BUILDING CHARACTER
THROUGH YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION
RESEARCH REPORT

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The University of Birmingham is a top ranking British University. Founded in 1900, it was England's first civic University and was ranked University of the Year 2013-14 by The Times and The Sunday Times.

The original Department of Education was founded in 1894 and became the School of Education in 1947. Ranked in the top 50 Schools of Education in the world today, it has a long-standing reputation as a centre of excellence for teaching and research in a wide range of areas of educational practice and policy, with fields of expertise including: disability, inclusion and special needs; education and social justice; and professional education.

Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues is a unique and leading centre for the examination of how character and virtues impact on individuals and society. The Centre was founded in 2012 by Professor James Arthur. Based at the University of Birmingham, it has a dedicated team of 30 academics from a range of disciplines: philosophy, psychology, education, theology and sociology.

With its focus on excellence, the Centre has a robust and rigorous research and evidence-based approach that is objective and non-political. It offers world class research on the importance of developing good character and virtues and the benefits they bring to individuals and society. In undertaking its own innovative research, the Centre also seeks to partner with leading academics from other universities around the world and to develop strong strategic partnerships.

A key conviction underlying the existence of the Centre is that the virtues that make up good character can be learnt and taught. We believe these have largely been neglected in schools and in the professions. It is also a key conviction that the more people exhibit good character and virtues, the healthier our society. As such, the Centre undertakes development projects seeking to promote the practical applications of its research evidence.

Building Character
Through Youth Social Action
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'ONLY A LIFE LIVED IN THE SERVICE TO OTHERS IS WORTH LIVING.'

Albert Einstein

Executive Summary

Youth social action is practical action in the service of others to create positive change. Social action is seen as an important mechanism for young people to develop and express their character while benefitting others. The research reported on here explores how youth social action providers aim to build young people's character.

The research was led by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (Jubilee Centre) and conducted in collaboration with Step Up To Serve[1] and youth social action providers. The total number of young people engaged in programmes run by the providers involved in this research is over one million.[2]

This research demonstrates the significant, positive impact that providers believe social action has on a young person's character, and in turn the impact of that character development on young people and society. This research shows that the subject of character is both topical and increasingly debated, and that youth social action providers engage in this debate.

The main findings from this research are:
- 87% of interviewees said that developing young people's character is fundamental to their organisation's work. Over half said it is their top priority.
- Young people develop a broad range of virtues through social action. However, youth social action providers and young people participating in their programmes do not necessarily prioritise the same virtues. In interviews, providers say they are developing virtues that they are not communicating overtly – moral virtues in particular.
- Character developed through social action can benefit both the individual and society, and some prioritise the benefits to the individual over the (often) immediate benefits to the community.
- Generally providers are unsure how to measure the development of moral virtues, though these are considered to be an important outcome of youth social action.

Based on these findings, this report concludes with some recommendations for consideration by practitioners, policy-makers and researchers interested in youth social action:
- Young people should be supported to reflect holistically on all the ways in which they develop character, including through social action.
- Providers aim to develop a variety of virtues in young people, and should communicate that aim, not neglecting their intended impact on moral virtues. Providers should be supported, and support each other, to find successful, cost-effective and efficient ways to measure the impact of social action on young people's character in a holistic sense.
- Youth social action has a transformative effect on young people's character, and in turn character development benefits both the individual and society, and therefore should be considered in any approach to measuring the individual and community/societal outcomes of social action.

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[1]   Step Up To Serve is a small charity that coordinates the #iwill campaign, which aims to make participation in meaningful social action the norm for young people by 2020.

[2]   According to self-reported data from 16 of the providers involved in this study who submitted figures to Step Up To Serve about the number of young people with whom they worked between September 2013 and November 2014. It is important to note that this figure is a rough estimate: providers likely used different means of data collection; it does not take into account the seven organisations who did not submit data; and it does not account for overlap (young people who are involved in more than one programme).

1 Purpose of the Report

This report is the culmination of research carried out between March-December 2014 with youth social action providers and young people.

The purpose of the report is to explore the link between character, virtues and youth social action. Through textual analysis of youth social action providers' websites and communications, interviews with senior leaders of these providers, as well as young people who experience their programmes, this research aimed at a better understanding of the link between character development and youth social action.

This research has been undertaken with considerable input from interested stakeholders since its inception – in particular, members of Step Up To Serve's cross-sector Data and Quality Assurance group and the sub-group on character. These groups have provided invaluable advice in shaping this project. In addition, the initial findings from this research were presented at a consultation held at St George's House, Windsor, in September 2014 (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2014a). Representatives from government departments, education, academia, and the voluntary and corporate sectors participated and their comments have also informed this report.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study sought to address the following five research questions, from the perspective of a sample of youth social action providers and young people taking part in social action:

RQ1: How is 'character' currently conceptualised, and how important is it?

RQ2: Which virtues do young people develop through social action?

RQ3: In what ways is character developed through youth social action?

RQ4: Does character developed through participating in formal social action opportunities benefit the young person, society, or both?

RQ5: Can character development be measured? If so, are providers measuring it? How? If not, why not?

This report provides an account of the methods employed in conducting this study, those used in its evaluation, the findings and our interpretation of those findings. Henceforth, youth social action providers are referred to as 'providers', individuals interviewed are referred to as 'interviewees', and young people participating in the focus groups are referred to as 'young people'.

> 'PEOPLE GROW THROUGH EXPERIENCE IF THEY MEET LIFE HONESTLY AND COURAGEOUSLY. THIS IS HOW CHARACTER IS BUILT.'
>
> **Eleanor Roosevelt**

2 **Background**

2.1 CHARACTER AND VIRTUE

Human flourishing is the widely accepted goal of life. To flourish is not only to feel happy, but to fulfil one's potential. Human flourishing requires moral, intellectual and civic virtues, excellences specific to diverse domains of practice or human endeavour, and generic virtues of self-management, known as performance virtues (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2013a). All are necessary to achieve the highest potential in life, and all are part of good character. The Jubilee Centre defines character as a set of personal virtues that produce specific moral emotions, inform motivation and guide conduct (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2013b). 'Virtue' is originally the translation of the Greek term 'arête' which simply means 'a positive trait of character'. 'Virtue' developed a more restrictive meaning in English in Victorian times; we revert to its original meaning. Hence, character can be seen as an umbrella term for virtues. Although virtues can be divided into different categories, together they form a coherent, mutually-supportive whole in a well-rounded life. The virtues examined in this study are divided into four, fluid categories. These are:

- Civic virtues: necessary for engaged and responsible citizenship – *e.g. volunteering, service*.
- Intellectual virtues: required for the pursuit of knowledge, truth and understanding – *e.g. reflection, communication*.
- Moral virtues: enable us to respond well to situations in any area of experience – *e.g. compassion, trust*.
- Performance virtues: behavioural skills and psychological capacities that enable us to put many other virtues into practice – *e.g. leadership, resilience, perseverance and determination*.

Although all virtues incorporate many elements (of attention, desire, motivation, emotion, action and style), in some virtues the emotional part dominates (for example in compassion), while in others the action part is more prominent (for example, service). Good sense, our rendering of

the Aristotelian meta-virtue of *phronesis*, is knowing what to want, feel and do when the demands of two or more virtues collide. *Phronesis* cannot be taught directly but develops gradually through the merging of experience and learning; adolescence is a crucial period of development.

Drawing on the Aristotelian-inspired philosophy of virtue ethics, we use the terms 'character' and 'virtue' in this report because we believe them to be conceptually sound and therefore useful for describing how character might be developed through youth social action. We understand, however, and the research in this report also demonstrates, that these terms are not necessarily used by the youth social action providers or young people participating in this study. The research also shows that there seems to be a semantic – though not substantive – dislocation between perceptions of character and virtue by those invested in young people's development.

2.2 POLICY

Strong interest in character has come from across government and opposition in recent years. Throughout the term of the 2010–2015 coalition government, several Ministers and Shadow Ministers have stressed the importance of character and its development through youth social action, and in 2014 the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Social Mobility published a manifesto on character and 'extra-curricular activities' (Paterson, Tyler and Lexmond, 2014).

The Department for Education also announced investment in character education in 2015, identifying a range of 'character traits, attributes and behaviours' which it believes to be important, including many of the virtues explored in this study as well as others such as grit, neighbourliness and integrity (Education Endowment Foundation, 2014).

2.3 RESEARCH INTO CHARACTER AND YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION

There are a number of outcomes frameworks in the youth sector focusing on character, though most do not use that term. The most relevant report to this study is the Young Foundation's *Framework of outcomes for young people* (McNeil, Reeder and Rich, 2012). This highlights the importance of 'social and emotional capabilities' to the achievement of all other outcomes for all young people, identifying seven clusters of 'capabilities' – such as communication, and resilience and determination – and setting out measurement tools. Aimed at all providers of young people's services (including schools, youth workers, charities, funders, and commissioners), this report significantly influenced the youth social action sector in forming the basis of the double benefit model (Figure 2: The double benefit of youth social action (The Campaign for Youth Social Action, 2013: 23)) and has in turn informed some providers' own theories of change and measurement approaches.

Work to show a link between social action and developing character has been conducted by multiple organisations, including in the corporate sector (CIPD, 2013). Much of the focus has been on performance virtues, often considered to be most related to employability, and self-reporting measurement tools. There are examples of studies exploring the impact of social action on moral virtues such as hope and optimism (Morsillo and Prilleltensky, 2007), but these are less common.

The Cabinet Office has invested significantly in exploring the link between character development and youth social action. The recently published interim evaluation by the Behavioural Insights Team, which ran Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) of selected programmes funded by the Cabinet Office's Youth Social Action Fund, provides 'robust evidence that young people who take part in social action initiatives develop some of the most critical skills for employment and

adulthood in the process' (Kirkman, Sanders and Emanuel, 2015: 3), including empathy, problem-solving, grit and resilience, cooperation and a sense of community. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and the Cabinet Office are also supporting trials to build evidence of the link between social action, character development and attainment, and further evidence on the impact of other programmes which are part of the Youth Social Action Fund is currently being evaluated. In addition, through the Youth Social Action Journey Fund the Cabinet Office aims to capture the impact of youth social action on young people's development.[3] The Cabinet Office's 'Skills for Life and Work' initiative and start-up funding for the Centre for Youth Impact aims to bring together organisations working with and for young people to measure and increase the impact of their services, including around character. In addition, the recent research commissioned by the Early Intervention Foundation, the Cabinet Office and the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission on social and emotional learning 'indicates strongly that the social and emotional skills measured at age 10 turned out to be important signals of a flourishing or struggling child' (Feinstein, 2015).

The importance of social action in building character is well recognised in the education sector, with most young people getting involved in social action through school or college (Pye and Stobart, 2014). Literature reviews from the University of Chicago (Farrington et al., 2012) and the EEF (Morrison Gutman and Schoon, 2013) have explored the link between character development and educational attainment, and recent guidance from Ofsted, though it does not reference 'character', promotes social action as a way to build confidence, leadership and resilience. This recognition also extends to the Higher Education sector. In its guidance to university applicants, UCAS recognises that 'volunteering' experience is relevant to include in personal statements and, though it does not refer to character, it does recommend

applicants to give examples of their 'skills', 'qualities' and 'attributes'. It plans to refine this guidance in 2015 to include more on social action more widely (UCAS, 2014).

Those in higher education and the voluntary sector have produced a substantial body of research in this area. To give some examples from 2014 alone, the O2 Think Big evaluation (Chapman, 2014) showed that young people develop confidence, resilience and problem-solving through the Think Big programme; Demos' Scouting for Skills (Birdwell and Wybron, 2014) found that Scouting can help young people build teamwork, leadership, resilience and problem-solving; and vInspired's Team v young leaders reported improvements in confidence and resilience (vInspired, 2014). Other major recent studies and literature reviews include those by Demos, (such as Birdwell and Miller (2013) and Birdwell and Birnie (2013)), the IVR (Hill, Russell, and Brewis, 2009), and impact reports from a variety of providers (such as UpRising, 2013 and Catch 22, 2014). Again, many of these studies focus on performance and intellectual rather than moral virtues. They also show that no consistent method is used by youth social action providers to measure character development, and very few have measured this robustly through RCTs or longitudinal studies. A recent Jubilee Centre study of the moral development of 14–15-year-old students in the UK is unique in that it both focuses on the moral aspects of character and employs a rigorous methodology. It demonstrates a correlation between moral development and 'charity work', although no causal links are established (Arthur et al., 2015).

The growing cross-party, cross-sector interest in this area has encouraged a national conversation in the UK about the importance of character for individual and societal flourishing. It is hoped that this study will add to and enhance this conversation and the existing body of knowledge.

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[3]   Four organisations involved in this study have received funding from the Youth Social Action Journey Fund and 10 organisations involved have received funding from the Youth Social Action Fund.

3 **Methodology**

3.1 RATIONALE

In order to answer the research questions, the research was divided into three phases:

1) Analysis of providers'
   external communications
2) Interviews with individuals from those providers
3) Focus groups with young people participating
   in social action.

The initial sample for phases 1 and 2 of this study was providers who had pledged to support #iwill[4] by the end of March 2014—25 in total.

Phase 1: Analysis of providers' external communications

From March—June 2014, the researcher studied the externals communications of these 25 providers, including:

- Websites (including homepages on 29 May 2014)
- Twitter (19—23 May 2014)
- Evaluations and impact reports
- Promotional materials
- Articles

References to 'character' and similar terms were recorded on an Excel spreadsheet, as well as references to 44 virtues. These 44 virtues had been pre-identified from relevant sources[5], but as the investigation progressed, other virtues commonly used by providers were also added, and terms that were not used by providers were removed. This list of virtues was subsequently revised down to 31.[6]

Next, the researcher calculated the total number of references to each of these virtues. The researcher wrote a short report of the findings for each provider and sent a one-page slide showing all of the virtues examined and their different categories to each interviewee,

highlighting those virtues that were found referenced in their organisation's external communications.[7]

Phase 2: Interviews with providers

In May 2014, the CEO of Step Up To Serve invited the CEOs of the 25 providers involved in phase 1 to participate in an interview with the researcher on the subject of character and virtues, of which 21 agreed to participate. Two pilot interviews were set up in June 2014 and the following 19 providers were interviewed in June and July 2014.

After these interviews had been scheduled, the research team recognised that providers working solely in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales were not represented in the sample. As such, a number of providers from these countries were invited to participate, though they had not at that point pledged to support the campaign. Interviews were subsequently arranged with two additional providers, one each from Northern Ireland and Scotland. Phase 1 research was subsequently conducted for these two providers and interviews for phase 2 took place in July 2014. The total number of providers interviewed was therefore increased to 23. The findings from phase 1 are for these 23 providers only, not the 25 originally included in the sample.[8]

Where interviews took place with more than one staff member from a provider, comments from these individuals are merged and referred to as the 'interviewee'.

Two interviews took place by telephone, one on Skype, and the rest were face-to-face. The interviews ranged from 35—75 minutes in length (one hour on average).

Each interview was audio-recorded, resulting in over 20 hours of recorded data, and transcribed

afterwards, the majority by the researcher who conducted the interviews. After studying the transcripts carefully, the researcher initially coded responses by interview question using NVIVO, since identical or near-identical questions were asked in each interview. Next, the researcher coded the data using a grounded theory approach (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967), according to themes which emerged from each question. For example, where 'measurement' was the code, two themes which emerged were 'explicitly satisfied with current approach to measurement' and 'explicitly unsatisfied with current approach to measurement'. In addition, the researcher coded each virtue individually.

Phase 3: Focus groups with young people

In September 2014, the researcher held two focus group sessions with 23 young people in total aged 12—20 in Birmingham and London, each lasting 45 minutes.[9]

Participants in the Birmingham focus group were chosen on the basis of their attendance at a youth social action event at the University of Birmingham. The focus group took place after this event. Three chaperones stayed in the room for the duration, and two additional Jubilee Centre staff members helped to facilitate the session.

To recruit participants for the London focus group, the researcher emailed interviewees who had offered to invite young people involved in their programmes to participate in the focus groups. Each provider was asked to invite two 16—20 year olds, representative of the young people with whom they work, one male and one female (where relevant to the provider), living in London. Nine young people participated in total, with two accompanied by a chaperone from the provider. This chaperone did not stay in the room during the focus group.

The focus group sessions were also audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed by the researcher. The researcher coded the transcripts according to the discussion guide questions/activities.

3.2 LIMITATIONS

The providers only represent a sample of providers across the UK and focus only on formal, rather than informal, social action opportunities. Being already engaged with the #iwill campaign meant they were potentially more likely to be familiar with 'character' than those not involved with the campaign. Furthermore, those interviewed were mainly CEO-level and therefore may have been less likely than more junior staff to have direct experience of how young people participate in their programmes, or how programme evaluations are conducted. They were also sent documents referencing 'character' and 'virtues' prior to the interviews, possibly making

them more familiar with these concepts than they might otherwise have been.

Additionally, there were only two focus groups with young people. The nature of focus groups compared with one-to-one interviews meant that there was insufficient time to cover all of the areas discussed in the interviews in the focus groups, so certain areas had to be prioritised over others. This means that young people's views are not represented in every section of this report. In addition, the focus group participants were not selected randomly, so there is a possibility of bias. In both groups there was a gender imbalance, (6 male and 17 female participants). Though the recent Cabinet Office survey indicates that girls are more likely to participate in meaningful social action than boys, the difference is not as great as this (Pye and Stobart, 2014). Finally, there are also likely to be social desirability biases inherent in both the interviews and focus groups.

3.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

For each method, ethical approval was granted by the University of Birmingham Ethics Committee. We regarded adherence to ethical considerations as essential, especially given that some of the research involved young people. A representative from a provider was required to agree to the nature of the focus groups, and consent to young people being involved. Young people also signed consent forms. Consent forms were sent a week in advance to interviewees and were signed and returned prior to or immediately following the interview. An information sheet was given to interviewees and focus group participants on the day, which they were given time to read beforehand, stressing confidentiality and their right to withdraw their information at any time during the interview/focus group, and up to a set period of time afterwards.

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[4] Step Up To Serve encourages individuals and organisations to help achieve the 2020 goal by pledging their support to the #iwill campaign.

[5] Sources included: Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues ('A Framework for Character Education in Schools' 2013a), ('Centre Overview' 2013b); Arthur (2010); McNeil, Reeder and Rich (2012); Anderson (2014); Foot (2002); Kraut (2014); Peterson and Seligman (2004).

[6] The full list of virtues examined can be found in Appendix 1. 'Social justice' was not included in the external communications analysis but was discussed in the interviews and focus groups.

[7] An example of this report can be found online.

[8] A full list of participating providers can be found on page 31.

[9] The focus group discussion guide can be found online at www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/characterandservice.

4 Findings

RQ1: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A SAMPLE OF YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION PROVIDERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE TAKING PART IN SOCIAL ACTION, HOW IS 'CHARACTER' CURRENTLY CONCEPTUALISED, AND HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?

Chart 1 shows some of the terms used by providers in their external communications when referring to young people's personal development through social action. It shows that providers do not have an alternative to the umbrella term 'character', but have many alternatives to what we would define as 'virtues'. While 'character' was cited by some providers, it was often used interchangeably with multiple other terms (five on average).

Almost half of interviewees explained that their organisation does not have a 'formal definition' of character. As such, they had not necessarily thought about its meaning until prompted in the interview and gave personal rather than organisational definitions. These responses generally focused on three themes: citizenship and helping others; actions and motivations; and personality and 'who you are', with some interviewees' definitions covering more than

one theme. Around 25% of interviewees linked character to citizenship and helping others, and included considering oneself as part of local and global communities and 'being good to each other'. In terms of actions and motivations, these definitions were more neutral: 22% of interviewees talked about character as a set of attributes or qualities that affect behaviour and choices made, though whether a person's character is good or bad depends on those choices. Finally, around a quarter of interviewees talked about character as part of personality – 'what makes you who you are' – again, a neutral definition. This third theme tallies most closely with young people's understanding of character in the focus groups, who understood it to be related to 'personal qualities' and 'individuality'.

Almost a third of providers used 'character' in their external communications. Interviewees from all but one of these providers agreed that they use 'character', and 43% of interviewees in total said they did, though half of those said they are cautious about who they use it with – so they would tend not to use it with young people, but in annual reports, internally or in conversation with a donor, for example, they might.

Only one organisation used 'virtue' in their external communications, quoting their eighteenth-century founding aim to develop 'virtuous dispositions' in young people. Instead, providers used terms such as 'values' or 'skills'. While just over a quarter of interviewees said they consider virtues to be positive – 'something to be celebrated' – the majority said they do not use 'virtue' because they think it is 'judgemental' and paternalistic, with religious and classical connotations. One interviewee described it as having Victorian connotations, echoing the way in which 'virtue' developed a more restrictive meaning in English in Victorian times. In addition, interviewees said 'virtue' is not the language of young people; in the focus groups, young people did not use 'virtue'.

Most interviewees (87%) described young people's character development as important to their organisation, and just over half said it is a top priority – 'what we're deep down about in our DNA'. Most reasons given for its importance focus on the impact of building character on young people's futures – from home, to education, to employment.

Indeed, several interviewees talked about employability unprompted, and about improving young people's employability as a key objective for their organisation – particularly those working with 14–20 year olds. For some, this is not just a 'nice to have' or a by-product, but they believe their organisation has a responsibility to develop these skills in young people.

Character was also described by two interviewees as having a positive impact on young people's behaviour towards others: 'if [people] were always developing these things, then everyone would get on'. One interviewee acknowledged that while character is important 'for us as an organisation, and conceptually, I have to be honest with you – with young people, they often start somewhere else'.

However, though the focus groups were not asked whether they prioritise character development, young people did talk about its importance and shared similar views to interviewees. One 16–20-year-old female spoke about its importance at university or work, and this link to employability was also

made by another two participants; four others (female, aged 12–20) talked about how various virtues are important in helping them to make friends and meet new people. Two participants, one male and one female, aged 16–20, talked about needing a wide range of virtues and knowing when best to employ them:

> You do need all of it, but you don't need it in vast amounts. You just need little bits for where it's needed.

> You don't use it [all] every day. So you need it but you don't have to use it all the time. So you make sure that you know everything … [but] you kind of put it in reserve in case you need it.

These comments demonstrate an understanding of the Jubilee Centre's definition of 'good sense', as defined in the Background section – the ability to know which virtues to use in a practical situation.

These findings show that providers use a variety of terms to describe what the Jubilee Centre would call 'character virtues'. It is important to note here that as the meaning of terms such as 'skills' and 'life skills' seem to coincide substantially with the meaning that theorists would want to ascribe to 'character', we can conclude that developing young people's character (on the understanding laid out in the Background section) is considered a fundamental, if not the most important, part of providers' work.

RQ2: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A SAMPLE OF YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION PROVIDERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE TAKING PART IN SOCIAL ACTION, WHICH VIRTUES DO YOUNG PEOPLE DEVELOP THROUGH SOCIAL ACTION?

External communications findings
The homepage analysis in phase 1 revealed that 13 virtues were referenced on providers' homepages on a certain date. Those used on the homepage have greater prominence than virtues found elsewhere in external communications, being more accessible to all and less likely to be directed at one particular audience.[10] The most popular were civic virtues: volunteering and community awareness were mentioned by around half the providers, followed by citizenship, confidence and leadership.

Table 1 shows the virtues referenced by providers in their external communications in

order of popularity, classified by the type of virtue. It is important to note that the classification of some virtues is context-dependent. In some contexts, for example, respect and tolerance would be more helpfully categorised as moral than intellectual virtues. Conversely, honesty can sometimes function more as an intellectual rather than a moral virtue. It complicates this classification further that some theorists consider civic virtue simply as a sub-category of moral virtues: namely, moral virtues exhibited in larger societal contexts. For the purpose of this study, we have classified the virtues accordingly.

Every provider claimed to develop confidence in young people participating in their programmes, and the majority of performance virtues examined fall in the top half of the table. By comparison, just one, a uniformed youth organisation, claimed to develop gratitude in young people, and the majority of the moral virtues fall within the bottom half of the table.

Interview findings
Table 2 (overleaf) shows the virtues referenced by interviewees when asked 'which three virtues do you prioritise developing in young people through your programmes?'.

Table 1: Virtues referenced by youth social action providers in external communications, in order of popularity.

Rank	Virtue	Type
1	Confidence	Performance
2	Leadership	Performance
	Community awareness	Civic
3	Communication	Intellectual
4	Teamwork	Performance
	Volunteering	Civic
5	Problem-solving	Performance
6	Resilience, perseverance and determination	Performance
	Creativity	Performance
	Citizenship	Civic
7	Friendliness and forming friendships	Moral
	Reflection	Intellectual
8	Cooperation	Intellectual
9	Service	Civic
10	Pride	Moral
11	Hope/optimism	Moral
	Trust	Moral
	Respect	Intellectual
12	Compassion	Moral
13	Courage	Moral
	Empathy	Moral
	Tolerance	Intellectual
14	Critical thinking, reason and judgement	Intellectual
	Open-mindedness	Intellectual
15	Honesty	Moral
16	Kindness	Moral
	Patience	Moral
17	Self-discipline	Performance
	Curiosity	Intellectual
18	Resourcefulness	Intellectual
19	Gratitude	Moral

Chart 1: Terms youth social action providers use to refer to young people's personal development.

Chart shows "No. providers referencing these terms" with values (approximate): Skills 14, Life Skills 13, Character 7, Soft Skills 6, Qualities 4, Transferable Skills 4, Competencies 3, Core Skills 3, Personal Development 3, Skills for Life and Work 3, Values 2, Capabilities 2, Capacities 2, Personal Qualities 2, Personal Skills 2.

Table 2 shows that interviewees referenced only 21 virtues in total in answer to this question, from the list of 31. They were encouraged to choose virtues from this list as well as any others they thought of as 'virtues' – 'selflessness' is the only additional virtue mentioned here.[11]

Focus group findings

Table 3 shows the virtues chosen by young people when asked to select, from the list of 31 virtues, which they think they develop through doing social action, and then rank them in order of importance as a group. It combines responses from both groups. In total, the London group chose 26 virtues and ranked them 1–10 (with more than one virtue in first place, for example), and the Birmingham group chose 20 virtues and ranked them 1–20. In this analysis, any virtues not selected by the London group but selected by the Birmingham group are ranked at 11, and any not selected by the Birmingham group but selected by the London group are ranked at 21. Where one group chose a virtue but the other did not, the position of the virtue was calculated based on the mean between the two ranks. Virtues not chosen by either group – service, social justice, volunteering, resourcefulness, and teamwork – do not appear in this table.

Table 2: Virtues prioritised by youth social action providers in interviews, in order of popularity.

Rank	Virtue	Type
1	Leadership	Performance
2	Citizenship	Civic
	Service	Civic
3	Empathy	Moral
	Teamwork	Performance
4	Confidence	Performance
	Courage	Moral
	Resilience, perseverance and determination	Performance
5	Community awareness	Civic
	Respect	Intellectual
	Communication	Intellectual
	Compassion	Moral
	Critical thinking, reason and judgement	Intellectual
	Curiosity	Intellectual
	Friendliness and forming friendships	Moral
6	Hope and optimism	Moral
	Pride	Moral
	Problem-solving	Performance
	Selflessness	Moral
	Social justice	Civic
	Volunteering	Civic

Table 3: Virtues developed through social action prioritised by young people in focus groups.

Rank	Virtue	Type
1	Confidence	Performance
2	Respect	Intellectual
3	Communication	Intellectual
4	Trust	Moral
5	Leadership	Performance
	Open-mindedness	Intellectual
6	Resilience, perseverance and determination	Performance
7	Critical thinking, reason and judgement	Intellectual
8	Curiosity	Intellectual
9	Creativity	Performance
	Self-discipline	Performance
10	Friendliness and forming friendships	Moral
11	Cooperation	Intellectual
12	Tolerance	Intellectual
13	Patience	Moral
14	Compassion	Moral
15	Empathy	Moral
16	Community awareness	Civic
	Courage	Moral
17	Honesty	Moral
18	Pride	Moral
	Kindness	Moral
19	Problem-solving	Performance
20	Reflection	Intellectual
21	Gratitude	Moral
	Hope/optimism	Moral
22	Citizenship	Civic

Conceptualising the virtues

Tables 1, 2 and 3 show that the top three virtues prioritised by providers and young people in the interviews and focus groups are, respectively, leadership, citizenship, and service, and confidence, respect, and communication. This section will briefly explore what providers and young people say they mean by these terms in Figure 1. It will then focus more closely on reflection and resilience, perseverance and determination.

Reflection

Though referenced by over half of providers in their external communications, reflection was not prioritised by interviewees or young people. It is explored here because it features prominently in the Statement on Character Development and Youth Social Action (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2014a) and corresponds most closely, of all the virtues explored in this study, to 'good sense' (see Background section).

Defined as 'looking back on what you've done', older female participants (aged 18–20) saw reflection as necessary in order to 'evolve and improve', involving talking about how things went and what they could change in the future. One interviewee also spoke about how young people can 'review what went right, what went wrong, and you can build that reflection and trying again into everything you do, whether it's a project with [us] or a job interview, or your job, or just dealing with your challenging relationship with your mum'.

17% of young people talked about the need to reflect on the positive and not just the negative, and how reflecting on successes motivates them and builds optimism. Two interviewees agreed, one remarking on how after reflecting, 'you feel good about yourself, and then you're going to do it again'. However, the same percentage of interviewees focused more on reflecting on mistakes rather than successes, on 'getting young people to understand that everything they do you can fail at, you can do things wrong'.

Another 17% of interviewees talked about the need for structured and supported reflection. One interviewee who saw the work of young carers as a form of social action lamented the fact that

No-one goes to that young person [a young carer] and say[s] 'these are the skills you have and this is how they can be transferred'. Whereas … youth social action groups like us are great at telling young people 'You're fantastic! This is how you can transfer the skills'.

Figure 1: Conceptualisation of virtues by providers and young people.

RESPECT
About self and others, and a right, rather than something that is actively earnt.

CITIZENSHIP
Includes both responsibilities and rights, but most importantly is 'active'. Young people did not use the term.

SERVICE
43% of interviewees cited it in their top three priorities or used it positively in conversation; 22% said they would not use 'service' and had strong reactions against it, though still agreed its basic premise is important. Young people did not use the term.

CONFIDENCE AND COMMUNICATION
These were considered to be very closely related by both interviewees and young people, and connected to self-esteem, public speaking and leadership.

LEADERSHIP
Being 'proactive' in taking action on an issue of concern and working as part of a team. It can be developed through training programmes or by providing role models who are strong leaders.

Resilience, perseverance and determination
Since character is often referenced alongside 'resilience' (such as Peterson, Tyler and Lexmond (2014)), we considered it worth exploring further in this study. In this study it is grouped with perseverance and determination, as these were often referred to together in providers' external communications.

Two main ways of looking at these virtues emerged. The first is generally positive, mainly referring to their development in a 'safe space' (created by the provider) whereby the response to the situation or problem produces positive outcomes – interviewees spoke about 'bouncing back' and 'moving forward'. The other way of looking at these virtues is more negative, suggesting that they are coping mechanisms used to deal with a problem – not necessarily to emerge from that situation in a positive way, but simply to get through it.

Young people's interpretations sat somewhere between the positive and negative: one 12–16-year-old male described it as 'not quitting … when things are going foul and not what [you] were expecting', and another 18–20-year-old male spoke about 'just keep[ing] going even though you might have days where you think 'Oh, really, do I have to do this?' but you have to keep going because it's something that you are very passionate about and you want to make happen … you have to keep on staying strong, keep pushing forward'. Neither young people nor providers used the term 'grit', though this is often used interchangeably with 'resilience' (such as Tough (2013)).

Regardless of their understanding of these virtues, all interviewees agreed that not having resilience, perseverance and determination can have damaging consequences, particularly for a young person, because if people do not develop these virtues when they are young, succeeding in life is more difficult.

Three interviewees, all from very different providers, spoke about how resilience, perseverance and determination are different for young people experiencing disadvantage. One interviewee from a grassroots, community-based provider explained how 'if you're coming from a tougher background you need more resilience than the rest of us', and another from a youth organisation agreed that resilience is 'more complicated … when there is no trust in society', when young people are involved in 'gang and knife crime and drug issues'. The third interviewee represented an organisation working specifically with young people

experiencing disadvantage, and described these young people as resilient because they 'have come through a whole life of lots of knockbacks', saying that the provider's role is to 'unlock' that resilience, helping them to realise that 'they've navigated their way through it and come out, and actually that's a real strength and they should be celebrated for that'.

In summary, these findings show that interviewees say young people develop a broad range of virtues through social action, and that interviewees and young people are not necessarily prioritising the same virtues. In addition, interviewees say they are developing virtues that they are not communicating overtly – moral virtues in particular.
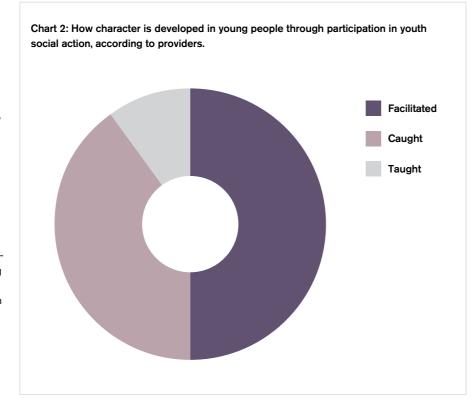
RQ3: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A SAMPLE OF PROVIDERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE TAKING PART IN SOCIAL ACTION, IN WHAT WAYS IS CHARACTER DEVELOPED THROUGH YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION?

Interviewees considered there to be three main ways in which young people develop character through social action. Some interviewees focused on just one; others drew from all three, depending on the virtue. Chart 2 below shows responses to the question 'Would you say that your organisation 'teaches' character, is it 'caught' simply by the young person taking part in your programmes, or is it something different?'

Chart 2: How character is developed in young people through participation in youth social action, according to providers.

Facilitated
Caught
Taught

'Something different': Character development can be facilitated
61% of interviewees said that young people already have a number of virtues before taking part in social action. For some, this is because certain virtues are innate[12]; for others, it is because they have learnt them in different ways. Interviewees preferred to use their own words rather than any offered in the question to describe how this is done, saying that rather than teach virtues they instead find ways of 'developing', 'channelling', 'facilitating', 'guiding' and 'recognising' young people's virtues. Many of these interviewees said they believe that everyone has the foundations of character, and youth social action's role is to build upon these foundations. These interviewees said their organisation deliberately aims to develop certain virtues in this way.

Character can be caught
Just under half of interviewees stated that some virtues can be 'caught'. They said that while they purposely develop particular virtues (as above), other virtues develop as by-products and are 'caught'. They said that this happens most often through exposing young people to opportunities, which providers create, in which they can discover and practise those virtues, but also includes experiential learning (see Kolb, 1984), peer-to-peer learning, and role-modelling. The development of these virtues is not an intended outcome, but a by-product of the social action.

'Facilitated' and 'caught' are very similar understandings of character development, yet there are subtle differences: 61% of interviewees chose to use their own words to describe how character develops, rather than 'caught' or 'taught' which were offered in the interview question. The main difference between understandings of 'caught' and 'facilitated' seemed to be in terms of the intended aims of the youth social action programme: interviewees who said that some virtues are 'caught' said they *did not* intend to develop these virtues; interviewees who said that some virtues are 'facilitated' said they *did* intend to develop these virtues.

Character can be taught
The least favourable option was 'taught'. Just three interviewees (13%) said they believe that virtues can be taught, such as through guidance, formal coaching or training programmes. Almost a third of interviewees were explicitly uncomfortable with the idea that they would teach any of these virtues, or that they could be taught at all, and generally associated teaching with formal, classroom-based, textbook-heavy, top-down education, anathema to social action (see more on this below).

How effective do providers think social action is at developing virtues in young people?
22% of interviewees spoke about how its double benefit, and impact on civic virtues, distinguishes youth social action from other ways of developing character. One interviewee

from a provider focusing purely on youth social action described how social action 'gives something in return to young people and lights passion in them that's difficult in any other experience for them to feel how their impacts can be felt'.

39% of interviewees, none of whom had previously worked in formal education, and only one from a provider which delivers its programmes through schools, commented on perceived differences between school and social action as ways of developing character. They argued that, unlike school, social action promotes active, 'fun', practical learning, 'real life experience', and responsibility, and it is often – or ought always to be, for some – voluntary, thus generally excluding social action from a school context. This understanding of school education is very traditional: these interviewees spoke about young people 'sitting in a classroom', 'absorbing knowledge in a much more passive way', 'understanding about theoretical frameworks and concepts', and 'hearing someone talk at them'. On the contrary, these interviewees argued, social action offers young people the chance 'to actively express and experience a learning outcome'.

Interviewees also listed virtues that they consider to be especially well developed through social action. These included all civic virtues (excluding social justice), five moral virtues, one performance virtue and one intellectual virtue, but no virtues

were considered to be developed only through social action. Indeed, though one interviewee described social action as 'basically the answer to everything' (albeit light-heartedly), the general consensus from interviewees was that social action is not the only way to develop young people's character. According to one interviewee whose organisation focuses purely on social action, is 'not a panacea that can cure all ills'. 22% of interviewees, representing youth organisations where social action is only one part of their programming, were more vocal on the benefits of other ways to develop character. One interviewee described social action as just one of the 'five fruits a day of a young person', and another that:

The more of those virtuous citizens that you can create, the better. We, by the way, wouldn't think that youth social action was the answer to that. We think it's part of the answer … [a] shortcoming of just thinking about social action or volunteering in itself as being the one thing that we should be focusing on getting young people to do is actually no-one is going to get all of this from that one activity.

These findings suggest that young people develop their character through social action, and that providers help to guide this development rather than teach it. While social action is considered a very effective way of developing character, it is certainly not considered the only way.

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12 This is not the standard psychological understanding, however. While some global personality traits (such as the so-called 'Big Five') are considered partly genetic, the standard view is that character traits, as a sub-set of personality traits, are socially constructed.

RQ4: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A SAMPLE OF YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION PROVIDERS, DOES CHARACTER DEVELOPED THROUGH PARTICIPATING IN FORMAL SOCIAL ACTION OPPORTUNITIES BENEFIT THE YOUNG PERSON, SOCIETY, OR BOTH?

On the double benefit model of youth social action in Figure 2, 'empathy' is given prime importance by being part of 'emotional intelligence', bridging the individual benefits and the community benefits.

Interviewees and young people initially agreed on two similar definitions of empathy. 'Understanding' or building relationships was the most common definition, cited by just under half of interviewees and one young person. 'Putting yourself in other people's shoes' was quoted by 17% of interviewees and a young person, and another 13% of interviewees talked about 'seeing it from another person's point of view' and 'imagining' another person's situation.
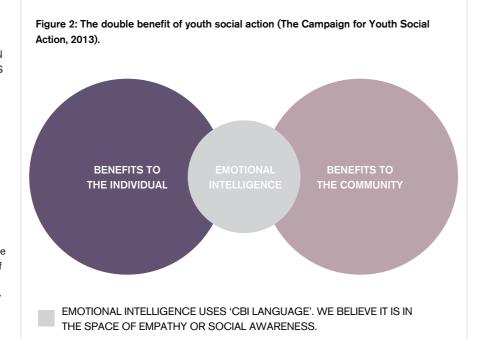
However, when probed it became clear that the way providers see empathy in a social action context is quite different from this neutral, passive description. As one interviewee remarked, compassion, rather than empathy, is more relevant to social action:

You can empathise with another person without wanting to alleviate that suffering. Whereas, to me, compassion is the next rung on the ladder … everyone says, 'treat others as you want to be treated'. That's absolute rubbish. It's treat others as they want to be treated. Not everyone wants what you want.

A 16–20-year-old female in the Birmingham focus group echoed this sentiment, suggesting (our emphasis):

You shouldn't always think about yourself, you should think about other people and try to figure out how they feel and if you were like them, what would you do, what would you need, how would you want other people to help you?

Empathy developed through social action is therefore considered to be more about compassion and action. When probed, 70% of interviewees further described empathy in positive terms – 'it's one of the most important things you can develop' – and interviewees as well as young people identified positive examples of empathy developing through social action. Two 16–20-year-old females gave this example of how they developed empathy through social action:

Figure 2: The double benefit of youth social action (The Campaign for Youth Social Action, 2013).

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE USES 'CBI LANGUAGE'. WE BELIEVE IT IS IN THE SPACE OF EMPATHY OR SOCIAL AWARENESS.

Participant A: We've kickstarted another project just on our own. It's sort of to raise awareness about homeless people and trying to get more people to understand why people are homeless. We'd just come out of a meeting [on this] … and there was this homeless guy sitting on the floor, and as any other Londoner you sort of have a blind eye towards it and almost walk past. But then we realised we'd been in a meeting for this kind of stuff, and I went and bought a sandwich for this guy and [participant B] was sat down with another one of our team—

Participant B: —And all together we started talking to him and seeing how they see things from their perspective, and because we figured what's the point in making a group that tries to fight the image given to homeless people when we don't understand ourselves? … And I guess empathy is kind of an understanding of what they're going through, but as we were sitting there we were experiencing the looks and the attitude people had towards them.

For these young people, it wasn't enough simply to 'imagine' the situation of a person experiencing homelessness; they were critical of this approach, admitting their own guilt at their instinct being to walk by, and decided that taking action could have more impact. This was also reflected by interviewees, whose examples of empathy in practice included a young person mentoring a peer online who felt suicidal and 'moving them quite quickly [away] from the point of despair'. This example also demonstrates the double benefit of empathy, mirroring Figure 2.

Referring to this double benefit model in Figure 2, 21 interviewees (91%) said they see character development more widely (rather than just empathy) as beneficial both to the individual and to society.

Developing these things in young people is where all of society benefits, because essentially you're enabling them to be the best they can be. So I think it's the young person [doing the social action], the other people they help, and then by enabling young people to get through what they're facing, and develop that character, then actually what they contribute and how they can fulfil that potential that we all benefit from is amazing.

However, two interviewees said that they consider the societal benefits of social action to be by-products of the benefits to the individual:

[Character development] is probably more benefiting the individual because it's about your own personal progression and how that will help you as well as the community, but it also helps the community because more rounded individuals working together in a community is going to be better than a load of selfish people.

22% of interviewees specifically said that they concentrate on the individual rather than the societal benefits, and that 'first and foremost, [social action] benefits the young person'.

Interviewees' understandings of the benefits to society are twofold, referring to (often) immediate or short-term, (usually) micro benefits, and future, macro benefits (most closely associated with character) – what one interviewee called the 'triple benefit'. The immediate, micro benefits to society seem to be least important to interviewees. One, whose organisation focuses purely on social action, explained that if the measure of success was the effectiveness of a project at meeting others' needs, young people wouldn't always be best placed to carry it out, because an adult would sometimes be more experienced and thus more effective. Another, from a youth work background, commented that 'if we have a whole generation of people who have all of these traits well developed and a commitment to social action throughout their lifetime, that's more valuable than the individual acts of social action that a young person would carry out.' However, one interviewee from a personal development organisation warned that:

Some [programmes] are just going down the route of benefiting the young person. They learn about values and teamwork but it doesn't really matter about the community bit – that's nice, but they could repaint the same community [centre] each year, just a different group of young people … I think that's totally wrong – that's not youth social action.

The future, macro benefits to the individual were considered more important by interviewees, and closely related to character. Interviewees talked about having a positive impact 'on the world around you', as well as criminal justice and welfare savings to the state.

These findings show that providers believe character development benefits both the individual and society, and that some prioritise the benefits to the individual over the immediate benefits to the community.

RQ5: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A SAMPLE OF YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION PROVIDERS, CAN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT BE MEASURED? IF SO, ARE THEY MEASURING IT? HOW? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

74% of interviewees said they measure character in some way. Most said they use more than one measurement tool, but by far the most common form of measurement is self-assessment, through surveys, interviews, mood diaries and testimonials, for example. 17% of interviewees talked about triangulating these data with surveys with teachers, parents, youth professionals, UCAS admissions tutors, and/or employers. Other means of measuring cited include longitudinal studies, case studies, anecdotes and 'just the looks on their faces', as well as RCTs.[13]

Over half of those who talked about measurement said they were happy or satisfied with their current approach to measuring character. They were confident discussing it, using words such as 'rigorous', talking about their approach being developed by academics, and being 'statistically significant' and 'as good as you get': 'We have a fairly rigorous evaluation process … they're all strong, well-recognised, peer-reviewed, checked evidence measures'.

30% of all interviewees listed problems with more 'rigorous' forms of character measurement. Two said that they wanted to be able to do this kind of measurement, but lack financial or human resources, especially those with volunteer-run programmes, or they do not know how best to do it. 17% were adamant that it is unnecessary, too difficult or even impossible – 'you can never tell if it's the impact of what you're doing rather than everything else that's going on in [young people's] lives'. Two very different youth organisations, one working with young people experiencing disadvantage and the other working with young people of all backgrounds, warned that measuring moral virtues could damage the individual – 'If I haven't got the right level of gratitude, am I rejected by society? What are you going to do with it when you've measured it?' Both urged the need to

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think carefully about the purpose of measurement and the risk of measurement becoming a 'tick box exercise' that is an end in itself. This is in contrast to seven who said they measure character development because it benefits the young people with whom they work.

22% of interviewees said they were unhappy or unsatisfied with their current approach to measurement. They generally said this was because they were only using self-assessment tools, and recognised the limitations of these, or because they were currently only measuring outputs, and want to measure outcomes, too:

I'm really annoyed at what I consider to be a low standard of evidence for this compared to our [beneficiary measurement approach] … [it] is nothing like good enough.

39% of interviewees talked about measuring performance and intellectual virtues. Three expressed difficulty in measuring moral virtues, with two highlighting empathy and compassion in particular; one of these nonetheless said they prioritise empathy as one of the most important virtues young people develop through social action.

In addition, interviewees spoke about measuring a range of other outcomes – personal and societal, including social mobility, wellbeing, and reoffending rates – as well as outputs such as numbers of young people involved and money raised. Almost all interviewees said their organisation conducts some form of measurement, either of outputs or outcomes, or both.

Regardless of what form of measurement interviewees said their organisation uses or prefers, many agreed that it is important, and something that 'needs' to be done, even those who are critical of the more 'robust' character measurement methods. One interviewee said 'if it can be done in such a way to support the intent of unlocking potential then it's obviously got a place, although I am a bit apprehensive about these things.' The reasons given for its importance can be grouped into three, in order of priority according to interviewees: because it helps young people; because they have to; and to support the wider youth sector. Two providers gave reasons from all three categories. In terms of being beneficial to young people, interviewees spoke about measurement helping them to improve the impact of their programmes, better understand young participants, and as a tool to support young people in articulating their skills on CVs or in interviews. On funding, interviewees talked about measurement as a means of leveraging funding as well as fulfilling funders' requirements for demonstrating impact, and showing 'value for money'. Those who spoke about supporting the youth sector as a whole – not just the youth social action sector – explained this in terms of using evidence to inform public policy as well as sharing best practice with other organisations.

Just over a quarter of interviewees talked about whose character should be measured, and all focused on young people experiencing disadvantage in some way, rather than what one interviewee called an 'everyday, okay child'. As one interviewee said, 'when I

see the difference we're making, particularly in areas of deprivation, it's breathtaking.' Interviewees whose organisations did not solely focus on working with young people experiencing disadvantage still talked about social mobility, educational attainment or risk of crime among the outcomes being measured. However, one interviewee from an organisation working specifically with young people experiencing disadvantage warned that a disproportionate focus on these young people can be elitist:

A lot of us who were fortunate to come from supportive backgrounds, those were things that just happened naturally to us, and we didn't have to go through some hoops and pass some tests to say, 'oh my character's been developed because I did that', but when it comes to people who are on the edges or marginalised in a way, excluded in some way, we think 'oh, well we'll have to demonstrate, that's all justifiable', and it just feels that we ought to apply the same rules that we apply to ourselves to the whole of society.

These findings show that providers consider measuring character development to be important. The most common form of measurement is self-assessment of performance virtues, testing young people's perceptions of their own development, and more 'robust' measures. Providers are generally unsure how to measure the development of moral virtues, though these are considered to be an important outcome of social action.

5 Summary of Findings

- Providers use a variety of terms to describe what we would call 'character', though they and young people do understand the term. While 'character' is sometimes used, depending on the context, and is seen to incorporate a range of skills, the word 'virtue' is not. Nonetheless, developing young people's character (on the understanding foregrounded in this report) is considered a fundamental part of providers' work by 87% of interviewees, and over half said it is the most important part of their work.

- Young people develop a broad range of virtues through social action, and providers and young people participating in their programmes do not necessarily prioritise the same virtues. Providers say they are developing virtues that they are not communicating overtly – moral virtues in particular. Resilience, perseverance and determination can result from positive and negative experiences, and can be expressed both positively and negatively. Social action can offer young people an engaging way of building resilience, perseverance and determination, which is worthwhile for themselves and others.

- Young people build their character through social action, and providers help to guide this development rather than teach it; many providers doubt that character can be taught directly through social action. While social action is considered a very effective way of developing character, it is not the only way, and young people's character-building experiences are often multi-faceted and wide-ranging.

- Social action benefits both the individual and society, though 22% of providers prioritise the benefits to the individual over the immediate benefits to the community being helped. Character development also benefits both the individual and society. Empathy developed through social action is essentially a combination of empathy and compassion, and is an active, positive virtue that is prioritised by providers and benefits both the individual and society.

- 74% of providers said they measure character in some way. Providers consider measuring character development to be important in improving the experiences of young people participating in their programmes, securing funding, and supporting and promoting the youth sector. The most common form of measurement is self-assessment of performance virtues, testing young people's perceptions of their own development, and more providers would like to implement more 'robust' measures. Generally providers are unsure how to measure the development of moral virtues, though these are considered to be an important outcome of youth social action.[14]

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[14]   They are not alone in this, however, as the academic discourse on measurement of virtue is still at a very early stage (Kristjánsson, 2015: 3).

6 Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

This section interprets the findings in light of the five research questions stated at the start of this report.

RQ1: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A SAMPLE OF YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION PROVIDERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE TAKING PART IN SOCIAL ACTION, HOW IS 'CHARACTER' CURRENTLY CONCEPTUALISED, AND HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?

Though the term 'character' is not used universally, the character development of young people through social action is considered fundamentally important – to young people and providers, as demonstrated in this study, and to researchers and policy-makers, as discussed in the Background section. Furthermore, interviewees and young people share similar definitions of character which are also similar to the Jubilee Centre's definition, though they differ by being more morally neutral: the standard academic meaning of character is positive, but, as reflected in this study, the word 'character' may gradually be 'losing its moral shades of meaning in ordinary parlance' (Kristjánsson, 2013: 270).

However, providers are generally uncomfortable using 'character' with all stakeholders. Interviewees offered several reasons for this: one said that although their organisation values character and would like to use it, they do not believe that the term is used or valued by employers or UCAS; another described character as 'too nebulous' for the work they do; and several said that it is not a word that young people use or recognise, and therefore they choose not to promote it. Indeed, UCAS guidance does not refer to 'character' (UCAS, 2014), but the CBI does (CBI and Pearson, 2014), and this study shows that young people recognise and understand the term. It seems there is a semantic – though not substantive – dislocation between perceptions of character by those invested in young people's development. By using such a variety of language, between but also within organisations, it makes it difficult for youth social action

providers to communicate the benefits of their work as effectively as they might, and more difficult to promote youth social action as a way of developing character. One interviewee said:

I think there's a massive vacuum and I think people want to talk about character. So if there's a piece of work like this that gets people talking about character … just having a debate about it is really good because it just gets the word out there.

At the Jubilee Centre, we use the term 'character' because we believe it highlights the extent to which the traits that truly individuate persons in meaningful ways pertain to the morally evaluable part of their selfhood (Kristjánsson, 2010). Moreover, we suggest that some of the other terms used in its place are liable to misinterpretation. For instance, 'soft' may indicate that the skills in question are unimportant or easily learnt; 'non-cognitive' may indicate that the skills do not incorporate thoughts but only feelings. Our definition of character, on the other hand, is concise and gaining recognition (see the Background section), and may therefore be useful for providers to adopt.

RQ2: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A SAMPLE OF YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION PROVIDERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE TAKING PART IN SOCIAL ACTION, WHICH VIRTUES DO YOUNG PEOPLE DEVELOP THROUGH SOCIAL ACTION?

Providers aspire to develop virtues across all four categories (moral, intellectual, performance and civic) in young people doing social action[15], though they do not use the same categories of virtues adopted by the Jubilee Centre. Civic virtues were the most commonly referenced virtues on providers' homepages – community awareness and volunteering especially. These also appear to be prioritised by providers in the rest of their external communications and in the interviews. This suggests that these are considered useful terms to explain the nature of youth social action in an easily understandable way.

However, there were significant differences in providers' use of moral virtues. Interviewees referenced moral virtues more than their organisations did overtly in external communications. Furthermore, when asked which virtues are especially well developed through social action, moral (and civic) virtues were cited more frequently than performance or intellectual ones. This suggests that the development of moral virtues is considered a more important outcome of youth social action than it appears to be based on the external communications of these providers. Since interviewees also said they are less likely to measure the development of moral virtues, and that these are more difficult to measure than others, one reason for this discrepancy could be that, understandably, providers are wary of claiming to develop a virtue without evidence. Some interviewees also offered other explanations for this, which suggest talking about moral virtues puts providers outside their comfort zone: one, from an organisation focusing purely on youth social action, said 'I think that all social action (and ours) underestimates the moral virtues. I think people are very scared of them, sometimes for good reason and sometimes not.' Another, from a youth charity, agreed: 'The moral virtues is the bit where people see it as slightly separate, where you're talking about values and the stuff that's been shoved into RE lessons and the bit that people are sometimes squeamish about'.

Included firmly within these moral virtues is empathy, linked by interviewees to a variety of other moral virtues. Providers' and young people's understandings of empathy chime with the Jubilee Centre's conceptualisation of empathy: 'I know how you feel' and 'I feel for you and with you, because you feel that way', but 'I'm not necessarily concerned about alleviating your suffering; I might even be taking vicious delight in seeing you suffer so undeservedly'. Compassion, on the other hand, is about feeling 'pain at another's undeserved bad fortune.' (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2014b). This is also reflected in philosophical literature, such as Kristjánsson (2006). It should be mentioned here that theorists disagree widely

about the correct designation of empathy[16], and it is quite common to see social scientists, psychologists and philosophers use 'empathy', 'sympathy' and 'compassion' almost synonymously. According to those interviewed in this study, compassion is the *sine qua non* of empathy – the virtue which enables empathy to be exercised for positive ends.
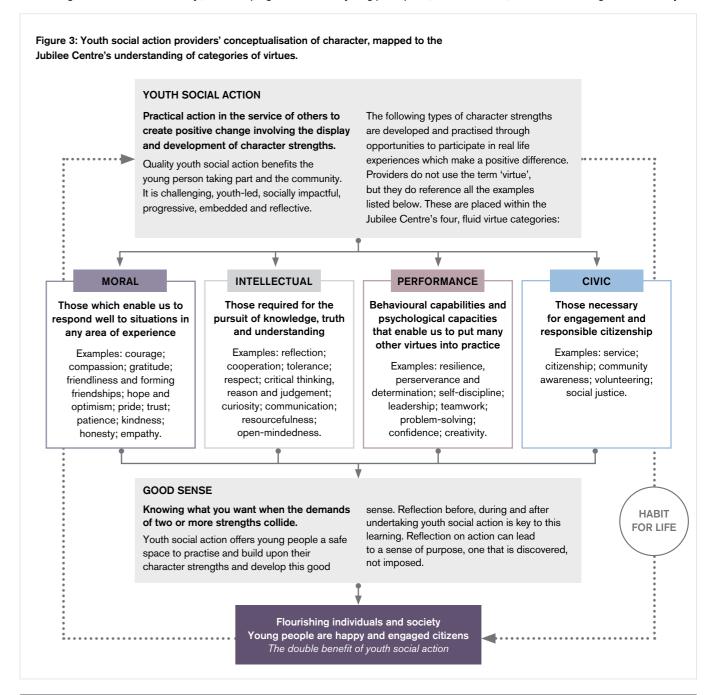
Indeed, this appears to be the purpose of other moral virtues as well – enabling other virtues to be used for positive ends. Resilience, for example, is not considered inherently good by providers: being resilient without also having empathy and compassion could mean that you 'plough on and plough over and don't mind who gets mown down on the way', and it

'depends to what ends you are being resilient'. As such, possessing a variety of virtues across all four virtue categories is necessary in order for an individual to be well rounded and to flourish. As this study shows, virtues are all interconnected, and need to be developed holistically to build good sense. Since providers say they are developing such a variety of virtues from all four categories, they should also ensure that they communicate this development, to show the breadth as well as the depth of their impact.

Though they do not use the term 'virtue', providers do tend to reference similar virtues when describing how their social action programmes benefit young participants,

suggesting that they are all working towards similar outcomes, even if they use different language to describe them. The virtues explored in this study, while by no means an exhaustive list, may be a good basis from which providers may draw when describing the benefits of their work, especially when speaking on behalf of the youth social action sector, though further research on young people's understanding of these terms would be useful.

Figure 3 demonstrates how character develops through youth social action, referencing all four categories of virtue, and which virtues may be developed within these, based on the findings from this study.

Figure 3: Youth social action providers' conceptualisation of character, mapped to the Jubilee Centre's understanding of categories of virtues.

YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION

Practical action in the service of others to create positive change involving the display and development of character strengths.

Quality youth social action benefits the young person taking part and the community. It is challenging, youth-led, socially impactful, progressive, embedded and reflective.

The following types of character strengths are developed and practised through opportunities to participate in real life experiences which make a positive difference. Providers do not use the term 'virtue', but they do reference all the examples listed below. These are placed within the Jubilee Centre's four, fluid virtue categories:

MORAL

Those which enable us to respond well to situations in any area of experience

Examples: courage; compassion; gratitude; friendliness and forming friendships; hope and optimism; pride; trust; patience; kindness; honesty; empathy.

INTELLECTUAL

Those required for the pursuit of knowledge, truth and understanding

Examples: reflection; cooperation; tolerance; respect; critical thinking, reason and judgement; curiosity; communication; resourcefulness; open-mindedness.

PERFORMANCE

Behavioural capabilities and psychological capacities that enable us to put many other virtues into practice

Examples: resilience, perseverance and determination; self-discipline; leadership; teamwork; problem-solving; confidence; creativity.

CIVIC

Those necessary for engagement and responsible citizenship

Examples: service; citizenship; community awareness; volunteering; social justice.

GOOD SENSE

Knowing what you want when the demands of two or more strengths collide.

Youth social action offers young people a safe space to practise and build upon their character strengths and develop this good

sense. Reflection before, during and after undertaking youth social action is key to this learning. Reflection on action can lead to a sense of purpose, one that is discovered, not imposed.

HABIT FOR LIFE

Flourishing individuals and society
Young people are happy and engaged citizens
The double benefit of youth social action

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[15]   This is also reflected in ResearchAbility's study for the Early Intervention Foundation, Cabinet Office and Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission, which reports that 'participants pointed out that in order to become a 'well-rounded' individual … children and young people needed to develop the full range of [social and emotional learning skills], and not just one or two dimensions' (Yeo and Graham, 2015).

[16]   For example, a different conceptualisation of empathy to that understood by the Jubilee Centre is presented by McDonald and Messinger (forthcoming).

RQ3: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A SAMPLE OF YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION PROVIDERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE TAKING PART IN SOCIAL ACTION, IN WHAT WAYS IS CHARACTER DEVELOPED THROUGH YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION?

In this study, many providers spoke about facilitating the development of character in young people, and character being 'caught' rather than 'taught'. There was generally an aversion to the concept of teaching character in a traditional, classroom-based school context. Rather, providers saw their role as less like teachers and more like coaches. It should be mentioned here that this understanding of the word 'teaching' is much less permissive than the typical meaning of 'teaching' in academic educational discourse, where it is often considered to include students' immersion in the 'hidden curriculum' as well. Yet this narrower understanding does have famous historical precedents, such as Socrates' claim that he was not really a teacher, since he did not deliver truths to students, but rather (like his mother, who was a midwife) only helped them 'drag it out'.

However, recent statistics reveal that formal education is the most popular route into youth social action – 63% of those engaged in meaningful social action got involved through their school or college (Pye and Stobart, 2014). This aversion to considering youth social action in a classroom context may mean that providers are missing an opportunity to engage more young people in their programmes through formal education, such as citizenship education, integrating non-formal programmes into the school day, or service learning programmes.[17] The link between having 'a lot' of citizenship education and having positive attitudes to participation in social action, and especially self-efficacy, has been tracked longitudinally in the UK (Keating *et al.*, 2010), and the popularity of service learning programmes in North America[18] suggests that it is possible to integrate social action into the curriculum, and that the school environment should not be seen as anathema to social action, but can in fact be conducive to its success. Indeed, the same Ipsos survey also showed that participation in youth social action in Scotland is higher than anywhere else in the UK. This could be a result of their Curriculum for Excellence, which is set up to support the formal and non-formal education sectors to work collaboratively for better outcomes for young people.

Interestingly, character was seen as being especially useful in the future, rather than in the present. This may be partly because most of the providers work with young people across the 10–20 age range, and over half also work with young people in their 20s. However, it also implies that character development takes time, and that the benefits are often not reaped until later.

In interviews, 'reflection' seemed to be typically used to refer only to backward-looking considerations, not to reflecting on what would be the best course of action in the present or future. This may explain why 'reflection' is not accorded the same significance here as it would be in classical (originally Aristotelian) conceptions of *phronesis* as all-round reflective good judgement. Moreover, the connection between reflection and wisdom, commonly highlighted in the academic literature (see for example Baltes and Staudinger (2000)), was not typically made by the participants. A small number of interviewees talked about how reflection helps young people to become more eloquent about themselves and their skills, to 'articulate with evidence-based, concrete examples of that skills development side of things'. The concept of 'virtue literacy', where young people are able to express their skills using language that is understood by them as well as by schools, employers, universities and networks, is important here. For example, one provider in this study runs sessions with employers and young people where they discuss what language works best when talking about young people's 'skills'. The virtues used in this study could be a good basis for youth social action providers hoping to build this virtue literacy in their staff and young people. Other examples include the Franklin Scholars 'character shield', which encourages young people to talk about different aspects of their character using a shared vocabulary (Franklin Scholars, 2014).
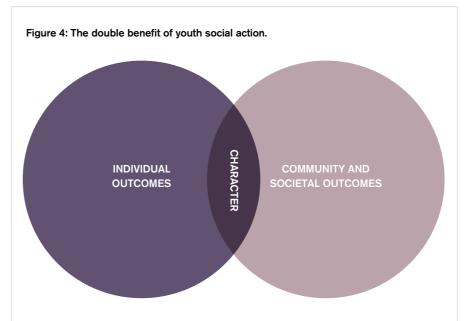
Opportunities for in-depth, critical reflection on successes as well as failures should take place before, during and after the youth social action experience so that young people can concentrate on developing the virtues that are most important to them, and articulate their learning journey during and after.

Furthermore, though individual programmes often encourage and support young people's reflection, this does not necessarily happen in cases of informal social action, or on a holistic

scale where a young person is involved in more than one programme. Given its benefits, facilitating reflection on informal social action and across all a young person's experiences would therefore be valuable. In addition, further research on the impact of reflection on a young person – on their ability to articulate their experiences and skills, on the success of their future endeavours, and on the likelihood that they will participate in social action in the future (the 'progressive' element of the #iwill campaign's six quality principles) – would be worthwhile.

RQ4: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A SAMPLE OF YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION PROVIDERS, DOES CHARACTER DEVELOPED THROUGH PARTICIPATING IN FORMAL SOCIAL ACTION OPPORTUNITIES BENEFIT THE YOUNG PERSON, SOCIETY, OR BOTH?

The findings suggest that conceptualising character development only in terms of its benefits to the individual is limiting, because, as one interviewee explained, 'you don't just grow up in isolation … therefore most of these things will have an impact on the way you interact with other people.' This suggests a change in the way the double benefit model is perceived: rather than just empathy, it is actually character that encapsulates the benefits to the individual and has a positive impact on society (see Figure 4). This understanding chimes with the typical virtue ethical understanding of the virtues as not only being beneficial to the individual but to society at large (Kristjánsson, 2015).

In short, providers believe that youth social action builds character. They believe that character benefits the individual doing the social action and it benefits society, since that individual is a part of society. But in order to be quality social action, as defined by the #iwill campaign, it must also be socially impactful and have a 'clear, intended benefit to a community, cause or social problem' (Step Up To Serve, 2014). As such, the immediate, micro benefits to society should not be neglected. This is why community and societal outcomes are combined in Figure 4. They include the immediate benefits to the community being helped as well as the longer-term societal impacts. The impact of character on both the individual and the community/society should be considered in any approaches to measuring the double benefit of youth social action, including providers' theories of change for their programmes.

Figure 4: The double benefit of youth social action.

INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES

CHARACTER

COMMUNITY AND SOCIETAL OUTCOMES

RQ5: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A SAMPLE OF YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION PROVIDERS, CAN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT BE MEASURED? IF SO, ARE THEY MEASURING IT? HOW? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

At present, few robust forms of measurement are used by providers. This makes it difficult for providers to create comprehensive theories of change and prove positive impact, as well as ensure that they are not creating harm. It is also important that when robust measures are implemented, the reasons why a particular intervention has worked are also explored (see Farrington *et al.* (2012: 14)). It is hoped that the question of 'what works' will be addressed by the Department for Education and the EEF in their latest round of funding on character education (Education Endowment Foundation, 2014).

This study strongly indicates that providers would welcome more guidance on alternative and robust forms of measurement specific to youth social action – which must take into account how providers operate, such as the fact that adult volunteers might need to facilitate measurement, and the implications of this on their time, as well as the cost of implementing measurement. In addition, the purpose of measurement needs to be clearly defined and care taken to ensure that no harm is done to young people involved. Any form of measurement also needs to look at all four categories of virtue, and account for the intensity

and duration of the social action experience, the context in which it takes place, as well as the other influences on a young person's character, to avoid the risk of assessing 'deadweight' by 'counting the impact of factors which would have achieved change if nothing had been done at all' (Chapman *et al.*, 2012: 75).

The Cabinet Office has already begun to address some of these needs (Cabinet Office, 2014; Kirkman, Sanders and Emanuel, 2015). More work like this is needed to reassure and advise providers of the benefits of measuring outcomes and of taking an approach that is standardised to the extent that it is useful for the youth social action sector whilst still being adaptable to individual programmes.

Given that moral virtues are not being referenced by many providers in their external communications, but were referenced in interviews and prioritised, more work should be done on how to measure these virtues in ways other than those being used to measure performance and intellectual virtues (see Kristjánsson, 2015: 3). If just performance and intellectual virtues continue to be measured, there is a risk that only these virtues will be valued at the expense of others. Exploring international studies on how organisations have measured these moral virtues would be useful. It may also be useful to consider how a young person's likelihood to undertake social action in the future and into adulthood could be a measure of whether the moral and civic virtues have been developed.

As an exploratory piece, in many ways this study has generated more questions about measuring character than it has answered. Many of these questions which follow echo those raised by evaluation experts, providers and other organisations, demonstrating their wide resonance:

- What should we measure? Different organisations seek to develop different character strengths.
- How can we ensure we measure what we value? Which character strengths positively transform young people's lives as well as have short- and long-term benefits for societies more generally?
- What is the purpose of measurement? To be able to compare programmes? To determine the effectiveness of individual programmes without comparing them to others? To learn from it and improve the quality of programming?
- Who leads on measurement? Should this be top-down (e.g. government) or bottom-up (e.g. providers)? Are some providers able to develop more robust measures than others? What does that mean for those unable to?
- How do we best address methodological issues? Issues around self-reporting, isolating the specific influence that youth social action is having against other influences on young people, and how to measure both the short- and long-term impacts on character.
- How do we overcome practical/logistical issues? Who carries it out – a volunteer workforce? Who has the skills, experience and time to do it? Will funders pay for it?
- Do the outcomes frameworks currently in existence reflect what youth social action is about, and represent the youth social action sector as a whole? Is it even possible (or desirable) for a framework to be representative of the whole sector?
- What are other perspectives on measurement? Young people, the youth work sector, teachers and employers from across the UK.

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[17]   Service learning 'combines community service with curriculum-based learning' (Kwak, Shen and Kavanaugh, 2002: 190).

[18]   In 2008 24% of K-12 schools and 35% of secondary schools offered service learning programmes in North America (Spring, Grimm and Dietz, 2008: 6).

6 Recommendations

This research demonstrates the significant, positive impact that providers believe social action has on a young person's character, and in turn the positive impact of that character development on young people and society. Based on the research findings, this report concludes with some recommendations for consideration by practitioners, policy-makers and researchers interested in youth social action:

- Young people should be supported to reflect holistically on all the ways in which they develop character, including through social action. Through doing so, young people, providers and adult volunteers should be encouraged to become more 'virtue literate', understanding and being able to articulate how they develop certain virtues, and young people should be encouraged to consider how they have or plan to apply these virtues to all that they do. The virtues examined in this study could provide a good basis for this.
- Providers aim to develop a variety of virtues in young people, and should communicate that aim, not neglecting their intended impact on moral virtues, which are important for both individual and societal flourishing. Providers should be supported, and support each other, to find successful, cost-effective and efficient ways to measure the impact of social action on young people's character in a holistic sense.
- Youth social action has a transformative effect on young people's character, and in turn character development benefits both the individual and society, and therefore should be considered in any approach to measuring the individual and community/societal outcomes of social action.

- We recommend further research on the following areas:
  - Larger scale, more in-depth studies that prioritise the voices of young people to gain a richer understanding of how character is developed through social action.
  - Exploring international studies of how others have measured the development of moral virtues.
  - The impact of reflection on a young person – on their ability to articulate their experiences and skills, on the success of their future endeavours, and on the likelihood that they will participate in social action in the future.
  - Further longitudinal studies of young people's character development to test how this builds over time.

['PARENTS CAN ONLY GIVE GOOD ADVICE OR PUT THEM ON THE RIGHT PATHS, BUT THE FINAL FORMING OF A PERSON'S CHARACTER LIES IN THEIR OWN HANDS.'
Anne Frank]

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Appendices

Appendix 1:
List of virtues explored in this study

Virtue	Type
Citizenship	Civic
Communication	Intellectual
Community awareness	Civic
Compassion	Moral
Confidence	Performance
Cooperation	Intellectual
Courage	Moral
Creativity	Performance/Intellectual
Critical thinking, reason and judgement	Intellectual
Curiosity	Intellectual
Empathy	Moral
Friendship and friendliness	Moral
Gratitude	Moral
Honesty	Moral
Hope/optimism	Moral
Kindness	Moral
Leadership	Performance
Open-mindedness	Intellectual
Patience	Moral
Pride	Moral
Problem-solving	Performance
Reflection	Intellectual
Resilience, perseverance and determination	Performance
Resourcefulness	Intellectual
Respect	Intellectual
Self-discipline	Performance
Service	Civic
Social justice	Civic
Teamwork	Performance
Tolerance	Intellectual
Trust	Moral
Volunteering	Civic

Appendix 2:
Interview Questions

Materials provided to organisation one week prior to interview:

■ A table of virtues (those virtues which organisation says it develops in young people are emboldened) and an explanation of the different categories of virtues recorded (moral, performance, civic, intellectual).

■ An information sheet about the project.

INTERVIEW

Thank you for participating in this project on character and virtues. Have you had a chance to read the information sheet about this study?

If no, give them time to read it.

Do you have any questions about this project before we start?

If no/once questions have been answered.

Please can you take a moment to read this consent form? If you are happy, please tick the boxes on the form and sign at the bottom.

Once consent form is signed.

Thank you. In the questions I am about to ask you, I am looking to understand [name of organisation's] perspective on this subject in relation to your work across the country, where possible, but where that is more difficult, I am also interested in your perspective as [position of interviewee].

DEFINITIONS

1. How would [name of organisation] define the term 'character'?
2. At [name of organisation], do you use the term 'character' in relation to your work with young people – externally and internally?
   a) [If no] Please could you explain why? Is there another term that you prefer to use instead?
      ■ If there is a different term they use]: How does developing [term they use] fit in with your priorities as an organisation? Please can you elaborate on your answer?

If organisation does use the term 'character' in their external communications, this question is asked instead of question 2:

From my research, I have noticed that [name of organisation] uses the term character in relation to your work with young people. Where does character development fit in with your priorities as an organisation? Please can you elaborate on your answer?

3. How would [name of organisation] define the term 'virtue'?
4. At [name of organisation], do you use the term 'virtue' in relation to your work with young people – externally and internally?
   b) [If no] Please could you explain why? Is there another term that you prefer to use instead?
   c) [If there is a different term they use]: How does developing [term they use] fit in with your priorities as an organisation? Please can you elaborate on your answer?

DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER AND VIRTUES

[Looking at table of virtues]. We're going to take a look at the table I sent through last week. At the Jubilee Centre we consider there to be four different categories of virtues, which I have defined on this sheet and colour coded accordingly. Each term on this sheet has been referenced by at least one of the organisations I have been studying for this project. From my research, I have found that [name of organisation] uses the terms in bold on this table to describe your work with young people.

If interviewee does not want to use the term 'virtues', can replace with the term that they use in the following questions.

5. Do you think this is an accurate list?
6. Can you identify any other virtues on this table that, although not explicitly used, [name of organisation] nevertheless seeks to develop?
7. Are there any virtues that [name of organisation] seeks to develop which are missing from this table?
8. Do you think [name of organisation] will seek to develop any of these other virtues on the table [those not circled/emboldened] in the future?
   d) [If help is needed] Do you think character development:
      ■ Benefits the young person
      ■ Benefits society
      ■ Benefits both
      ■ Benefits neither
   e) Can you explain your answer?
9. According to the classifications on the table, what type of virtues do you think are most important to develop in young people through social action?
10. Which virtues do you prioritise developing in young people through your programmes?
11. Can you explain why some virtues are prioritised over others?

EMPATHY

12. We are particularly interested in 'empathy'. What do you consider 'empathy' to mean?
13. Do you consider 'empathy' to be a virtue?
14. [If answer is positive] Do you think there are any negative aspects of empathy?

RESILIENCE, PERSEVERANCE AND DETERMINATION

15. We are also interested in resilience, perseverance and determination. What do you consider each of these terms to mean in a youth social action context?
16. Do you consider these to be virtues?
17. [If answer is positive] Do you think there are any negative aspects of resilience in particular?

CHARACTER DEVELOPED THROUGH YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION

18. As you are probably aware, Step Up To Serve considers youth social action to have a double benefit – it benefits the young person taking part and it benefits society. Where do you think character development sits on this double benefit model, if at all?
19. To what extent do you think that social action is a good way for young people to develop character?

20. Do you think there is anything unique or different about the way social action can develop character in young people, compared to other ways of developing character? [If help needed]: For example, at school, through a faith group, etc.
21. Are there any virtues which can only be developed through youth social action?
   f) [If yes] What are these virtues? Please can you explain your answer?
22. Are there any virtues which cannot be developed through youth social action?
   g) [If yes] What are these virtues? Please can you explain your answer?

HOW [NAME OF ORGANISATION] DEVELOPS CHARACTER IN YOUNG PEOPLE

23. Thinking about specific examples, in what ways does [name of organisation] develop character in young people?
24. Would you say that [name of organisation] 'teaches' character, is it 'caught' simply by the young person taking part in your programmes, or is it something different?
25. [If teaches] What do you mean by 'teaches'?

IF TIME/AS FOLLOW-UP WITH COLLEAGUE

26. Do you record and measure character development?
   h) [If yes] How?

FINAL COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

27. Do you have any final comments or questions?

Appendix 3:
Participant demographics

INTERVIEWEES

Though CEOs/Directors were invited to participate in the interviews, some chose to nominate a senior colleague in their place, or to join them in the interview. As such, the researcher interviewed 18 CEOs/Directors and 8 senior staff members. The ratio of female:male interviewees was 50:50 and on average the interviewees were approximately in their 30s. The majority were White (96%). In terms of their professional backgrounds, 17 had worked in youth social action prior to their current role, 12 had worked for a youth charity, 7 for another type of charity, 6 in the corporate sector (including PR, banking, accounting and consultancy), and 6 in public affairs or government positions.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

14 young people participated in the Birmingham focus group: 4 male and 10 female, and at least half from a BAME background. 9 young people participated in the London focus group: 2 male and 7 female, and approximately one third from a BAME background.

Research Team

**JAMES ARTHUR –
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**

Professor James Arthur, Director of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, is the Head of the School of Education and Professor of Education. He has written extensively on the relationship between theory and practice in education, particularly the links between communitarianism, social virtues, citizenship, religion and education. A leading expert in the field of character and values, James is also Editor of the *British Journal of Educational Studies* and Director of CitizED, an organisation in higher education promoting citizenship.

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Dr Tom Harrison is a Deputy Director in the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, leading on all the development projects enabling the Centre's work to be transformative. Having previously worked on many research and development projects in the field of character and citizenship education, Tom has led projects on behalf of various organisations including engagED, Learning for Life, CitizED, the ASC, and the national volunteering and training charity CSV. Tom's specialist interests are character and virtue ethics, citizenship, community development, pupil leadership and volunteering.

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Emma is a Research Associate at the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham, based at Step Up To Serve. Prior to this role, Emma worked for youth empowerment charity and educational partner Free The Children and think tank Credos. In spring 2015 she began a PhD in the School of Social Policy at the University of Birmingham on young people's access to social action opportunities.

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