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17-19 yo females are charity's “young blood” (but *not* if you're ‘cool’)

17-19yo AB females are the most likely youths to support charities – but, without nurturing, they will lose interest as they hit the more “cynical” twenties. And charities need to come across as “effective” rather than “cool” if they are to meet young people's ideals. These are just two of a *wide* range of new findings from the UK's only rolling research project to specifically explore and monitor young people's attitudes and behaviour towards charities, campaigns and giving.

Leading not for profit sector think tank and research consultancy nfpSynergy's Youth Engagement Monitor (YEM) offers third sector organisations unique twice-yearly insights into what - if anything - young people think about them, their main charitable competitors and related social issues and causes. It also tracks how our youth learn about, and respond to, charities and their campaigns, as compared against the wider population.

The survey also finds that:

- **Over 7 in 10 (71%) of young people appear to see their employment aspirations as restricted/stunted by gender stereotypes** of the kinds of jobs men and women are expected to do
- **Young people rate volunteering over donating in terms of being “fulfilling”** (44% v 32%), “enjoyable” (35% v 11%), “inspiring” (32% v 13%), “fun” (27% v 4%) and “cool” (15% v 8%)
- **Young people rate campaigning over donating in terms of being “enjoyable”** (19% v 11%), “inspiring” (27% v 13%), “fun” (17% v 4%) and “cool” (13% v 8%)

The UK's 11.8 million 11-25 year olds increasingly represent a key audience for many charities. Quite apart from being a core group of service users and campaign beneficiaries for *some* charities, young people are current and future volunteers, campaigners and donors for *all* charities – not to mention purveyors of parental “pester power”! And their interests and affinities develop early – from primary school age onwards. Engaged and cultivated young, their support can last a life.

A small selection of the YEM's latest findings...

Involvement

- **1 in 6 (15%) young people claim to be “regularly involved with charities”**; over two thirds (68%) claim to be “occasionally involved with charities”; and only 17% claim they are “never involved with charities”
- **Young females (1 in 5, or 19%) are twice as likely as young males (one in ten, or 11%) to claim they are “regularly involved with charities”**
- **Two thirds (63%) of young females claim to have donated money in the last 3 months, compared with only a half (51%) of young males**
- **Over 1 in 5 (21%) 17-19 year olds (both sexes) claim to be “regularly involved with charities”**, compared with the mere 1 in 6 (15%) of young people as a whole
- **ABs are twice as likely as CDs to volunteer** - 1 in 5 (20%) ABs claim to have volunteered for a charity in the last 3 months; only 1 in 10 (10%) of CDs so claim

Issues & Attitudes

- **3 in 5 (59%) young people are very concerned about cruelty to children**; 52% about cancer; 43% about bullying, esp amongst 11-13yos and C2DEs; 42% about cruelty to animals; and 37% about gun violence
- **Only 1 in 4 young people are very concerned about HIV/AIDS (27%) or about student debt (24%)**
- **Young females, on the whole, show more concern for a range issues** than their male counterparts
- Almost half (47%) of young people agree (or agree strongly) that **“there are too many sexual images in the media and advertising”**
- 7 in 10 (71%) young people agree (or agree strongly) that **“there are still stereotypes about what jobs women and men should do”**

Ideal charity; and charitable activity

- **Almost half (45%) of young people say their ideal charity would be “effective”**; followed by “trustworthy” (38%), “supportive” (27%) or “relevant” (20%)
- **Conversely less than one in ten (8%) young people say their ideal charity would be “exciting”**, “inclusive” (7%), “cool” (6%), “youthful” (4%) or “confrontational” (3%)
- Despite adjudging both activities almost equally “helpful” (51% v 54%), **young people rate volunteering over donating in terms of being “fulfilling”** (44% v 32%), “enjoyable” (35% v 11%), “inspiring” (32% v 13%), “fun” (27% v 4%) and “cool” (15% v 8%)
- **Young people rate campaigning over donating in terms of being “enjoyable”** (19% v 11%), “inspiring” (27% v 13%), “fun” (17% v 4%) and “cool” (13% v 8%)
- **Young people would rather raise money than give it** - rating fundraising over donating money in terms of being “enjoyable” (36% v 11%), “fulfilling” (36% v 32%) and “fun” (35% v 4%) – and as equally effective (43%).
- **Over half (53%) young people consider recycling “worthwhile”**; only **2 in 5 (40%) think the same of buying fair-trade products.**

nfpSynergy’s Driver of Ideas, Joe Saxton, said:

“Young people – and their attitudes and behaviour – are of fundamental importance to the future of *any* thriving charity. From primary school age up, many young people are informed and inspired by the work of not for profit organizations, which alas all too often fail to fully appreciate or utilize their drive. This ongoing research helps charities better understand what turns young people on – and off – their work and campaigns, enabling them to adapt and best tap into their future army of donors, campaigners and volunteers.”

“Moreover, useful though it is to identify 17-19yo AB females as being the most receptive in terms of giving youthful charity support, the bigger challenge – and reward – is surely to broaden and sustain such interest amongst a wider range of young people, not least as they get older. Our latest findings also suggest forward-thinking charities have a potentially fruitful opportunity to harness young people’s own stated enthusiasm for volunteering and campaigning, not just for donating money.”

Several major not for profit organisations have already signed up to this substantial survey of the charity-related views and behaviour of a representative sample of over 1100 11-25 year olds. Third sector organisations still have time to subscribe to the Youth Engagement Monitor before the end of August when the next wave of research commences, with results due in the autumn. Participation includes input into questions and twice-yearly debriefing seminars. The YEM is just the latest in an expanding raft of syndicated, cost-effective nfpSynergy monitors, delivering subscribers with regular insights into other key stakeholders including politicians, business leaders, health professionals, journalists and the wider public.

Charities keen to sign up to nfpSynergy’s Youth Engagement Monitor before the next wave of research commences should contact Ariel Spigelman - on ariel.spigelman@nfpsynergy.net or 020 7415 7161 - by the end of August. For more information about nfpSynergy, visit: www.nfpsynergy.net

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MEDIA INTERVIEWS: To interview nfpSynergy's Joe Saxton about the Youth Engagement Monitor, its latest findings and how charities can best engage with young people, please contact:

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Notes to editors:

• nfpSynergy

nfpSynergy (www.nfpsynergy.net) is the UK's *only* think-tank dedicated to the charity sector and not for profit issues. It provides ideas, insights and information to help voluntary and community organisations thrive in an ever-changing world. Regularly harvesting the social and charity-related views of public and parliament, media and business - not to mention not for profit organisations themselves - *nfpSynergy* has a vast and ever-growing knowledge pool from which to extract and deliver insights.

• Joe Saxton

Joe Saxton co-founded *nfpSynergy* in 2002 after fifteen years experience in the voluntary sector, including as a director of the RNID (Britain's largest charity for deaf and hard of hearing people) and as a trustee of the RSPCA.

He is Chair of the Trustees of the Institute of Fundraising (www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk) - the professional body for fundraising and the largest individual representative body in the voluntary sector, with 4000 individual members and 200 organisational members. Joe was recently named one of the hundred most influential people in UK social policy by *The Guardian* and has been repeatedly voted one of the ten most influential people in UK fundraising by *Professional Fundraising*, most recently weighing in at the Number 1 slot.

A well-known and respected voice within the charity world and frequent face at sector conferences, Joe has contributed - via original research, opinion pieces and interviews - to a wide range of specialist and mainstream media, both print and broadcast, from *Third Sector* and *The Guardian* to *BBC Breakfast* and *BBC Radio 4*.

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