagers are shown to be behaving more responsibly when it comes to drink and drugs, caring more about social issues both at home and abroad, and being more willing to get out and take action to make their world a better place.
I believe that this should be the start of their engagement with their communities, not the end. We’re already working with a range of organisations – from the Scouts to the Canal and Riverside Trust – to provide opportunities for NCS graduates to continue to make their mark. But we could and should go further.

Our country faces real social challenges: we have youth unemployment that reaches almost one million, while over one million older people feel chronically lonely. But what about the one million NCS graduates by 2020, and all the other great young people that make up Generation Citizen? If we want to tackle these social problems – and many more – we should put aside our misconceptions and see our young people as part of the solution.

Our young people are ready to step up. Our report with Demos found that two thirds of teenagers thought that by getting involved themselves they could make a positive difference to social issues in their local community, and that three out of five specifically aspired to a career that helped people less fortunate than themselves. Great organisations such as City Year UK and Year Here are finding that young people can help themselves and tackle social problems in Britain when they are given the opportunity. I believe that everyone would win if more young people had the chance to step up to a year of service.

The generation that is now coming of age – who we work with every day at NCS – are in fact deserving of the title ‘Generation Citizen’ because they are more socially engaged than ever. It is remarkable that there has been a surge in volunteering among 16-19 year olds recorded in the Government’s Community Life survey: from 2009-10 to 2012-13 those undertaking formal volunteering went from 53% to 68% and those undertaking informal volunteering went from 42% to 58%. This age group – Generation Citizen – now gives more of their time in volunteering than any other. And our report shows that more than three quarters want more opportunities.

I’m delighted by the signs that our country is finally waking up to the reality of Generation Citizen and the brighter future they could offer us, if we give them the tools, opportunity and respect they need. Last November, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition were brought together by the Prince of Wales to launch a cross party and cross sector campaign to double participation in youth social action. The Step Up To Serve campaign has rightly identified that achieving this ambitious goal will mean all sectors working together to build a compelling service journey for young people.

At NCS we have pledged to play our part by continuing the rapid growth in our programme so that we will have one million graduates by 2020. This ambitious growth is made possible by public investment, the dedication of our youth organisations and the social engagement of our young people. This will mean one million people from all backgrounds entering adulthood armed with the tools and the desire to make a difference to their communities.
We Day: celebrating social action

“...a network of two million young people engaged in social action to better their local and global communities.”

Let’s be honest: who thinks a group of young people can change the world? When a dozen of us 12-year-olds started Free The Children in 1995, we did.

We began with a mission to free children from the idea that they are too young to make a difference. Nineteen years later, that motley crew of Year 7s has grown into a network of two million young people engaged in social action to better their local and global communities.

Each year, we come together to celebrate the power of young people to lead change with an inspirational event—We Day. On 7 March, 2014, the UK hosted its first We Day, with 12,000 students and teachers gathered at London’s Wembley Arena to hear the words of renowned leaders and performers such as Malala Yousafzai, Sir Richard Branson, Ellie Goulding and Clive Owen, as well as extraordinary young change-makers.

We Day is free to attend, but each young participant earns their ticket by taking action on one local and one global issue. And each one leaves with the inspiration to fuel a multitude of new initiatives for the year ahead, like collecting tinned food for local food banks, launching coin drives to fund clean water projects in developing communities and planning kindness campaigns to prevent bullying in their schools. Through these actions, young people build the knowledge, self-confidence and compassion to be not only the leaders of tomorrow, but also the leaders of today.

Free The Children is proud to be part of Step Up To Serve and help celebrate young people getting involved in social action at events such as We Day. Since our first We Day in 2007, students across North America and the UK have volunteered a total of 14.6 million hours and raised more than £32 million for over 1,000 local and global causes. Not bad for a group of young people.

Craig and Marc Kielburger, Co-Founders of Free The Children

Free The Children is a member of Generation Change.
“Few will have the greatness to bend history; but each of us can work to change a small portion of the events, and in the total of all these acts will be written the history of this generation.”

Robert F. Kennedy
“Volunteering lies at the very heart of intelligent education.”

Dr Anthony Seldon, Master, Wellington College
CHAPTER 3

Creating the citizens of tomorrow: building character

There is growing consensus that fostering character is key to developing our young citizens. This development needs to begin early in a child’s life. Dr Anthony Seldon, Master of Wellington College, explains his strong belief in the need for greater focus on character education linked to his widely known views on the breakdown of trust in society. Matt Hyde from the Scouts argues that character education must be universal with the voluntary sector and schools working together to make this a reality.
“Helping others... lies at the heart of the emotional development of each young person.”

Dr Anthony Seldon, Master, Wellington College and Executive Principal of Wellington Academy

The older generation have hardly given the example that elders should be giving the young. Many politicians are honest and hard-working, of course, but the prevailing image since the expenses crisis five years ago is that they have their snouts in the trough and are in it for the money alone.

It is not just politicians who have eroded trust. In the days of Dixon of Dock Green, the bobby on the beat was admired and respected. Nowadays, after a slew of scandals, trust in them has declined rapidly too. Episodes such as the Hillsborough tragedy, the murder of Stephen Lawrence, or police behaviour in Downing Street in the so-called ‘Plebgate’ scandal have all damaged confidence. Many now believe that all policemen are all on the make.

The Catholic Church, another traditional bastion of probity, had its integrity severely tested by paedophilia accusations, compounded by the apparent willingness of the Vatican and Cardinals to turn a blind eye.

The BBC has always been regarded as another body of utmost integrity, but again, a series of scandals, most recently the Jimmy Savile affair, has shattered confidence in the once proud BBC. Bankers may never have been flavour of the month, but their responsibility for the financial crash and their greed in claiming bonuses after it has shocked many.
The core of what has gone wrong with our bankers, politicians, churches, media and the rest is that they thought they could act as they wanted as long as they were not caught. Their actions were thus guided not by moral principle and responsibility for others but merely by what they thought they could get away with. This is no way to run a good society.

The young are right to feel disillusioned, for all the very large numbers of adults who are neither corrupt, predatory nor greedy. The young are at the very heart of building a better world in the future.

We need to rebuild from the ground up. Young people must be taught the benefits of doing right rather than wrong, and the importance of serving, rather than damaging, others. Schools need to provide many more opportunities for young people to learn that being honest, displaying kindness to others, volunteering to help and supporting those in need will bring far greater rewards than merely trying to maximise their own pleasure. Doing good, young people will learn, makes for happier and more fulfilling lives. Equally, being unpleasant and deceitful to others, abusing one’s body and hurting others, brings only pain to oneself and other people.

Volunteering lies at the very heart of intelligent education. In the last few years, the focus of primary and secondary schools has been too much on the passing of exams. Ask any head what their most important priority is, and they will say, by a mile, that it is the achieving of the best possible exam results. This is not good enough. The drumbeat of central diktat from government has squeezed out much of the wider moral and social vision of schools. Volunteering used to be a much larger part of school life before the 1990s and it needs to become a much larger part of school life again. Helping others, whether younger pupils at school, the elderly or infirm in the community, or helping others further afield, lies at the heart of the emotional development of each young person. If we are to achieve the objectives of Step Up To Serve, every single head in the country, secondary, primary or special school, state or independent, needs to get excited about volunteering, and to devise ways inside their own schools for giving every child the opportunity to volunteer and to learn from that experience. Ideally, many young people would want to progress onto a year of full-time service before starting work or going on to further education.

Service to others and character education more generally, should lie at the heart of every school. This is the way that we will rebuild trust in our society, and undo the damage caused by the older generations. We might not have provided the example that we should. But we can now help ensure that the young have the education that they must.
Character education must be universal

Matt Hyde, CEO, the Scout Association

The Scout Association is a member of Generation Change.

“...adults who were in the Scouts as children are twice as likely to give up their time to volunteer for a good cause as non-Scouts.”

For over a century, Scouting has helped young people build character and resilience. We know that these qualities - essential for the modern world - are developed through experience, responsibility, challenge and adventure.

I see the impact of Scouting and character every day. Nine out of ten of our young people say that Scouting has helped them develop leadership, communication skills and character. And it doesn’t end when they leave: adults who were in the Scouts as children are twice as likely to give up their time to volunteer for a good cause as non-Scouts.

With social mobility increasingly being linked to the right social and emotional skills there is a growing debate about the role of schools in developing character traits. Whilst schools can provide a universalism of opportunity that voluntary organisations simply can’t, organisations like The Scout Association have over a century of experience in delivering character education. Partnerships between the two could be transformative.

Scouting is already working with a number of schools to see how the combination of non-formal and formal education can best help young people.
At the University Academy in Toxteth, Liverpool, there is a dedicated Scout Group, with Scouting embedded into the curriculum. Scouting takes place during the day but is based on the Scout method of learning by doing rather than classroom-based exercises.

In West Yorkshire, Bradford Academy has encouraged teachers to train as Scout leaders and open a new Beaver Colony. Once established, parents and other volunteers will take over the Group and welcome those from across the community, not just pupils.

In Scotland, the Curriculum for Excellence helps young people demonstrate how what they are doing outside of the classroom is contributing to their educational outcomes. Scout leaders in Scotland have acknowledged an increased interest in Scouting, due in part to Curriculum for Excellence, and aspects of the programme have been highlighted to show how Scouts are meeting the learning outcomes in the curriculum.

Policy makers, teachers and non-formal education practitioners all have a responsibility to promote more equitable access to learning experiences outside of formal education. Unless this is achieved, the impact of non-formal education is actually to widen the gap in life chances between children from different backgrounds. A willingness to innovate and collaborate, not simply to rely on our existing education structures, will provide a much better result for our young people today and in the future.
“I can honestly say that completing my year of service as a mentor and role model at Whitmore Primary School in east London was life changing, both personally and professionally.”

Rodney Williams, City Year London alumnus
CHAPTER 4

City Year UK: Give a Year. Change the World

In the UK and US full-time volunteering supports other volunteers and can be the pinnacle of a young person’s journey towards adulthood. It can also provide crucial support as they transition from education to employment. In both countries, young people can undertake a ‘City Year’ where they serve in deprived schools to support pupils and engage communities. During the year they develop not only their own character, but the character of the children they support as near-peer role models. Colin Hely-Hutchinson from Credit Suisse and a City Year UK Trustee, introduces the stories of five young people who’ve given a year to change the world of disadvantaged children growing up in the UK.

To conclude, Justin Davis Smith of NCVO explains his views of the power of a full-time volunteering offer within the spectrum of youth social action opportunities.
“This is a unique partnership... It allows businesses to offer support to young people who, in turn, develop not only themselves but the children and community they serve.”

In the early 1990s, a British law firm made an appeal to its employees to dedicate five percent of their working hours to nonprofit organizations. Over the years, this approach has not only been copied in the legal world, but has inspired professionals in other fields to do the same. The resulting partnerships benefit the businesses as well as the nonprofits; for example skills-based volunteering promotes creativity and problem-solving abilities among the participating employees.

Colin Hely-Hutchinson, City Year UK Trustee and Managing Director, Investment Banking Division, Credit Suisse
breakfast clubs, maths classes, art and chess clubs. The corps members dedicate the other day each week to expanding and developing their own skills, including taking seminars at businesses such as Credit Suisse on networking, mentoring, career counselling and career planning.

The power of young people acting as near peer role models became very striking to me on one of my school visits. As we walked in dressed in suits and ties, the children looked at us as if we were in the wrong place. It was astonishing to watch how the attitude of the children changed when we put on those red City Year jackets. There was a little girl about six years old who, as soon as I put the red jacket on, came to me, took me by the hand and wouldn’t let go of it for the whole time I was there. The red jacket represented safety and trust and she felt perfectly at liberty to tell me everything about what she was doing that day, the good and the bad. It was a very touching experience.

This is a unique partnership between public sector (schools) and the voluntary and business sector that creates a double benefit. It allows businesses to offer support to young people who, in turn, develop not only themselves but the children and community they serve. The following individuals will tell you about their double benefit journey - Hassain is now working with us, Shakela is an achievement coach in an east London school, Rodney is now working with National Grid, Andrew is joining Teach First, and Doaa aspires to be a community organiser.
My Year of Service

Hassain Choudhury, 26, City Year London corps member 2010/11

Employed: Corporate Citizenship, Credit Suisse

“I saw my confidence improve, I learnt how to network with people in the private sector...and I was taught how to be a strong and persuasive communicator.”

I joined City Year UK after completing my Law degree and was motivated by the charity’s mission which is about harnessing the spirit and energy of young people to transform the lives of children.

City Year is about believing in something bigger than yourself, embracing diversity in your community and pushing yourself out of your comfort zone. You’ve got to be prepared to go that extra mile for your students and you’ve got to be brave enough to grasp the other opportunities that come with your service. For example, I got the opportunity to lead corporate directors and CEOs on volunteering days, and on one occasion I spoke in front of hundreds of guests at an event.

I was very apprehensive and nervous about City Year at the beginning, but it didn’t take me long to appreciate the journey of service I was on. Looking back, I saw my confidence improve, I learnt how to network with people in the private sector, which I had never been exposed to, and I was taught how to be a strong and persuasive communicator. All of these attributes are essential to my role working with Credit Suisse’s Corporate Citizenship team.

By volunteering with City Year I showed that young people can make a difference, contrary to the negative image which is often portrayed in the media. My year of service gave me great pleasure because I saw that I could make a real impact in my community and on the lives of children.
Shakela Uddin, 24, City Year London corps member 2010/11

Employed: Student Achievement Coach, School 21

"City Year has given me a strong and inspiring template to the person I want to be and showed me how to be that person."

My name is Shakela Uddin and I’m an enthusiastic 24 year old who is inspired to make a difference in the world. I was born and brought up in Newham, east London. I graduated from City University with a degree in Media studies with Sociology in 2010.

In today’s society many young people are not portrayed positively. I decided to become a City Year volunteer to change that presumption, by giving back to the community. I believe that City Year is the perfect environment to challenge yourself and to be part of an organisation where social change is at the heart of its agenda.

On my City Year journey, I’ve unlocked many skills that I never knew I had. I’ve learnt how to be a positive leader and a positive influence within the community. I’ve made so many life-long friends who are just as passionate as me. Every day I learnt something new and was constantly faced with challenges that took me out of my comfort zone.

City Year has given me a strong and inspiring template to the person I want to be and showed me how to be that person. I am now working in a school in my local area as a Student Achievement Coach, using all the essential skills I learnt at City Year. I’ve learnt how much of a difference can be achieved by simply being a positive role model and I have cherished every moment of my new role so far.
My Year of Service

Rodney Williams, 24, City Year London corps member 2010/11

Employed: Project Officer, National Grid

“I would urge every young person who is idealistic and concerned about real social change to think about joining the movement.”

I was born and brought up in south-east London and graduated from UCL with a degree in Chemistry with Mathematics in 2010. I joined City Year in London because I wanted to make a real difference to my community and to be a positive young role model for children who didn’t have the support that I did at school.

From a young age, I always had a passion to volunteer, but I think what appealed to me about City Year was this notion of completing a ‘year of service’, and the sense of mission and purpose underpinning it, which felt huge. I can honestly say that completing my year of service as a mentor and role model at Whitmore Primary School in east London was life changing, both personally and professionally.

Firstly, the opportunity to go into a primary school every day and be given the responsibility of mentoring pupils and mixing with different people helped me mature quickly, become mentally stronger and gave me a whole host of personal skills such as organisation, public speaking and leadership. I can’t say I really had the chance to develop these skills at university.
I’ve spent the last three years working in the Capital Delivery – Cable Tunnels Department as a Project Officer where I’m responsible for the delivery of works at one of the construction sites that forms part of the London Power Tunnels project, a £1bn seven year project to support London meet the increasing electricity demand and access the renewable energy of the future. Here I assist with ensuring that works run safely, to time and to cost. I also help out with community involvement events, such as presenting at engineering events and hosting sessions at the Energy Education Centre in Willesden Junction.

Completing my year of service was hard but hugely rewarding looking back on it. I wouldn’t be where I am today without City Year. I would urge every young person who is idealistic and concerned about real social change to think about joining the movement.
"Our diversity, united by shared values and City Year’s strong culture and mission, has equalled success.”

As someone who did well in education - graduating from Durham University with a BA in History and from Warwick University with an MA in Modern History - I wanted to commit to supporting young people who found education a challenge.

Unsure about whether or not to become a teacher post-graduation, I heard about City Year and its programme in schools and felt like I’d found my calling. I was very active in volunteering growing up - volunteering as a youth worker with different organisations and then becoming a Scout Leader whilst studying for my Masters - so I felt that City Year, as a full-time social action programme, was the perfect progression for me. I’d always felt that volunteering made a difference - a little bit each time. I got immense personal gratification out of helping others - but I wanted to commit to something bigger. I wanted to make what I did in my spare time, a full-time focus. City Year was the perfect match to my ambitions, attitudes and values. I place huge importance on education as the key to unlock every person’s potential, no matter where you’re born or who you are. I was determined to use my skills and enthusiasm for education to inspire young people, helping them to explore and realise their own individual potential.

Joining the City Year Birmingham founding corps, I was honoured to help establish the programme in my home city. Serving mainly at Holte secondary school and some of the time at Lozells primary school - with both schools sharing one united campus - I have been able to support pupils of varying ages. Despite the challenges so many of the students face - such as learning difficulties, speaking English as an additional language and having difficult home lives – they have been so appreciative of my team’s service in helping them to reach their educational goals.

Andrew Hodgetts, 23, City Year Birmingham corps member 2013/14

Employed: Teacher, Teach First
Through City Year, I have felt challenged and stretched. I already had a strong education and skills base, but because I’ve been put to the test, I have developed personally and professionally at an accelerated rate. I take my role seriously as a role model and mentor for students at the two schools, so I have to come prepared for a new challenge every day. I really value the strong connections I’ve built up with so many pupils I serve - within weeks of being at the schools, I could see the difference my presence was making. Many children lack confidence, self esteem and the patience to learn. My support in class, one-to-one and extra-curricular clubs provides students with a springboard to excel educationally.

Another great thing about my year of service - beyond inspiring students, my development or the impact I know I’m having - is my team. We’re a diverse bunch and have come from all walks of life. Our diversity, united by shared values and City Year’s strong culture and mission, has equalled success. We’re incredibly driven to make the best impact we can, but we know we can only do this as a collective. Our team-time, at the start and end of every day, outside of service and through our Leadership Development Programme, provides us all with focus and energy. Because we all bring different knowledge and experience to the team, we have our own specialisms and areas that we lead on.

I’ve been so inspired by serving in schools that I’ve decided my next step is to become a teacher after all. I’ve been fortunate enough to secure a place with Teach First next year, teaching maths in Birmingham. I will carry on volunteering with the Scouts, will remain connected to City Year as an alumnus, and will continue to inspire young people to achieve academically and be active citizens. I’ve seen how volunteering and getting involved in programmes in my local community can make a positive difference to the lives of lots of people; I want other young people to realise their potential and power, and get involved too. I’m so excited to continue my journey as a teacher and very much view everything I’ve done up until this point as foundations for the next chapter of my life.
“My year of service didn’t just develop me personally or professionally - it developed me as a citizen.”

Growing up, I lived between London and Cairo and was very fortunate to have an excellent education and a strong, supportive family. Before joining City Year UK, I graduated from Westminster University with a BA in Business Management with Commerce Law.

During my studies I got involved in volunteering for a few charities, but was demotivated by how disconnected I felt fundraising for a cause and not getting to see impact. I had an appetite to keep volunteering, but as the end of uni neared, I wasn’t sure what my next steps would be. Inspired by a serving corps member presenting at an information session, City Year UK seemed like the perfect opportunity for me.

The programme had a good balance of front line volunteering as well as training and professional development. I thought I might go on to work for a corporate one day, so the work shadowing City Year offered, and the corporate mentors appealed to me. Although I'd achieved educationally, I felt I lacked contacts, networks and certain skills that would enrich my CV.
As a corps member I served in Sebright Primary School and supported a special educational needs class. I engaged in activities and one-to-one sessions in literacy, numeracy, writing and reading. It was so satisfying observing each pupil’s improvement with time – I saw that with every hour I spent mentoring a child, they grew in confidence, gained self-esteem and embedded learning so much better.

Beyond being a role model and mentor to children, during my service, I engaged with local campaigning in the school’s wider community. My year of service didn’t just develop me personally or professionally – it developed me as a citizen. At Sebright I first came across London Citizens who at the time were campaigning to eradicate damp in Hackney council homes. The issue was important to me because I saw that some of the pupils I supported were suffering from the damp. One child was always continually unwell, which meant she became unhappy, snappy and anti-social. After months of meetings, actions and lobbying, the campaign was won! Hackney council committed to addressing the damp.

I relished the responsibility I was entrusted with during my service, so I decided to apply for a team leader position at City Year. Being successful in securing a post, I led a team of seven corps members in a primary school in Islington. I used the skills and knowledge learnt during the Leadership Development days to take a step back in difficult situations and overcome challenges as they cropped up. I felt immensely pleased with the team’s development and I was always conscious of each corps member’s strengths and weaknesses, to ensure everyone made leaps in their professional and personal growth.

As part of my training to become a team leader, London Citizens delivered training in community organising. I championed London Citizens and introduced organisers to the head teacher. Enthused by what could be achieved, the school signed up to join and quickly a listening campaign launched, involving pupils, staff and parents. Our school community decided to prioritise campaigning to reduce dog mess in Islington and secure parent-friendly jobs. I supported the campaigning as much I could, leading meetings, doing research and encouraging community members to get involved. Parents were surprised at how much their children were aware of, and felt disheartened that they hadn’t protected them from the issues in the borough. I helped them see that this was not something to be disappointed by - it was something that should propel them into action, involving their children in the process.

It’s incredibly powerful for local communities to come together, decide their own agenda and fight until a change is made. I wanted to learn more about other communities that had fought and won, which is why I applied to do an MA in Community Organising at Queen Mary University.

My time at City Year made me realise that the immense sadness, negativity and strife that many people suffer from can be turned into something positive. I wanted, from that point onwards, to commit my life to improving the lives of individuals and communities. After my Masters, I plan to embark on a career in community organising, potentially training individuals or institutions and helping to build a stronger, more open and accepting civic culture. I’ve seen firsthand how being an active citizen can lead to stronger, happier and more supported communities, and I hope I can help more people see the same.
The power of (full-time) volunteers

Justin Davis Smith, Executive Director of Volunteering and Development, NCVO

“Whatever kindness can be done without personal loss should be done, even for a stranger.”
Cicero, 44 B.C.

While full-time volunteering programmes for young people have been around for a long time, the renewed interest in them from policy makers across the political spectrum is to be warmly welcomed.

Such programmes make an enormously positive contribution to the lives of those that take part, and to the organisations they give their time to, and form a vital part of the menu of volunteering and social action opportunities on offer to young people.

The impact of these programmes, for both the young person and the community they serve, is based on two key elements: that they involve significant amounts of time, and are frequently demanding for the participants. These elements can of course be seen in other forms of volunteering, but they tend to be more pronounced in full-time programmes. The Institute for Volunteering Research has been evaluating City Year UK for the past three years, a programme which involves young people helping full-time in schools for an entire academic year.

In 2013 the programme involved 108 young people who between them gave nearly 160,000 hours service. When asked to describe their experience in one word, the most commonly used adjective
Success can be forthcoming; the Institute for Volunteering Research’s evaluation found that nearly half of the City Year UK ‘corps members’ involved in the academic year grew up in the most deprived quartile of locations in England. But it will require political vision, organisational planning of the highest order, and crucially, funding, to bring it about. Full-time volunteering programmes which reach out to our young people in all their glorious diversity, will repay huge dividends in terms of the social and human capital generated. But, make no mistake about it; they will require investment to succeed.

by ‘corps members’ was ‘challenging’ – the early starts and late finishes, the demanding issues in the classroom, and the emotional pressures placed upon them. But they also said that without this intensity and difficulty, they wouldn’t have experienced the impact they did, which was often life-changing: new career plans, a new outlook on life, feeling like they were a completely different person to the one who had started the year. The well-worn mantra that the more you put in, the more you get out, seems to be particularly apt here.

Something that is particularly valuable about full-time volunteering programmes is their potential to connect to the wider life of young people. They can provide a stepping stone between school and university, or studies and work, and can build and sustain a journey of participation. All good programmes will have this emphasis on journey or progression at their core.

The value of these programmes, however, needs to be placed alongside one of the biggest challenges facing young people today: the struggle to find meaningful, sustainable, paid employment. Although evidence shows that taking part in full-time volunteering can skill-up young people and enhance their employability, not everyone will be able to afford to give a sustained period of time, unpaid, however good the cause and strong their passion to get involved. If the full value of these programmes is to be realised, it is essential that they don’t become the domain of the privileged few. Equality of access must be a priority in future design. One solution might be a stipend, as is common in the US. This is not a payment, but a set amount designed to contribute towards travel, food and living costs. A good example is provided by City Year UK where young people receive up to £100 per month reimbursement for expenses, alongside awards for further education and training.

Full-time volunteering will never be for everyone. For some, short-term, episodic bursts of activity will better suit their lifestyle and motivation. But for others, the opportunity to give full-time, for up to a year, will be immensely attractive and has the capability of delivering huge personal and societal value. Volunteering is as old as civilisation itself. Cicero, writing in On Moral Obligations in 44 B.C., argued that ‘whatever kindness can be done without personal loss should be done, even for a stranger’. But it is also smack up-to-date and of the moment, offering huge benefits for young people making their way in the world. Full-time volunteering offers a wonderful opportunity for young people to play out their altruistic impulse while experiencing a life-changing opportunity. What’s not to like?
“Before I started I had no idea about the complexity of some people’s lives and the many conditions and issues people are coping with. It’s definitely made me less judgemental and more confident in my abilities. I’ve found volunteering hugely rewarding because I get to see the impact that I make on a daily basis.”

Louise, CSV Full-Time Volunteer – Away from Home
CHAPTER 5

Full-time voluntary service: a range of opportunities

A variety of organisations run a wide range of full-time volunteering opportunities. Ensuring the quality of these programmes is critical as is tackling local public policy challenges. Some focus on a single issue, others target a specific group of young people, some programmes have just been incubated, while others have long been established.
Back in 2009 we asked ourselves what more can we do to build young people’s influence within public services whilst at the same time uncovering their hidden talents and improving their chances of moving into education and work? Our response was to devise a year-long full-time volunteering programme for 16-25s that would deliver on these outcomes.

We wanted to gauge the impact of the total immersion of a cohort of young people in an organisation delivering public services. Since then we have worked with 32 local authorities, 28 FE colleges and 13 charities across England and placed over 2,500 young people at the heart of their services. We wanted to support young people, including those not suited to classroom education, to uncover their hopes and aspirations for future life and build their knowledge, skills, attitudes and networks to help them get there. Our programme combined social action, personal development, training and a recognised qualification but importantly, at the outset it gave the young person the opportunity to try out different placements to see what actually floated their boat. This approach was critical in helping those who had low opinions of themselves (many feeling hopeless about the future) to discover what they were good at and what they got enjoyment from. Then, the rest of the programme was built around that. Our ambition was not only to kick-start an organisation’s commitment to local, youth-led volunteering programmes which would enhance services and influence how they work with their service users, but to be part of the solution to the major public policy issue of high youth unemployment and the high levels of dropout from education and training.

“Between 2011-13 90% of the volunteers moved into education, training or employment on completing the programme.”

Terry Ryall, Former CEO, vInspired
vInspired is a member of Generation Change
The programme has evolved into vInspired Talent – now a six month full-time volunteering programme. vInspired Talent has a national framework with quality standards that is locally tailored to meet the needs of both the individual organisation and individual young people. Our learning over the years has improved the programme’s efficiency and effectiveness.

At entry to vInspired Talent most of the young people are not in education, employment or training and a significant number have additional disadvantages to overcome such as being a young carer, a lone parent, in care/care leaver, having a disability or low educational attainment. What they have in common though is a desire to get somewhere in life and help others while doing so. vInspired Talent helps them to realise that ambition. As well as gaining valuable experience of the workplace, the volunteers have the opportunity to lead their own social action project, tackling a local issue; the support they have from qualified workers guides their development and helps with reflection and addressing issues in their lives that could hinder progress. They also learn about important social issues and help devise solutions. Between 2011-13 90% of the volunteers moved into education, training or employment on completing the programme; the percentage of volunteers agreeing that ‘I have the skills I need to do the job I want to do’ rose from 33% to 88% during their placement; and those agreeing ‘I feel that I am part of my local community’ increased from 53% to 87%.

The programme has not only helped to address public policy issues by offering an alternative pathway into education, employment or training but has also had positive impact on local services.

"By having three v Talent year Project volunteers on board with the play service we have been able to expand our range. It has given us the capacity to explore new avenues which have enabled us to have a greater impact on a wider range of children and young people. The volunteers have achieved this by embracing a variety of working styles including facilitating consultation events in parks across Torbay." Play Work Team, Torbay Council

We were surprised to learn through our impact measurement, that despite the drop in public sector job opportunities in recent years, 13% of the programme volunteers are still employed by their original host organisation 30 months after programme completion.

The impact of this programme has convinced me that so many more young people and services could benefit from the uniqueness of a high quality full-time volunteering offer. Even more so for those young people that need that extra bit of dedicated support to get them to where they want to be.
Creating the next generation of social leaders

Adam O’Boyle, Executive Director, Hub Ventures and Co-Chair of Generation Change

“After completing a Maths degree at Cambridge I knew that what I really wanted to do was to apply my skills to a cause that I cared about.”

Jon Whitehead

Last year, Dame Mary Marsh produced her Leading Social review. It highlighted the difficulty of getting a start in the social sector due to a combination of factors including a lack of clear entry routes, the importance of cultivating aspiring leaders and encouraging leadership development at a younger age.

Worthwhile’s mission is to tackle this issue and create the conditions for bright young people to do their best work in social impact. The private sector figured out years ago that getting curious, driven young people through the door of their organisations was one of the best things they could do to enable growth. At Student Hubs we have drawn particular inspiration from the US VISTA Americorps model to create Worthwhile. Furthermore, over the last three years we have taken on 32 graduates as volunteers hosted by a variety of local charities.

Student Hubs, a UK charity supporting students to shape a better world, spearheaded this practice, and has almost trebled in size and impact thanks to the ambition and innovation of the graduates who have developed professionally within the organisation – during their graduate year and afterwards, as full-time members of staff. We know from experience the value these people bring to an organisation, both immediately, and over the course of their careers. We want to enable more small charities to realise the benefits of working with great young people.
There are three groups we see as benefitting from Worthwhile programmes. First of all, there are thousands of young people today looking to build a career in social impact, but unable to find an entry point, or unsupported in trying to find a career that will work for them sustainably, Worthwhile proactively helps these people to launch their careers by providing a clear entry point into the not-for-profit sector, and offering a combination of meaningful experience and high quality training and mentoring to help them succeed.

As valued members of a not-for-profit organisation, the graduates take ownership of a social problem and innovate to find a solution. This develops a range of skills and strong focus within the programme on creating social impact. We firmly believe young professionals are capable of doing amazing things in the workplace, if given the opportunity and the right support.

Jon Whitehead was a student leader at Cambridge Hub, one of Student Hubs’ 9 university Hubs in the UK. Having got a taste for his power and potential to shape a better world, he became a Full-time Worthwhile graduate in 2012. He explains “After completing a Maths degree at Cambridge I knew that what I really wanted to do was to apply my skills to a cause that I cared about. I was given the task of re-visioning Student Hubs’ digital presence: so far, this has meant building 10 new websites to support student-powered social change.”

We aim to help not-for-profit organisations tap into the wealth of creativity, dedication and capability that sits with young people. By providing the appropriate support mechanisms, we will help not-for-profit organisations attract more young people and help them realise their fullest potential for mutual benefit.

“Access to a diverse range of third sector expertise and experience has been particularly rewarding to me while on the Worthwhile graduate scheme. I was placed with the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust to run the national campaign Students Against Depression, I am frequently able to ask for and benefit from the advice of Worthwhile colleagues around the UK. This learning and training- in web design, branding and engagement, impact analysis and the recruitment of student volunteers- has been a great aid to both my organisation and to my own development as an individual hoping to make a career in the third sector.” Richard Keen, Worthwhile graduate 2013

To help ensure that this option is accessible to all graduates so they can commit to a year of volunteering, we provide accommodation and cover expenses (typically up to £250 per month). For those in London we also provide a travel card.

Finally, we are convinced that by supporting individuals and organisations in the right way we can help them achieve their personal social action mission, and all the positive impact for society at large that that entails. At a fundamental level, we believe we will create a better society sooner if we can engage the best young minds we have in innovating to solve our problems today.
Year Here: frontline immersion

Jack Graham, Founder, Year Here

Year Here is a member of Generation Change.

“Over time, the needs of the people you serve become your stake in the challenges of our time.”

President Obama

In the run-up to the 2008 US presidential elections, The Economist’s polling revealed an interesting difference in the public’s opinion of the two candidates. Over a third of voters strongly agreed that “Barack Obama understands people like me” while fewer than one in six strongly agreed with the same statement about John McCain.

According to the poll, Obama’s empathy was one of his biggest strengths. Perhaps it even won him the election. It’s no surprise; he spent his first two years out of college working as a Community Organiser in Chicago’s impoverished Southside, helping communities defend their rights, gather resources and build hopeful futures. Empathy was woven into Obama’s character at a formative time in his life.

Sadly, President Obama’s story is rare among political leaders in the States and at home. The absence of frontline experience from many of the CVs of those who are charged with designing policies and services for the rest of society will not lead to the social solutions we need.

I believe that changing the national norms about service can remedy the situation. Service is a means with multiple ends – including
Alongside service and personal development, we support Fellows to learn the tools and mindset of social innovation, in partnership with Citizens UK, Teach First, New Philanthropy Capital, Institute for Government and many others – getting to grips with business model development, design-thinking and impact strategies. Fellows take part in six immersive learning weeks, known as ‘Bootcamps’, hear from over 40 external speakers and benefit from monthly mentoring from leading policy-makers and social entrepreneurs.

We believe that service is critical to leadership development because, above all, it obliterates the concepts of ‘them’ and ‘us’. With service at the heart of Year Here, we aim to nurture leaders who are deeply connected to their fellow citizen and concerned for their wellbeing and prosperity. In President Obama’s words, “over time, the needs of the people you serve become your stake in the challenges of our time.”

social mixing and community cohesion, individual employability benefits and direct impact on our biggest public policy challenges – but until it becomes an integral part of the way we develop our social and political leaders, we won’t maximise its impact.

At Year Here, we believe that volunteering on the frontline, in institutions that support, educate or empower those who are at the margins of society, can help ambitious young people develop the insight and legitimacy that some of our leaders arguably lack.

Year Here is a leadership programme that challenges bright young Britons to a year of tackling society’s toughest problems in their own back yard. Year Here ‘Fellows’ serve at the frontline, learn from the leading lights of social innovation and lead their own creative and entrepreneurial projects. We exist to create better leaders for a better society. We do this by coupling human-level insight into challenging social issues with an ambitious culture and rigorous learning programme.

For the first half of the programme, Fellows serve in shelters for the homeless, care homes and youth clubs tackling big issues like elderly isolation and educational disadvantage hands on. This becomes a rich source of inspiration and sparks ideas for change that they use to develop an innovation project in their placements. Later, Fellows work in groups to launch social enterprises, with support from IDEO, FutureGov and Emerge Venture Lab, and deliver projects for national social sector clients.

We recognise that immersing oneself in the human realities of drug abuse, mental illness or family breakdown is hard. Being confronted with death, madness, loneliness and injustice can bring up deep-rooted fears and prompt the most profound kind of self-reflection. Through regular coaching and action learning sets, we ensure that this process is a positive, developmental one for our Fellows and the people they support.
A year of supporting others

“The New Economics Foundation found that reciprocity and giving back to others promotes wellbeing for all ages.”

Over 50 years ago, CSV pioneered the development of full-time volunteering opportunities for young people particularly within health and care settings. Our work has informed the development of health and social care policy and practise in many critical areas, including independent living for disabled people, and the role of volunteers within health and social care.

CSV full-time volunteering offers young people the opportunity to develop skills, networks, confidence, and character through challenging yet rewarding placements with individuals and families, disabled students, professional service providers and public services/educational establishments. They also lead, encourage and facilitate other young people to engage in volunteering in their local communities.

Young people can volunteer at home or away from home through CSV. Young people aged 18+ are matched by CSV to UK based social action projects across the UK for 6 months to a year, giving up to 35 hours of their time in voluntary activity per week. They will support individuals with a range of support needs within their own home and local community to live independently; provide respite for carers; help families that need that bit extra; support young people within schools around citizenship; mentor young people at risk of exclusion. 70% of volunteers said they engaged with the programme to be challenged, and 93% confirmed that they were. 94% would recommend this programme to others, with 63% gaining their own independent living skills.

Lucy de Groot, CEO, CSV
In addition, CSV Full-Time Volunteering – At Home has engaged 600+ young people in the past three years in social action and volunteering within their local communities. A team of local Full-Time Volunteers recruit, train and support young Volunteer Mentors to lead on community activities involving more young people from peer groups and schools, galvanising volunteering for generations of young people.

Full-time volunteering can powerfully support the efforts of other volunteers. Social actions include conservation days, volunteering at after school clubs, Conflict Resolution workshops for peers, and fundraising events for local charities.

Full-time volunteering reduces dependence on traditional services, reduces social isolation, provides personalised support, and increases choice and control for individuals with health and social care needs, and promotes intergenerational understanding.

"Before I started I had no idea about the complexity of some people’s lives and the many conditions and issues people are coping with. It’s definitely made me less judgemental and more confident in my abilities. I’ve found volunteering hugely rewarding because I get to see the impact that I make on a daily basis." Louise, 22 (Full-Time Volunteer – Away from Home)

The health, social, and economic inclusion benefits of volunteering are widely evidenced – both for the volunteer and the person with whom they are volunteering. CSV’s Full-time programmes have consistently demonstrated the positive impact on young people in their personal and career development, health, and social inclusion; and individuals with whom they volunteer in improving their health and wellbeing through personalised, holistic approaches to their support, choice and control.

The 2013 King’s Fund Report Volunteering in Health and Care found that support provided by volunteers and peer mentors is of particular value to those who rely most heavily on services. CSV’s own research found it was more likely to have a positive outcome due to the informal nature of the relationship and the responsibility it gives the person being supported for their own recovery, as well as encouraging community and peer responsibility.

In a 2013 customer survey, 79% of individuals supported felt that as a result of having CSV Full-time Volunteers they were actively more engaged within their community and 78% reported that their wellbeing had improved. Volunteering is an effective route into employment – a 2013 evaluation of the CSV Full-Time Volunteering programme found that over 93% of young volunteers went onto education, employment, training or further volunteering. Early access to volunteering embeds the spirit of social action into the young person’s life journey – 79% of young people on CSV’s Full-Time Volunteering At Home programme stated that they would volunteer again.

CSV continues to be committed to securing investment in a strategic approach to involving young people in volunteering and social action in the health and social care economy through robust infrastructure, quality opportunities, and consultation with young people themselves. We will support this through our role as a Strategic Partner of Department of Health, our pledges to the Step Up To Serve campaign, our role as the secretariat for the Network of National Volunteer-Involving Agencies (NNVIA), and our work with the Think Local Act Personal partnership, amongst other key national and international volunteering, health and social care networks.
“...young people are able to actively participate in solving the problems facing society and the world; fostering friendships and solidarity that transcend borders and socio-economic barriers. These skills not only develop robust characteristics rooted in the complexities of human relationships, but they build better employment chances.”

Steve Holliday, CEO, National Grid
CHAPTER 6

Harnessing potential: the payback of service

By supporting full-time volunteering, funders and employers are able to see firsthand the impact young people can make and also the payback to UK plc.

In this chapter National Grid and NESTA explain their experience and perspectives.
The payback for business: the richest talent pool going

“...It’s without doubt that our ability to hire the 21st century workforce will, in part, come from young minds active in and affected by programmes like City Year.”

Does a full-time year of volunteering create considerable benefits for government and employers? There are two words in this question that I’d like to unpack: full-time and considerable. Business and government need to truly appreciate the critical role time plays in enabling holistic change. Sustainable behaviour change does not happen overnight. Time is needed to understand the immediate and latent effects of our actions.

Steve Holliday, CEO, National Grid

A full-time social action programme allows room to identify aims, the talent needed to make those aims a reality, and the time needed to empower people to take action. This builds individual character; helping our future generation understand the purpose of hard work and perseverance, alongside tolerance for universal access to education and the need to eliminate gender disparity. Feeding this into the values and culture of business builds, over time, a business that is a reflection of society in its truest sense. And has considerable benefits – a payback that spans any industry and any sector.
Social action programmes foster active members of society working towards a common goal which, sadly, is rather unique. Our youth today face the challenge of identifying how they can contribute to the bigger picture while battling against the call to be part of the mainstream – to follow the crowd, to be one of the many, to lead with apathy.

Social action programmes offer a space and structure for this to be challenged. It’s in these programmes that young people are able to actively participate in solving the problems facing society and the world, fostering friendships and solidarity that transcend borders and socio-economic barriers. These skills not only develop robust characteristics rooted in the complexities of human relationships, but they build better employment chances. And because of this are key to contributing to the economy, rather than subtracting from it. Moreover, they build community cohesion - nurturing ties that serve as a safeguard against the collective psychologies of hatred and prejudice.

It’s without doubt that our ability to hire the 21st century workforce will, in part, come from young minds active in and affected by programmes like City Year. City Year Corps Members offer us a strong pool of candidates – they’ve worked in teams, followed direction, acted professionally and demonstrated a willingness to work hard and create a result. They also have greater confidence and elevated communication and problem solving skills; characteristics that any employer will jump at the chance of having.

As Marcy Reed, President of our Massachusetts jurisdiction says, “These are the type of people we are looking to hire.” Social action programmes also narrow the gap between education and work. We believe it’s vital for businesses to play an active role in providing real insights into the breadth of opportunities available in the world of work, enabling closer alignment between young people’s aspirations and future opportunities. Our National Grid City Year teams in both the UK and US experience this in a number of different ways, mentoring corps members being one. Through City Year we’re able to develop our own skills, skills that are often outside our day to day activities which cultivates a stronger business that becomes a more attractive place to work. It’s a win – win.

The payback from social action programmes is clear: Government gains bright, active, conscious and creative young minds working in unison to better the lives of others and from this, business has one of the richest and exciting talent pools going. But it will take time, which needs commitment, and commitment needs passion. I urge business and party leaders to act on this passion and help create sustainable change that will support social action long into the future, creating global citizens active in our local communities and businesses. Together, we can create a real step change.
“...at King’s College Hospital doctors helped determine how volunteers could best help.”

People helping people. Social action. Volunteering. Whatever you choose to call it, when people are in need, others are often willing to help.

And given that people are volunteering to help others, it’s also no surprise that we’re seeing some exciting innovation in this space. Through the Centre for Social Action Innovation Fund we have now looked at over 1300 programmes and a few common themes have emerged. The innovations we have seen are positioning volunteers as key figures in more places, in different types of roles and with a greater focus on impact.

More places: Volunteering is becoming increasingly common across a wide range of institutions, from parks to schools and prisons to hospitals. Beyond institutions, social action now takes place in people’s homes, online, and literally on the street between neighbours. For instance, traditionally hospital volunteers worked in the hospital shop or reception, but at King’s College Hospital doctors helped determine how volunteers could best help. Now volunteers are brought on to the wards to help improve patient outcomes – for example, by playing reminiscence games with patients suffering from dementia.

Lindsay Levkoff Lynn, Head of Impact, NESTA
The next innovation will be to spread service year volunteer capacity into new areas. While City Year UK focuses on education, we could expand the concept to focus on other challenges—such as the increasing burden of delivering social care for the elderly. Isolated older people could receive the support they need and at the same time, volunteers would gain skills, experience and knowledge of an important social issue that they may choose to engage with for the rest of their lives.

We have seen from programmes elsewhere that the double benefit that can come from a full-time year of service is great. We also know that the many innovations that we have seen in the location and type of volunteering roles have led to an increase in the impact that we as a society can have on our most pressing social challenges. As a result, I expect that, as with City Year UK, one “space to watch” in volunteering innovations is with those programmes that are looking to drive full-time and longer-term service in the UK.

Different roles: There is an important distinction between the role of paid professionals and volunteers, but that hasn’t prevented the creative use of volunteers to improve outcomes for people and communities. In the US, one of the most innovative new solutions involving volunteers in new places is FEMA Corps, a programme where 1,600 young volunteers devote a year to hands-on disaster response in communities all around the country—both improving the quality of support and saving an estimated $60M per year.

Greater focus on impact: Human capacity and generosity is a resource like any other. The most enterprising and successful volunteering organisations create opportunities for both their volunteers and beneficiaries to achieve a positive and sustainable impact. A great example of this double benefit model is Street Doctors which helps young offenders turn their lives around by working with volunteer medical students who are given the opportunity to teach and practice their life-saving first aid skills. In this case both the young offenders and doctors learn and grow.

One particularly exciting innovation that has combined all three of these innovations is the idea of a “full-time year of service.” Full-time service years have already flourished in the US and taken root in many other countries, including Canada and Germany. In recent years, we have also seen them come to the UK in the form of City Year, Worthwhile, vInspired Talent and several other exciting and growing programmes.
“...we must not lose sight of... [the] question... what type of society do we want to build?”

Sonia Sodha, City Year UK Trustee and author of the 2010 Demos report ‘Service Nation’
CONCLUSION

Service Nation five years on

Sonia Sodha, a Trustee of City Year UK and author of the 2010 Demos report ‘Service Nation’ outlines her reflections on the UK context five years on from the seminal publication co-authored with Dan Leighton.
Almost exactly five years ago, in the run up to the last general election, the idea of youth citizen service was sparking great political interest, with the main political parties making youth volunteering and social action an important part of their manifestos. At the think tank Demos, where I was working at the time, we were just embarking on a new research project to look at how to create a vibrant culture of youth citizen service in the UK.

Five years later, there has been significant progress. The Prime Minister commissioned Dame Julia Cleverdon and Amanda Jordan OBE to conduct an independent review into how to create a ‘decade’ of social action for young people aged 10 to 20, leading to the launch of the Step Up To Serve Campaign, and the Government has launched National Citizen Service (NCS). This scheme, which supports 16-year-olds to contribute to their communities through social action projects, is scaling substantially. In addition, full-time voluntary service programmes like City Year UK have become part of the landscape thanks to strong philanthropic support.

The foundations have been laid to enable a generation to serve their communities and to benefit from the rich experience, self-development and personal growth which volunteering can offer. However, to truly unlock young people’s potential through voluntary service, we must offer in parallel with their formal education journey, progressive structured volunteering opportunities to every young person. A full-time voluntary service year should be the culmination of this journey.

It is imperative we do not lose momentum as we approach the election next year. The political agenda so far has been dominated by economic issues: growth, the cost of living and long-term economic reform. This debate is of course critical to how Britain will prosper as a nation. But we must not lose sight of a question that is equally as important: what type of society do we want to build?

The essays in this collection illustrate the impact that greater youth engagement in social action could have. This is an agenda about building all young people’s skills and resilience, regardless of whether they’ve been identified as high flyers, or written off by the education system. It’s also about helping to equip them for the more complex careers of the future and it has the additional potential to build a stronger social fabric.
Volunteering helps to create lasting and meaningful connections, offering a common ‘space’ where young people from different backgrounds and geographies can come together and change the way that people from different generations relate to each other. It is an agenda that could transform the face of our schools, hospitals and care homes, making them more human, and energising them with the passion and drive of young people.

To make this a reality however, we need politicians to be as focused on the challenge as they were going into the 2010 election. In particular, although there have been real developments in encouraging young people to contribute through social action projects while they are at school — for example through NCS and the curriculum — the development of a full-time service year offer through schemes like City Year UK is still in its nascent stages, available to a fraction of the young people who we believe would take them up were they more widely available. This is limiting the potential of youth social action: its full benefits cannot be realised without there being more full-time service opportunities for young people who want to serve.

At City Year UK, we want to see a bigger range of youth organisations delivering more service year opportunities for young people, working in partnership with local services — not just schools, but also our hospitals, care homes and children’s services. To create a flourishing service sector, government needs to commit to delivering an infrastructure for service years, in the same way that there is for businesses offering apprenticeships. To do this would require:

1. **Recognition and support.** The status of young people making a year-long, full-time contribution to their communities needs to be recognised. There has long been an aspiration that all young people should either be in education, training or work. Emerging independent evidence, for example from the Institute for Volunteering Research, shows that undertaking a service year offers young people the opportunity to develop the practical and applied skills like team-working and problem-solving so valued by employers. Learning through serving should be recognised as an important and valuable route for young people to develop themselves into the citizens and leaders of tomorrow. This is partly about the status of service years as a pathway for young people — they are not yet recognised as such by careers services, job centres, businesses and universities. It is also, however about financial support: for example, young people undertaking service are not currently allowed to claim JSA, but is there another form of financial support that could be made available to young people voluntarily contributing to society in this way? In addition, a proportion of university student loans could be written off in return for a year of service, as Shirley Sagawa’s essay demonstrates is the case in the US.

2. **Cross sector investment in scale.** Calling for financial support is obviously difficult given the existing fiscal climate. However, if we are to maximise the potential of young people’s voluntary contribution, some financial support will be required to create the quality and quantity of opportunities. City Year UK currently funds service years through a mixture of contributions from businesses, foundations and from the schools that benefit from the scheme. These are critical: local services should be contributing because of the benefit they gain; and businesses are starting to step up as they see the payback from providing service year opportunities to future potential employees. Yet service years will not be able to scale much further without some degree of government support. Given the impact undertaking high-quality structured service schemes can have on young people’s development, it is right that government makes a contribution in the same way it does to apprenticeships and other forms of further learning. Perhaps, a way forward could be on the basis of a third from government; a third from local services, and a third from business partnerships. In this way, government investment can be used to leverage further funding from business.

3. **Quality safeguards.** As service years expand and attract more support from local services, from businesses, and hopefully from central government, it is critical that the ‘double benefit’ of service years — the impact on both young people’s skills and development and on local services and communities — is protected via strong quality safeguards. A set of principles for delivery alongside a focus on strong double benefit outcomes is essential. The youth social action coalition, Generation Change, is working with Step Up To Serve and the Cabinet Office to develop a quality framework for youth social action based on double benefit outcomes. This will bring together learning from the Cabinet Office’s youth social action trials programme, existing expertise on evaluating programme outcomes, and knowledge in the business and education sector about the kind of high quality experiences that help young people succeed in life.

Support from central government should be contingent on a demonstrable impact on outcomes for the young people taking part. And support from local services will be contingent on a demonstrable impact on the outcomes the services themselves achieve, as we are already finding at City Year UK where schools are renewing contracts as a result of the impact they see our teams of young people having on the aspirations and achievement of their pupils.

If we get it right, youth citizen service has the potential to transform our society, helping to create the collaborative and kind public services David Robinson has written about here. It will help us create more integrated communities as outlined by both Matthew Taylor and David Skelton. It will help tackle the stubborn issue of youth unemployment as set out by Vivian Hunt, by creating the exciting talent pipeline National Grid believes it is generating through its involvement in City Year. It can help rebuild the civic trust Dr Anthony Seldon feels we have lost. But most importantly, it will show young people how they are the solution to some of the big social challenges facing us as a country.

When he addressed City Year at its 25th anniversary celebration this year in the US, President Bill Clinton spoke about how — as he began his journey to the White House almost 25 years ago — he saw the potential of citizen service to change humanity for the better when he visited City Year, and how he, and the Presidents that have followed him, have made realising that potential their mission. We hope our vision for youth service in Britain will excite and inspire politicians here in the same way it has done for the thousands of British young people who’ve taken part in City Year UK, NCS, vInspired Talent and others in the last five years.
Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the contributors who have spent time writing their essays. Their time, efforts and commitment to shining light on the shared consensus on this issue are greatly appreciated.

Thanks to Fiona Murray for the original idea to create this publication, for steering the content creation and gathering together the contributions.

Without Charlotte Gerada and Rosie Davey this publication would not have reached completion. Their considerable efforts in supporting with, designing and editing the publication are very greatly appreciated. And finally, very many thanks to Albert Samuels a.samuels@windfalldesign.com for his patience with this complex publication and his excellent design for this set of essays.

Finally thank you to the leadership teams of City Year UK and US, in particular Sophie Livingstone, CEO City Year UK for advising and supporting the project and AnnMaura Connolly, Chief Strategy Officer and Executive Vice President City Year, Inc. for collating all the US contributions and for her continued advice, support and wisdom.

The views in these essays are those of the individuals, not those of City Year UK.