

Proudly supporting
youth social action



Department for
Digital, Culture
Media & Sport



COMMUNITY
FUND



DARTINGTON
SERVICE
DESIGN LAB

#iwill Fund Learning Hub Evidence Workstream

Towards a Typology of Youth Social Action
Dartington Service Design Lab
November 2019

Executive Summary	2
Introduction	5
Definitions	6
Review of existing typologies	11
What types of youth social action does the #iwill Fund support?	15
Towards a more complete typology	19
Discussion	22
Conclusions and recommendations	24
Appendices and references	26

Executive Summary

'Youth social action' is an emerging term and field, which encompasses a broad range of activities. These activities have not, to date, been categorised or described in detail. This limits our understanding of what is being delivered. This, combined with the breadth of the term, makes it challenging to draw conclusions and recommendations about what youth social action achieves, or what are the features of a high-quality youth social action 'opportunity'. The #iwill Fund Learning Hub believes that developing a typology of youth social action over time will support the development of stronger theories of change, as well as our conclusions and recommendations. As we formulate recommendations about delivery and outcomes we can be specific about the types of youth social action for which they are most relevant.

The existing definitions of youth social action are relatively new: they tend to focus on describing the 'quality features' of youth social action that are believed to make it of maximum benefit to young people and communities. The six quality principles of youth social action are key for delivery of social action opportunities within the #iwill Fund. These support quality delivery but do not describe what happens within youth social action, or how it is delivered or enabled.

Youth social action is distinct from volunteering; however the volunteering literature illuminates many of the potential aims and purposes of youth social action: these include service to others, mutual aid which enriches both parties, participation in decision-making, and activism. It also draws to our attention important considerations in defining and designing specific youth social action opportunities, such as how community benefit is achieved, and whether social action needs to be voluntary to be social action.

Volunteering literature has also developed useful typologies which can support us in thinking through the roles that young people taking part in social action play within organisations or institutions. Existing social action typologies have been designed to support surveys and the capture of funder data, not to support strong theories of change, or conclusions about outcomes and quality. As a result, the #iwill Fund Learning Hub has used the #iwill Fund's Information Management System to develop an evidence-based typology of what is being funded.

We used cluster analysis – a method that identifies groups of cases on the basis of their similarities and differences. Youth social action opportunities in one group or cluster have similar features to each other, but are different to members of other groups. The results must be caveated on the grounds that this is a snapshot of #iwill Fund data at this time; much more data will be added over the next few years as more opportunities are funded which we expect to change the picture. Data completeness is also not high at this point – again, we expect this to change.

Our analysis allows us to make some statements about the prevalence of what has been funded, as well as the types, shown below:

What	Where	Issue	Notes	Comments
1. Volunteering	Community-based	Not defined in advance		A broad category of youth volunteering where the cause young people give their time to is not specified in advance. This could be interpreted as social action which is intended to be highly youth-led, so that they can choose which cause they work towards.
2. Volunteering	Community-based	People & Communities		A broad category of youth volunteering in the community
3. Volunteering	School-based	People & Communities		A broad category of youth volunteering organized through schools
4. Volunteering	Community-based	People & Communities	Most deprived postcodes	A broad category in terms of activity and cause but targeted towards work in the most deprived areas. This is likely to be driven by the fact that closing the socio-economic participation gap in youth social action is a key investment driver for the #iwill Fund, and an area of interest for many Match Funders.
5. Helping improve your local area	School-based	People & communities	Possibly mandatory within the school day	One interpretation of this category is that these opportunities are introduced as a compulsory part of school where young people experience youth social action via helping improve their local area.
6. Tutoring, coaching or mentoring	Community-based	Health & Care/Education & Learning		It seems likely that this cluster captures opportunities in which young people coach or teach sport or arts activities outside of school.
7. Helping to improve the local area	Community-based	Environment/Heritage & Culture		It seems likely to capture opportunities in which young people provide direct services and effort to restore, maintain and improve their local built and natural environment.

We believe that all these categories will become more detailed with more data, and that new categories will be added covering campaigning and fundraising opportunities. The final three categories are particularly interesting at this time, as they allow us to develop a picture of some distinct types of youth social action that are currently being delivered. Understanding these 'types' will allow us to make more sophisticated statements about how they can be delivered well, and which outcomes they appear to promote.

The more details we have about what the funded 'interventions' (either from the Information Management System or via Match Funder reports) the further we can develop the typology and strengthen our conclusions. In the full report we share an approach drawn from intervention science which can support this information capture.

We make the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. **We have been able to identify some clusters of youth social action opportunities based on empirical observations of what is happening on the ground.** We would like to continue to explore whether these categories represent youth social action delivery, and if so, what more we can say about how they can be delivered with quality, and which outcomes they might promote. As we develop it further, hopefully into a full typology, we recommend it be used by Match Funders and other funders to define and describe their funded activities. We will use it in upcoming Data Reviews – when we report emerging findings about youth social action, we will aim to be clear about which types the findings apply to.
2. **The Information Management System data is useful for building an empirical typology for youth social action in England, but is currently limited by low data completeness on some variables.** Better data completeness will allow us to develop a more robust, evidence-based typology of youth social action that can facilitate learning across youth social action practice, and this should be a priority for the #iwill Fund.
3. **The typologies we share can contribute to the development of stronger theories of change for youth social action.** Organisations that fund or deliver youth social action opportunities should use the typologies set out in this paper to accurately describe their opportunities – in terms of what they do, and don't include. Funders should support them in this.
4. **Tools like the TIDieR framework¹, or adapted versions, could record all the the key elements of youth social action interventions that would build to a complete typology.** Where funders use frameworks like these, they could drive higher data completeness within the Information

¹This framework can be seen on page 21

Management System, or could form useful parts of Match Funders reports to the #iwill Fund.

5. **The #iwill Fund and Match Funders are supporting more work in the most deprived postcodes than elsewhere.** Our earlier paper on the socio-economic participation gap gave some examples of opportunities being funded in these areas. More information on this, as well as which approaches work and for whom, are important research questions going forwards.

1. Introduction

This is a report by the #iwill Fund Learning Hub. The #iwill Fund Learning Hub was commissioned to support, and build on, the activities of the #iwill Fund. It has two strategic objectives: to inform the strategic and investment direction of the #iwill Fund and to strengthen and connect the youth social action sector by enabling and facilitating the sharing of learning, data and insights across delivery partners.

1.1 Why do we need a typology of youth social action?

Youth social action is an emerging term that deliberately encompasses a wide range of activities. The #iwill Fund Learning Hub has observed in earlier papers that this is a significant hurdle on the way towards generating useful evidence and learning for the field.¹ This is because it isn't clear when learning from one youth social action opportunity can be generalised to other opportunities. For example, some of the lessons learned during the delivery of opportunities for younger children at school and aimed at improving the local environment may not be relevant to a youth social action opportunity that involves young people running a campaign for change. Whether we are looking to develop statements about what youth social action achieves, or what the features of a high-quality opportunity are, we face challenges in doing so when talking about a broad spectrum of activities.

In order to share relevant learning with stakeholders in the sector, it will be helpful to subdivide the broad field of youth social action into different categories. In other words, if we can develop a typology of youth social action, we can make the statements described above more meaningful and useful.

1.2 Towards a typology

Establishing a useful typology of youth social action, which will help us all generate learning about what certain *types* of youth social action achieve, and how they might best be delivered, should be a collective endeavour for stakeholders in the field. Considering this, we do not seek the final word with this paper. We are sharing theoretical and empirical knowledge so that the shared conversation about how to define and categorise types youth social action is as informed as possible.

In this paper, we will explore existing definitions and typologies of youth social action. We complement this with a cluster analysis of data at the level of the individual ‘youth social action opportunities’ from the #iwill Fund Information Management System. The aim of this analysis is to develop an evidence-based description of the youth social action opportunities supported through the #iwill Fund – this will allow us to develop more precise learning and recommendations in future outputs. As we formulate recommendations about delivery and outcomes we can be specific about the types of youth social action to which they are most relevant. The paper ends with conclusions and recommendations.

2. Definitions

The purpose of this section is not to reach a new definition of ‘youth social action’. Rather we will walk through some different perspectives on its meaning and by comparing and contrasting the term with volunteering. This will help us to identify concepts within youth social action inform us as we move towards a useful typology.

2.1 Existing definitions of youth social action

As a starting point, we take the definition of youth social action used by the #iwill Campaign.

“Youth social action refers to activities that young people do to make a positive difference to others or the environment. There are lots of ways in which young people can take practical action to make a positive difference. It can take place in a range of contexts and can mean formal or informal activities. These include volunteering, fundraising, campaigning or supporting peers.”ⁱⁱ This is an inclusive definition that

deliberately encompasses a wide range of activities, and can build a ‘broad church’ of supporters. What brings these activities together is that young people do them in order to make a positive difference to people and the planet.

A review of written material on youth social action conducted by The Campaign for Youth Social Action², with IVR and the Young Foundation, identified four common conditions that have been applied over and above the #iwill Campaign definition to determine whether or not an activity can be classed as youth social action.ⁱⁱⁱ Youth social action activities have been characterised as being:

1. **Group-based, involving young people in working together and supporting each other towards agreed goals.** While some groups may be locally-based and depend upon face-to-face communication, digital communications free young people to take collective action nationally, internationally and globally.
2. **Activist in nature.** Young people identify an issue of common concern to the group, and work to achieve positive change. Once again, this may be an issue arising from their immediate

² The Campaign for Youth Social Action is now known as Step Up to Serve.

environment, such as school or community, or it may be something that concerns them at a national or international level.

3. **Following a step-by-step process.** A planned process is integral to youth social action. The young people take responsibility for each stage of planning and activity directed towards an agreed objective.
4. **Owned by young people.** While appropriate adult facilitation is critical, the action is driven and managed by young people themselves. In pursuing their goals, young people acquire real-life experience of managing social change.

We do not take these additional conditions to be requirements of every youth social action opportunity, but rather they highlight different aspects of youth social action as it is practiced today. It might be noted that benefit to young people themselves, which is a stated aim for many Match Funders within the #iwill Fund is not among these conditions, and which is held to be a core 'quality principle' for youth social action by the #iwill Campaign^{iv}. The full quality principles are:

- Be youth-led
- Be challenging
- Have social impact
- Allow progression to other opportunities
- Be embedded in a young person's life
- Enable reflection about the value of the activity

Taken together, these two sets of definitions provide a valuable, and challenging list. It can be used by funders to explain the features of activities they are looking to support – or to assess how what they are supporting is performing against a quality measure. It can be used by providers and enablers of youth social action to spark self-scrutiny and reflection as to whether what they do meets these definitions.

In these ways it complements the typologies of youth social action we will look at later – it may eventually be possible to consider whether certain 'types' of youth social action described lend themselves more to the quality principles.

2.2 Definitions from 'volunteering'

As already stated, 'youth social action' is a recently emerged term. In contrast, many of the activities that fall under the #iwill Campaign definition, such as fundraising and campaigning, are more established terms and therefore more clearly defined. In particular, the academic literature contains a wealth of definitions and typologies for volunteering – which is another common activity that falls under 'youth social action'. We have found that this literature goes well beyond a narrow definition of 'volunteering', and illuminates concepts that apply to a great deal of youth social action. As a result, we focus some attention here on the volunteering literature.

2.2.1 Paradigms of volunteering and youth social action

In *Volunteering and Society in the 21st Century*, Colin Rochester and colleagues present two models of volunteering:

- The **non-profit paradigm**, which sees volunteering as an altruistic act, like giving money as a donation. This type of volunteering typically involves people with skills or assets using these to deliver care or support services to those 'less fortunate' than themselves. It's often delivered via large, professionally staffed organisations where volunteers complement paid staff. Volunteer roles are defined in advance and recruited for specifically, in a similar way to paid positions.
- The **civil society paradigm**, which sees volunteering as a method of self-help and mutual aid. This type might typically include mutual support groups and campaigning for improvement in services or spaces, rather than by directly delivering care or support. This kind of volunteering tends to take place within smaller, grassroots organisations that are staffed entirely by volunteers. Volunteers are not seen as helpers, but as members of an association or campaign, and roles are often not specified in advance but develop over time. Table 1 summarises the differences between the two paradigms.

	Non-profit paradigm (vertical paradigm)	Civil society paradigm (horizontal paradigm)
Motivation	Altruistic	Self-help, mutual aid
Areas of activity	Social welfare, delivery of support/care, helping others	Mutual support groups, campaigning, social welfare, transport, environment
Organisations	Large, professionally staffed	Smaller, grassroots, staffed entirely by volunteers
Volunteer roles	Defined in advance, recruited for specific skills, unpaid work	Member of association, role developed with organisation

Table 1. Summary of volunteering paradigms. Source: Rochester et al. (2010) *Volunteering and Society in the 21st Century*.

The activities funded by the #iwill Fund include examples across both these models of 'volunteering'. Those that fall into the civil society paradigm are often described as peer support, fundraising, or campaigning. It is useful for funders and delivery organisations to think about which model describes with what they are trying to do, and to look for compelling, or well-evidenced similar models, which may provide guidance.

2.2.2 Differences between youth social action and volunteering

We see above that youth social action and volunteering are terms that often refer to the same activities – including some that we may see as going beyond ‘volunteering’. However, in some important ways, youth social action has sought to differentiate itself from volunteering: these are set out, and explained, below.

Volunteering	Youth social action
There is a (net) cost to volunteering in terms of time or other personal resource	In funding and delivery there is often an emphasis on benefits of participation for young people
Voluntary action intends to have a direct impact on community or cause	Youth social action often intends to impact a community or cause indirectly by encouraging young people to become more active, socially-minded citizens in their adult life. This is in addition to the social impact of the youth social action.
Free choice to participate (or at least only ‘agreeable obligations’)	Can be compulsory (for example, in school settings) as well as voluntary. However, even where compulsory, it should be youth-led to some extent, rather than entirely directed by adults.

Table 2. Summary of differences between volunteering and youth social action.

A. Net cost vs. young person benefit

It is a commonly held view that volunteering involves some cost for the volunteer. This could be a financial cost, but equally might be a cost in terms of time the volunteer gives to a cause. Ram Cnaan and colleagues have developed a testable proposition that “public perception of who is a volunteer is related to the conception of the net cost of any given volunteering situation”.^v A subsequent study found that the higher the net cost of volunteering to an individual, the higher the public value that individual’s voluntary action.^{vi} Moreover, the basic concept that volunteering implies a net cost for the volunteer has been found to be widely accepted in eight culturally different countries.^{vii}

One of the six #iwill Campaign principles of quality youth social action is that an opportunity should deliver ‘double benefit’: the activity should benefit both the community *and* the young participant. In contrast to volunteering, which is generally viewed as costly for the person participating, the #iwill quality principles state that a youth social action opportunity should be *beneficial* to the young person taking part.^{viii} We can say that youth social action is different from

volunteering because there is an explicit focus in youth social action opportunities on the benefits of participation for young people.

B. Direct impact vs. societal benefit

Youth social action emphasises the impact of participation on young people’s behaviours, attitudes and choices. This means that some youth social action opportunities will seek to bring an *indirect* benefit to communities and causes by encouraging young people to become more active citizens who will benefit society in the longer term, as well as a direct benefit.

In contrast, some definitions of *volunteering* require an activity to produce public goods or deliver public benefit directly in order to count as voluntary action.^{ix} Achieving public or community benefit is complex and difficult and measuring any impact represents a further substantial challenge.^x We would therefore follow Cnaan and colleagues’ definition and suggest the more pragmatic requirement that youth social action programmes should have “intended beneficiaries”; the *intention* of the project should be to make a positive difference.^{xi} In either case, volunteering activities typically seek to directly benefit a cause or community.

In our paper on community benefit and youth social action, the #iwill Fund Learning Hub developed a framework to help funders and delivery organisations think about community impact.^{xii} In this framework *societal benefit* describes the indirect benefit enjoyed by the wider community when being made up of more active and socially engaged citizens. Youth social action opportunities are hypothesised to encourage young people to be more active citizens both now and in the future.

C. An ‘agreeable obligation’ vs. compulsory participation

A final difference between youth social action and volunteering is particularly relevant to the #iwill Fund investment driver of “engaging the younger age group [in social action] to build a habit, with a focus on primary school age”.^{xiii}

An apparently essential feature of volunteering is that it is undertaken out of free choice. However, it is not quite as simple as that. The decision to volunteer, even when made by adults, is never made entirely without influence from social and moral norms, expectations and rules. A more nuanced perspective understands that the decision made by adults to take part in volunteering can still be said to be a free choice because these obligations are typically outweighed by the personal rewards of volunteering. Rochester and colleagues have called this phenomenon “an agreeable obligation”.^{xiv}

On the other hand, common definitions of youth social action do not require participation to result from a free choice even in this nuanced sense. The National Youth Social Action Survey asks young people why they took part in youth social action and allows them to answer, ‘because I had to’.

One reason why some consider compulsory activities to count as youth social action opportunities is because youth social action can intend to bring about societal benefit by influencing the behaviours, choices and attitudes of young people. The aim of some youth social action opportunities is to encourage young people to become more active citizens and to foster a 'habit of service' that leads to further social action participation. This is particularly relevant for young children who often have less free choice over the activities in which they take part.

Some youth social action opportunities do emphasise voluntary participation. In general, it is important that providers of youth social action opportunities consider *whether* a free choice to participate in youth social action is important to their theory of change, or whether 'compulsion' can be an appropriate part of introducing young people to social action, particularly for younger age groups. It is likely that, even where social action is compulsory, that this is part of the school day, and that children are still likely to have some choice over the precise nature of their social action.

The literature on volunteering contains much that is of relevance to understanding how we can more precisely define and talk about concepts of importance to youth social action: how should young people and communities benefit, and compulsion and the role this might legitimately play in initially engaging young people in social action.

3. Review of existing typologies

In this section, we will set out a typology of youth social action used by the #iwill Campaign and #iwill Fund. We will then consider this typology in the context of others drawn from volunteering literature. This theoretical discussion complements the following section, in which we use cluster analysis to develop an evidence-based typology of the activities supported through the #iwill Fund to date.

3.1 Typologies of youth social action

3.1.1 The #iwill Campaign and #iwill Fund

The National Youth Social Action Survey is funded by the Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport and developed with Ipsos Mori in partnership with Step Up to Serve. The categories were informed by cross-sector consultation. It is designed to support the aims of the #iwill Campaign. The National Youth Social Action Survey breaks youth social action opportunities down into eight types (one of which was added for the first time in 2018).^{xv} The #iwill Fund Information Management System – the #iwill Fund's internal database recording Match Funders, grants made and information about grantee programmes – uses the first five types.^{xvi} The sixth was removed to provide some consistency with monitoring systems which Match Funders already had in use. Table 3 shows these types as well as the proportion of young people who report getting involved in each one, and the proportion of #iwill funded opportunities falling into each category. Over half the

opportunities supported through the #iwill Fund are categorised as volunteering (as it is defined in the non-profit paradigm above – in terms of giving time).

Type of youth social action	Proportion of young people getting involved according to the NYSA Survey	#iwill Fund opportunities
Giving time to help a charity or cause (volunteering)	26%	53%
Fundraising or a sponsored event	43%	>1% ³
Helping improve your local area	16%	20%
Campaigning for something you believe in	8%	5%
Tutoring, coaching or mentoring	17%	21%
Supporting other people who aren't friends or relatives	23%	Not included

Table 3. Six types of youth social action, the proportion of young people doing each and the proportion of #iwill Fund opportunities supported. Sources: National Youth Social Action Survey 2018; #iwill Information Management System (accessed 19/08/2019).

3.1.2 DCMS Typology of Social Action

In 2017, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport worked with the New Economics Foundation published guidance for commissioners seeking to support social action at all ages.

The typology is based on a spectrum of professional or statutory involvement in the social action opportunity, depicted in Figure 1, and was designed to demonstrate what kinds of commissioning are needed to support different types of social action. Its accompanying report observes, “[opportunities] towards the left of the spectrum may be commissioned directly, either through existing services or as a social action project. [Opportunities] towards the right require more focus on commissioning the conditions for social action. This might mean commissioning the training of local community organisers and ensuring that local spaces are accessible for groups that want to set up activities.”^{xvii}

³ We expect that the percentage of #iwill-Funded activities described as ‘fundraising or a sponsored event’ will increase over time, though not in line with the percentage recorded in the NYSA Survey.



Figure 1. Typology of social action from commissioning perspective. Source: DCMS and NEF (2017) Enabling social action

3.2 Typologies from volunteering

The academic literature on volunteering contains a wealth of typologies which, due to the similarities between social action and volunteering, are relevant to youth social action. Here, we share two typologies. It is important to remember that the purpose for which a typology is created determines which features of volunteering the framework focuses on. Typologies are not directly comparable, in the sense that one can be objectively better than another; instead, they can be judged more or less fit for purpose.

3.2.1 International perspective

For the United Nations' International Year of Volunteers, Davis Smith outlined four types of volunteering that occur globally – designed to highlight the social and economic value of volunteering, and how different types promote different benefits.^{xviii} The typology proposes four broad categories; it is helpful for the field of youth social action because it encompasses both the more 'traditional' types of volunteering described above as the 'non-profit paradigm', but also the more 'mutual' type, as well as 'volunteering' that rests on the power of the volunteer's voice to create change for themselves and others.

1. **Mutual aid or self-help.** Often summarised by the slogan, 'by us, for us', this type of volunteering refers to collective efforts to meet social needs and alleviate shared challenges. It is more common in the Global South; in the North, this kind of work is organised around welfare states rather than grassroots associations.
2. **Philanthropy or service to others.** This is the most common perception in Britain and reflects the non-profit paradigm of volunteering described previously.^{xix}

3. **Participation.** This refers to voluntary involvement in political or decision-making processes at any level. The most common manifestation of this form of volunteering in the UK is through governance roles such as voluntary school governors.^{xx}
4. **Advocacy or campaigning.** This is collective action aimed at securing or preventing change. Rochester and colleagues observe that this kind of volunteering, depending on what change is being contested, “can be controversial ... It can thus test the boundaries of the largely unspoken assumption that volunteering is a ‘good thing’.”

3.2.2 Organisational context

An alternative approach to categorisation is to look at how people are related to the organisations for which they volunteer. Rochester and colleagues argue volunteers can be involved in four different ways.^{xxi} This typology is helpful for the field of youth social action because it explicitly considers the relationship between the volunteer and the organisation providing the opportunity. The leadership and influence of young people is very important within youth social action – some of this is captured within this typology, but it is likely that it misses something particular about the relationship between adults enabling opportunities and young people taking them up: that adults are consciously trying to develop young people’s ability to lead independently through social action.

1. **Service delivery.** Paid staff are employed by the service delivery organisation to manage volunteers; volunteers provide the direct service.
2. **Support role model.** Volunteers complete administrative or other support work to enable paid staff to perform, deliver a service etc.
3. **Member/activist model.** These associations can have many structures, but are often characterised by small ‘inner group’ of volunteers who take on most of the work. These associations are normally staffed entirely by volunteers.
4. **Co-worker model.** In rarer cases, the division of labour between paid and voluntary staff is not clear and volunteers can be said to work alongside paid staff.

The typologies created to increase our understanding of youth social action are fit for their purposes: learning more about what types of social action are being carried out or funded, and enabling the correct commissioning support. To support learning and recommendations about outcomes and quality delivery we need to know more about the context and ways in which each category of action are usually delivered and experienced – for example, the intended outcomes or causes, the setting, the young people engaged, and the duration.

The two typologies from volunteering help us build a more nuanced understanding of the potential aims of social action, and of the different roles that a ‘social actor’ may take: this latter is particularly important within social action because of the increasing leadership, or at least independent action, that young people should be supported to take, within some social action

opportunities. However, again, they are not fit to support conclusions or recommendations across the range of youth social action activities.

4. What types of youth social action does the #iwill Fund support?

We have sought to develop an evidence-based picture of the activity being supported through the #iwill Fund. We hope this will complement, and extend, the typologies already developed within youth social action. To do this, we have used the #iwill Fund Information Management System which, to an extent, captures data that can build a typology of youth social action taking place in England.

4.1 Data

The #iwill Fund Information Management System was introduced to track the coverage and nature of the projects supported through the #iwill Fund. Data are returned by Match Funders about the grants they have made, the grantee organisations who received the funding and the youth social action opportunities delivered by the grantee organisations. For the purposes of this analysis, we looked at opportunity-level data from the Information Management System.

The Information Management System collects data on 21 features of youth social action opportunities. It should be noted that the data we are using in this paper is at 'opportunity-level', not at participant-level, and Table 4 should be read with this in mind. In this analysis we are interested in features of programme design; we want to understand what kinds of programmes are being funded. This meant that we excluded from our analysis data aspects of youth social action opportunities that could be (partly) determined by implementation or effectiveness. We excluded, for example, the age of participants because, while a target age group is an important programme design choice, the age range of young people who actually participate in the opportunity is a function of how effectively the programme can reach its intended young people.

Moreover, we excluded data on several features of programme design that would have been relevant to include in our analysis because of insufficient data completeness⁴. It would have been interesting to see whether youth social action opportunity can be grouped according to their duration (one hour, one day, a whole year etc.) or the frequency (weekly, monthly etc.) with which young people participate. However, we have not received sufficiently complete data returns to conduct this analysis.

⁴ Relevant features such as the duration of opportunities were excluded from the analysis because, due to low data completeness, only one category within the feature was recorded as prevalent in more than 10% of opportunities. The only duration category, for example, that recorded a prevalence over 10% was 'More than six months'.

We are aware that the Information Management System is a resource that will continue to be used across the life of the Fund. The data we use here is a 'snapshot' in time. We know that many campaigning opportunities have been supported by two Match Funders in particular, but this data has not yet been added to the Information Management System, meaning that campaigning does not feature in the cluster analysis. We intend that it will feature in future iterations of the typology.

4.2 Method

The types of youth social action described in this section have been identified using cluster analysis – a method that identifies groups of cases on the basis of their similarities and differences. Youth social action opportunities in one group or cluster have similar features to each other, but different to members of other groups.

The cluster analysis assessed similarities between 2,459 youth social action opportunities on 20 key features of programme design. To be included in the analysis, variables needed to have a prevalence in the data higher than 10% but lower than 90% - a threshold which ensures that variables are common enough to determine group membership, but not so ubiquitous that they will appear in all groups. We also excluded features of opportunity design for which there was a high proportion of missing data. For example, a third of opportunities do not report their duration in the Information Management System. The overall prevalence of design features will be presented initially, followed by a breakdown of the seven opportunity clusters identified by the cluster analysis and their associated characteristics.

4.3 Findings

4.3.1 Prevalence

Volunteering (53% of funded opportunities) is the most common form of youth social action supported through the #iwill Fund, followed by tutoring, coaching or mentoring (21%) and helping to improve the local area (20%). Campaigning represents a small proportion of funded activity (5%) and was therefore excluded from the cluster analysis. Over two thirds (65%) of youth social action opportunity in the #iwill Fund portfolio are delivered in community setting while almost a quarter (24%) are delivered through schools.

The vast majority of #iwill-funded youth social action opportunities are directed towards a specific cause (86.7%) and the most popular causes are People & Communities (46%) and Education & Learning (41%).

The #iwill Fund supports more youth social action opportunities in the most deprived tenth of postcodes (21%) than in any other decile. In general, the #iwill Fund supports more opportunities in more disadvantaged areas across the distribution.

Unfortunately, we have low data completeness on the duration of youth social action opportunities supported by the #iwill Fund and how the opportunities are youth-led. However, we can say that

at least a third (33%) of #iwill-Funded opportunities aim to engage young people for over six months. It appears that most opportunities involve young people in leadership by giving choices to decide what to do (43%) at an operational level and rarely involve young people in strategy or governance (both representing less than 1% of #iwill funded opportunities).

Table 4 shows the prevalence of all design features across the youth social action opportunities supported through the #iwill Fund. Those in bold were included in our analysis.

		Duration of opportunity	Prevalence	
1		1 - 2 Months	12	0.5%
2		1 - 4 Weeks	5	0.2%
3		3 - 6 Months	38	1.5%
4		A Whole Day	1	0.0%
5		Less than 1 Week	2	0.1%
6		More than 6 Months	808	32.9%
		Missing/other	1593	64.8%
Frequency of engagement				
7		Daily	2	0.1%
8		Monthly	12	0.5%
9		Weekly	350	14.2%
		Missing/other	2095	85.2%
Type of youth social action				
10		Campaigning	122	5.0%
11		Fundraising / Sponsored Event	2	0.1%
12		Helping to Improve Local Area	496	20.2%
13		Tutoring, Coaching or Mentoring	516	21.0%
14		Volunteering	1303	53.0%
		Missing/other	20	0.8%
How is the programme youth-led?				
15		Young people are given choices and decide what to do	1060	43.1%
16		Young people are informing strategy	9	0.4%
17		Young people are part of the organisation governance	7	0.3%
18		Young people are supporting other young people to lead activity	54	2.2%
		Missing/other	1329	54.0%
Delivery setting				
19		Community Settings	1587	64.5%
20		On-line	1	0.0%
21		Organisational Offices	8	0.3%
22		Outside - in an external space	15	0.6%
23		Places of Worship	1	0.0%
24		School / College / Educational Facility	592	24.1%
		Missing/other	255	10.4%
Is the opportunity cause-specific?				
25		No	326	13.3%
26		Yes	2133	86.7%
		Missing/other	0	0.0%

Deprivation decile of postcode where opportunity takes place			
27	10% most deprived	511	20.8%
28	11% to 20%	403	16.4%
29	21% to 30%	375	15.3%
30	31% to 40%	291	11.8%
31	41% to 50%	215	8.7%
32	51% to 60%	185	7.5%
33	61% to 70%	145	5.9%
34	71% to 80%	119	4.8%
35	81% to 90%	109	4.4%
36	10% least deprived	66	2.7%
	50% least deprived	624	25.3%
	Missing/other	40	1.6%
Average hours spent on opportunity per participant			
37	Less than 10 hours	23	0.9%
38	Between and 10 and 20 hours	266	10.8%
39	More than 20 hours	41	1.7%
	Missing/other	2129	86.6%
Cause			
40	Crime & Justice	369	15.0%
41	Crisis & Poverty	487	19.8%
42	Culture & Heritage	419	17.0%
43	Education & Learning	1003	40.8%
44	Environmental	448	18.2%
45	Health & Care	614	25.0%
46	People & Communities	1134	46.1%
47	Sport & Recreation	305	12.4%

Table 4. Prevalence of opportunity design features by across youth social action opportunities supported through the #iwill Fund. The features used for the cluster analysis are in **bold** Source: #iwill Fund Information Management System.

4.3.2 Clusters

Our analysis of the Information Management System data identified seven clusters – or types - of youth social action opportunity supported through the #iwill Fund. All groups of opportunities address a specific cause, unless otherwise specified.

What	Where	Issue	Notes	Comments
1. Volunteering	Community-based	Not defined in advance		A broad category of youth volunteering where the cause young people give their time to is not specified in advance. This could be interpreted as social action which is intended to be highly youth-led, so that they can choose which cause they work towards.

2. Volunteering	Community-based	People & Communities		A broad category of youth volunteering in the community
3. Volunteering	School-based	People & Communities		A broad category of youth volunteering organized through schools
4. Volunteering	Community-based	People & Communities	Most deprived postcodes	A broad category in terms of activity and cause but targeted towards work in the most deprived areas. This is likely to be driven by the fact that closing the socio-economic participation gap in youth social action is a key investment driver for the #iwill Fund, and an area of interest for many Match Funders.
5. Helping improve your local area	School-based	People & communities	Possibly mandatory within the school day	One interpretation of this category is that these opportunities are introduced as a compulsory part of school where young people experience youth social action via helping improve their local area.
6. Tutoring, coaching or mentoring	Community-based	Health & Care/Education & Learning		It seems likely that this cluster captures opportunities in which young people coach or teach sport or arts activities outside of school.
7. Helping to improve the local area	Community-based	Environment/Heritage & Culture		It seems likely to capture opportunities in which young people provide direct services and effort to restore, maintain and improve their local built and natural environment.

Table 5. Showing the results of cluster analyses of the #iwill Fund Information Management System

5. Towards a more complete typology: learning from intervention science

We note in the section above that the #iwill Fund's Information Management System is 'live', and that the amount of data available to us will grow over time. Not only will data on new opportunities be added, but we hope that this will be more complete than data provided on historic opportunities. We hope that this paper will also encourage Match Funders to ask for and record more data on the youth social action opportunities they fund. This will not only aid our mutual understanding of what has been funded, but help the #iwill Fund Learning Hub to shape more

specific conclusions and recommendations about the outcomes of youth social action, and what high-quality delivery looks like.

In this section we share a useful approach drawn from ‘intervention science’: a well-established field that applies scientific research methods to the development and evaluation of interventions that aim to change individual and collective behaviours and outcomes. One of the objectives of the field is to determine ‘what works’ and for whom; to judge which interventions are effective at achieving which outcomes for specific target groups.

3.3.1 Describing interventions

Intervention scientists have developed a descriptive framework to facilitate the understanding, and comparison, of interventions. This framework is not a typology, but it does allow us to understand the important components of an intervention, and where the framework is used for multiple interventions we can understand where they are similar, or different.

There are two ways of thinking about youth social action opportunities as interventions:

- First, we can think of **young people** involved in youth social action programmes as **delivering an intervention**. We might view a befriending project in which a young person spends an hour talking with an elderly person as an intervention, delivered by the young person, that hopes to alleviate the elderly person’s loneliness.
- Second, we can think of the **young people** involved in social action programmes as **recipients of an intervention**. We could think of the befriending project as an intervention to alleviate the young person’s loneliness, improve their self-confidence or encourage them to develop a habit of service. Both these interpretations are valid which reflects the centrality of double benefit to the practice of youth social action.

The TIDieR checklist (Template for Intervention Description and Replication) was originally developed to prompt evaluators and project developers to describe interventions in enough detail to allow their replication. As the preceding sections have shown, youth social action encompasses more than just service or intervention delivery, and replication, in the strict scientific sense, is not our concern here. Whenever a youth social action opportunity can be thought of as an intervention – especially when it is designed to achieve specific outcomes for young people or another group within the community – the TIDieR framework can be a helpful way to describe its Theory of Change, and what it needs to be delivered well.

The framework shared below has been simplified from the original version which can be found at <http://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/tidier/>. It highlights pertinent details of the intervention being described including the rationale, the target population, the inputs delivered as well as who delivered them, for how long and how frequently. It also asks for an evaluation of the quality of delivery and if any parts of the intervention are tailored to subgroups of recipients.

TIDieR Framework

BRIEF NAME

1. Provide the name or a phrase that describes the intervention.

WHY

2. Describe any rationale, theory, or goal essential to the intervention.

WHAT

3. Materials: Describe any physical or informational materials used in the intervention, including those provided to participants or used in intervention delivery or in training of intervention providers.
4. Procedures: Describe each of the procedures, activities, and/or processes used in the intervention, including any enabling or support activities.

WHO PROVIDED

5. For each category of intervention provider (e.g. youth worker, lead volunteer), describe their expertise, background and any specific training needed.

HOW

6. Describe the modes of delivery (e.g. face-to-face or by some other mechanism, such as internet or telephone) of the intervention and whether it is provided individually or in a group.

WHERE

7. Describe the type(s) of location(s) where the intervention occurs, including any necessary infrastructure or relevant features.

WHEN and HOW MUCH

8. Describe the number of times the intervention was delivered and over what period including the number of sessions, their schedule, and their duration, intensity or dose.

TAILORING

9. If the intervention can be intentionally adapted to meet the needs of particular young people, then describe the ways in which it can be adapted.

HOW WELL

11. Planned: If intervention adherence or fidelity was assessed, describe how and by whom, and if any strategies were used to maintain or improve fidelity, describe them.
- 12.† Actual: If intervention adherence or fidelity was assessed, describe the extent to which the intervention was delivered as planned.

Table 6. TIDieR Framework. Microsoft Word version available at <http://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/tidier/>

Insofar as youth social action opportunities can be thought of as interventions – regardless of whether the young person delivers or receives the intervention – the TIDieR framework provides a standardised and detailed way of describing youth social action opportunities. If it were widely adopted amongst those opportunities that are structured as interventions (which include volunteering and peer support opportunities), we would be better able to understand much of what has been funded within the #iwill Fund, and significantly add to the evidence-based typology we have begun to develop. Eventually, the task of drawing conclusions and recommendations about youth social action interventions in terms of their impact on community and young people’s outcomes, and how these are achieved, would be significantly advanced.

We recognise that many youth social action opportunities are not structured as interventions, and that this framework would often not ‘fit’. A further adapted, or alternative, framework which could allow for similar clarity and understanding of campaigning or ‘youth voice’ opportunities, by capturing their key features, is needed.

5. Discussion

A good typology is one that is developed for a clear purpose. The typology developed for the National Youth Social Action Survey (which informed the #iwill Fund Information Management System) seeks to describe the nature of youth social action in which young people are participating. It provides a reasonable level of precision, and we can use the typology to drive surveys and data collection, and make some meaningful statements about youth social action. For example, we can say that half the projects supported through the #iwill Fund provide volunteering opportunities, while the most common forms of *all* youth social action – not just those supported through the #iwill Fund – in 2018 were fundraising and sponsored events.

The international and organisational typologies developed by Smith and Rochester and colleagues complement the #iwill typology because they emphasise the relationship between the young person and the youth social action provider. Developed in the context of adult volunteering, they categorise voluntary action according to whether the volunteer is providing unpaid labour or is a more embedded member of the association for which they are working. There are interesting parallels here with the #iwill quality principle that youth social action should be youth-led. How might different youth social action opportunities be categorised according to the ways in which they are youth-led?

We then turn to our own emerging typology – which is of course in part determined by the typology used by the #iwill Fund’s Information Management System. The first three clusters identified by our analysis are broad buckets that do not tell us a great deal about the opportunities they include. There are two interpretations of this finding. First, the features of opportunity design recorded in the Information Management System may not be the most helpful information, or captured at the wrong level of detail, to be able to distinguish differences between the

opportunities. On the other hand, there are several features of opportunity design that we were unable to include in our analysis due to low data completeness. With better data completeness, which we anticipate will happen over time, we would be able to develop a more nuanced evidence-based picture of the youth social action landscape using the cluster analysis method.

The fourth cluster identified by our analysis is a relatively generic group of opportunities – similar in type and setting to the first three clusters – which are delivered in the most deprived postcodes in the UK. The #iwill Fund supports more programmes in the most deprived postcodes than any others. Analysis of data in the Information Management System does not reveal whether or how these opportunities are tailored to young people living in these areas. However, as noted above, it may be that the data recorded in the Information Management System do not allow us to develop an accurate picture of how these opportunities are different – for example, they may be more intense, or of longer duration. A more complete dataset might enable us to see this.

The final three clusters identified begin to describe more distinctive categories of programmes. In the fifth cluster we have a group of school-based opportunities for helping the local area, which may capture youth social opportunities that are probably compulsory in schools. The sixth cluster appears to capture sport and arts leadership carried out by young people in the community. Finally, the seventh cluster describes opportunities in which young people provide direct services and effort to restore, maintain and improve their natural and built environment.

This analysis is a first step towards an evidence-based typology of youth social action: it represents a step forward from the merely conceptual, and into what is actually being delivered in England. It allows us to move beyond very broad descriptions of categories, or descriptions of what quality looks like, and into more concrete, detailed, and bounded descriptions of what is actually being delivered.

The #iwill Fund Learning Hub intends to further develop this typology through further Information Management System analysis and complemented by reports from Match Funders. We expect to add further detail to the categories, and to our understanding of the prevalence of particular categories, or features. We expect that categories relating to campaigning and fundraising will be identified, as more data on these opportunities is added. This will allow funders now, and in the future, to understand what is 'out there' – allowing them both to sustain existing types of youth social action where this is their goal, and to build less-common types if there is appetite to do so.

Further, this typology can help us put the delivery and outcome data and learning we will receive to work for the benefit of funders and organisations: we will be able to develop learnings and recommendations specific to the different types of youth social action. We anticipate this will be more useful, and influential, than recommendations covering all of 'youth social action'.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

1. We have been able to identify some clusters of youth social action opportunities based on empirical observations of what is happening on the ground. Our cluster analysis of #iwill funded opportunities has allowed to develop an emerging, evidence-based picture of the sorts of youth social action currently being funded and delivered. Three emergent categories are:
 - a. school-based (perhaps non-voluntary) help for the local area;
 - b. tutoring, coaching and mentoring in the community, which is likely to be supporting sport and arts activities;
 - c. community-based work to help restore, maintain and improve young people's local natural and built environment.

We would like to continue to explore whether these categories represent youth social action delivery, and if so, what more we can say about how they can be delivered with quality, and which outcomes they might promote. As we develop it further, hopefully into a full typology, we recommend it be used by Match Funders and other funders to define and describe their funded activities. We will use it in upcoming Data Reviews – when we report emerging findings about youth social action, we will aim to be clear about which types the findings apply to.

2. The #iwill Fund Information Management System data can be very useful for building an empirical typology for youth social action in England, but is currently limited by low data completeness on some variables. The features of opportunity design that the #iwill Fund Information Management System can capture are aligned with what the literature on volunteering and intervention science consider to be important. The database asks for information on the duration, frequency and intensity of youth social action opportunities, as well as how the participant is related to the organisation providing the opportunities (i.e., how the social action is youth-led). **Better data completeness in these fields will allow us to develop a more robust, evidence-based typology of youth social action that can facilitate learning across youth social action practice, and this should be a priority for the #iwill Fund.** In particular, more complete data on the duration and frequency of youth social action opportunities would be helpful.
3. Each of the typologies set out in this paper can contribute to the development of stronger theories of change for youth social action. **Organisations that fund or deliver youth social action opportunities should use the typologies set out in this paper to accurately describe their opportunities – in terms of what they do, and don't include. Funders should support them in this.** This will help the development of stronger theories of change because:

- organisations can then consider how each aspect of the opportunity is logically connected to the desired outcomes, for young people and communities
 - organisations can be more detailed and precise about the features of delivery or context which they think matter most to making the youth social action high-quality and effective
 - evaluation and research will be better able to make statements about which types of youth social action seem to promote which outcomes
 - funders and delivery organisations will be better able to identify similar programmes from which they can learn.
4. Tools like the TIDieR framework, or adapted versions, could record all the the key elements of youth social action interventions that would build to a complete typology. This data can be, or already is, recorded in funding applications. Others can be captured via conversation with funders, or completed by the grantee organisation. Indeed, we believe that some grantees may benefit from having to consider and complete these details. **Where funders use frameworks like these, they could drive higher data completeness within the Information Management System, or could form useful parts of Match Funders reports to the #iwill Fund.**
5. The #iwill Fund and Match Funders are supporting more work in the most deprived postcodes than elsewhere. Our cluster analysis does not indicate that opportunities delivered in deprived areas are tailored for the location. **Our earlier paper on the socio-economic participation gap gave some examples of opportunities being funded in these areas^{xxii}. More information on this, as well as which approaches work and for whom, are important research questions going forwards.**

Appendix - About the #iwill Fund Learning Hub

This is a report by the #iwill Fund Learning Hub. The #iwill Fund Learning Hub was commissioned to support, and build on, the activities of the #iwill Fund. It has two strategic objectives:

1. To inform the strategic and investment direction of the #iwill Fund. This will ensure that the Leadership Board and #iwill Fund delivery partners are able to target funds into the right areas, ages and approaches, where it is really needed.
2. To strengthen and connect the youth social action sector by enabling and facilitating the sharing of learning, data and insights across delivery partners, including what does and doesn't work. Sharing key insights and learning more broadly within the wider youth social action sector.

The Learning Hub has developed three workstreams which will support its objectives. This will allow us to support funders in making decisions about how to support youth social action now, and to capitalise on the evidence generated through the #iwill Fund to create a legacy of evidence to support funding and delivery in the future.

1) Systems

This work will develop our understanding of barriers and enablers in building and strengthening sustained youth social action. It will support the identification of emerging practice and the testing of potential new solutions as well as help guide investment decisions.

(a) Systems Mapping

Co-production workshops, supported by research briefings, will build the understanding of barriers to, and opportunities for, embedding and sustaining youth social action in three priority themes: education, place, and the relationship between youth social action and 'all ages' social action. Workshops are attended by Match Funders, invited grantees, and other invited stakeholders (Sept 2018 – Mar 2019).

(b) Funder Collaboration

A series of 'Lab Storms' will be offered to Match Funders to enable a collaborative approach toward identifying common challenges, and to find and share actionable responses to them. The Lab Storms will support Match Funders to fund as effectively as possible (April 2019 – April 2021).

2) Sector Evidence Plan

This work will build on our understanding of what youth social action achieves; how to reach under-served groups and how to sustain youth social action (Aug 2018 – ongoing). It will draw on

these four information sources to develop and evolve answers to key questions:

- Intra-fund evaluation aggregation
- Extra-fund research aggregation
- Match Funder returns to the #iwill Fund and data from Information Management System
- Results from other workstreams.

3) Quality Practice

This work will deepen our understanding of what it takes to deliver quality youth social action. It will illustrate how delivery organisations define 'double benefit' and how they attempt to both achieve and measure it. This work will support delivery organisations to improve their offer (September 2018 – ongoing). 'The Impact Accelerator', is an intensive process of impact support, challenge and development – up to 30 organisations will take part in this. Learning from these organisations will be shared more widely to spread knowledge about improvement across the youth social action landscape.

References

- ⁱ Dartington Service Design Lab (2019a) *Introduction to the Sector Evidence Plan*. #iwill Fund Learning Hub.
- ⁱⁱ #iwill website (2019) <https://www.iwill.org.uk/about-us/youth-social-action>. Accessed: 14:15 BST, 11/09/2019.
- ⁱⁱⁱ The Campaign for Youth Social Action with IVR and the Young Foundation (2013) *Scoping a Quality Framework for Youth Social Action*.
- ^{iv} <https://www.iwill.org.uk/about-us/youth-social-action/#quality>. Accessed 19:57 GMT, 30/10/2019.
- ^v Cnaan et al. (1996) 'Defining Who is a Volunteer: Conceptual and Empirical Considerations' in *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 25(3):364-383
- ^{vi} Handy et al. (2000) Public Perception of "Who is a Volunteer": An Examination of the Net-cost Approach from a Cross-Cultural Perspective. Retrieved from http://repository.upenn.edu/spp_papers/2.
- ^{vii} Meijs et al. (2003) 'All in the Eyes of the Beholder? Perceptions of volunteering across eight countries' in Dekker and Halman (Eds) *The Values of Volunteering: Cross-cultural perspectives*.
- ^{viii} The Campaign for Youth Social Action with IVR and the Young Foundation (2013)
- ^x Dartington Service Design Lab (2019b) *Community Benefit and Youth Social Action*. #iwill Fund Learning Hub.
- ^{xi} Cnaan et al. (1996)
- ^{xii} Dartington Service Design Lab (2019b)
- ^{xiii} #iwill website (2019) <https://www.iwill.org.uk/about-us/iwillfund>. Accessed: 10:41 BST, 12/09/2019.
- ^{xiv} Rochester et al (2010), p.21
- ^{xv} Ipsos MORI (2018)
- ^{xvi} #iwill Fund (2018) *Guidance for #iwill Fund Information Management System*. Internal document.
- ^{xvii} Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport with New Economics Foundation (2017) 'Section A: A description of social action' in *Enabling social action*.
- ^{xviii} Smith (2000) *Grassroots Associations*.
- ^{xix} Rochester et al. (2010)
- ^{xx} Rochester et al. (2010)
- ^{xxi} Rochester et al. (2010)
- ^{xxii} Dartington Service Design Lab (2019), *Participation for All – Youth Social Action and Socio-Economic Disadvantage*, #iwill Fund Learning Hub