

CHARACTER, SERVICE AND GRATITUDE

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues has pledged to support the #iwill campaign by researching the impact of youth social action on young people's character development. Youth social action providers consider the character development of young people undertaking social action to be a fundamental, if not the most important, part of their work. The #iwill campaign's aim is to make social action a 'habit for life', but there is not yet evidence on what this habit is. Existing evidence on other habits (such as exercise) suggests that habits can be measured. This project will focus on the character virtue of service to investigate: what is a habit of service for young people?

The project will investigate the following hypothesis: Through participating regularly in quality social action, young people build core character virtues and recognise the positive impact they are having on the person/cause they are helping. As a result, social action starts to become a habit and character virtues are strengthened. Based on our literature review, we hypothesise that a young person who has participated in service previously, is currently participating, and intends to participate again in the future, has formed a habit of service. We also suggest that for this young person, service is also in keeping with subjective norms, part of their moral identity, and is believed possible by that young person. Finally, we also hypothesise that young people who have made a habit of service are more likely than those who have not made it a habit to find it challenging and enjoyable, recognise the double benefit of service, have an opportunity to lead in their service, and are able to reflect upon their service. These young people may also be involved in different types of service, and be demographically different, from those who have not made a habit of service.

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