

Additional question

- 1) Are you aware of any notable examples of supporting and promoting safe opportunities for volunteering and unpaid work placements among children and young people in other jurisdictions, both in Australia and overseas, that NSW might learn from?

School-based volunteering/social action

In Scotland and Canada 'social action' has been embedded in school curriculums to support high levels of engagement.¹ For example in Ontario, high school students must complete 40 hours of service to graduate.² In America the focus is on service-learning which combines community service with intentional learning.³

A positive aspect of embedding volunteering in school curriculums is that the benefits then flow to a diverse range of children and young people including the most vulnerable. Proponents of school volunteering programs suggest that these tap into a cohort who may not have relatives volunteering or the requisite supports from home.

It is argued by proponents in the UK that the best schools embed social action into the ethos of the school and partner with local community and national organisations to offer opportunities to their students.⁴

However, it should be noted that school volunteering is not a new idea for NSW. According to the DEC submission, student volunteering programs operate in a number of public schools in NSW. The last recorded data (2012) indicates that some 6,258 students from across 301 participating schools were actively logging their volunteering activities.

Broad ,community-based campaigns and social enterprise

The United Kingdom has made a substantial investment in Step Up To Serve, a national campaign 'to inspire a generation of young people' through increasing the quality, quantity and frequency of social action for all young people aged between 10 and 20. The goal is to double the number of young people participating in social action to over 50% by 2020, with an additional 1.7 million young people engaging in social action for the first time.⁵

The Step Up to Serve Campaign is backed by significant funding (11 million pounds) to provide a package of programs to encourage young people to help others through social action.⁶ This includes embedding opportunities for the National Citizen Service (NCS), which runs two to three-week summer programmes for 15 to 17-year-olds to learn about

¹ Birdwell, J and Bani M (2014) *Introducing Generation Citizen*, Demos, London UK, viewed 17 April 2014, <http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Generation_Citizen_-_web.pdf?1392764120>

² Birdwell, J and Miller C (2013) *Service Generation: A step-change in youth social action*, Demos, London UK, <http://www.demos.co.uk/files/SERVICE_GENERATION_-_March_2014.pdf?1393856268>

³ Youth Services America (2013) *Semester of Service : Strategy Guide*, viewed 17 April 2014, <http://ysa.org/semester>

⁴ Birdwell, J and Miller C (2013) *Service Generation: A step-change in youth social action*, Demos, London UK, <http://www.demos.co.uk/files/SERVICE_GENERATION_-_March_2014.pdf?1393856268>

⁵ <http://www.stepuptoserve.org.uk/about-us/>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/11-million-funding-to-boost-opportunities-for-young-people>

enterprise, team-building and volunteering. A 2012 independent review of the program noted that since 2011, 70,000 young people participating in NCS have given more than 1.3 million hours to efforts for the local community. This is viewed as an investment by the UK government in the work-readiness of young people.⁷

There are some good examples of organisations in the UK and Australia with interactive and youth-friendly websites which link young people with a diverse range of projects to engage with as volunteers. For example the Foundation for Young Australian's Young People Without Borders program⁸ and in the UK VInspired's opportunity marketplace⁹. Organisations such as Inspire also provide good models of meaningful engagement of young people as volunteers, with a stepped approach which leads to work.

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/11-million-funding-to-boost-opportunities-for-young-people>

⁸ Young people without borders, Australia, viewed 17 April 2014, <<http://www.ypwb.org.au/challenges/>>

⁹ Vinspired, United Kingdom viewed 14 April 2014 <<http://vinspired.com/opportunities/marketplace>>