

New Approaches to Researching Spirituality

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'The Spirit of Generation Y' Project

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Project Website

<http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/ccls/spir/spir.htm>

1. Varieties of Youth Spirituality

Michael Mason, Australian Catholic University

2. Influences on Youth Spirituality

Andrew Singleton, Monash University

3. Social Consequences of Youth Spirituality

Ruth Webber, Australian Catholic University

The research objective of the project is to advance the understanding of 'the spirit of Generation Y':

1) Spirituality:

-the 'varieties of religious and spiritual experience' among young Australians aged 13 to 29 years;

-the versions of religion and spirituality which such experience shapes and reflects;

-and the alternative, non-religious ways in which young people are defining themselves and interpreting their lives;

-the components of these religions and forms of spirituality:

-the master-narratives, the worldviews,

-the value-complexes,

-the rituals and other practices,

-the communal structures and activities.

2) Influences on spirituality:

- the range of cultural resources used in constructing spirituality;*
- the extent to which the contemporary cultural milieu tends to shape the interpretation of the life-story more as a solitary journey than a communal one;*
- patterns of cultural communication of spirituality;*
- the social patterns of differential access to and distribution of forms of spirituality.*

3) Social consequences of spirituality:

- the association between particular styles of spirituality and the holding of particular values and attitudes to the self, to others, and to society;*
- the links between people's spirituality and their*
 - social ethic,*
 - attitudes of civility and sociability,*
 - social and political awareness and participation,*
 - pro-social and anti-social behaviour,*
 - citizenship activities.*

Features of research method

- 3 stage design blending qualitative and quantitative
 - stage I intensive interviews:
 - initial exploration and survey preparation
 - stage II national survey; some open-ended questions
 - stage III intensive interviews:
 - filling out the survey findings; change over time;
- unobtrusive measures of spirituality
- emphasis on personal narrative
- use of evocative techniques
- emphasis on the **dynamics** of spirituality
- classification of spirituality types
- exploration of non-religious 'spiritualities'

Interview sample: Age

| Age Group | No. | % |
|-----------|-----|-----|
| 12-14 | 20 | 29 |
| 15-19 | 41 | 59 |
| 20-24 | 4 | 5 |
| 25-29 | 6 | 7 |
| Total | 71 | 100 |

Survey sample: Agegroups (unwtd)

| | N | Percent |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1 13-15 | 401 | 24.8 |
| 2 16-18 | 408 | 25.2 |
| 3 19-24 | 410 | 25.3 |
| 4 25-59 | 400 | 24.7 |
| Total | 1619 | 100.0 |

SPIRITUALITY GROUP BY AGEGROUP (WTD)

| | Agegroup | | | | Total |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 1 13-15 | 2 16-17 | 3 18-24 | 4 25-59 | |
| 1 Traditional | 67 63.8% | 41 56.9% | 137 58.5% | 751 62.1% | 996 61.5% |
| 2 Alternative | 6 5.7% | 8 11.1% | 31 13.2% | 208 17.2% | 253 15.6% |
| 3 Humanistic | 32 30.5% | 23 31.9% | 66 28.2% | 250 20.7% | 371 22.9% |
| Total | 105 100.0% | 72 100.0% | 234 100.0% | 1209 100.0% | 1620 100.0% |

Agegroup 13-24 25-59

| <i>Type</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>%</i> | | |
|--------------------|----------|----------|--|---------------------------------------|
| TRADITIONAL | | | | |
| 1 'XTR/VHI' | 9 | 6 | Christian | / Very high ethos |
| 2 'XTR/HI ' | 4 | 3 | | / High |
| 3 'XTR/MED' | 16 | 20 | | / Medium |
| 4 'XTR/LO ' | 13 | 20 | | / Low |
| 5 'XTR/QST' | 6 | 0 | | / Quest or questioning |
| 6 'XTR/ECL' | 6 | 11 | | / Eclectic (with elements of New Age) |
| 7 'OTHTRAD' | 6 | 3 | Other tradition (Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, etc) | |

ALTERNATIVE

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|------------------------------------|--|
| 8 'THEISTS' | 4 | 2 | Belief in God, not further defined | |
| 9 'NEW/HI ' | 3 | 8 | New Age | |
| 10 'NEW/MED' | 6 | 9 | | |

HUMANISTIC

| | | | | |
|--------------|----------|----------|------------|--|
| 13 'HUM/HI ' | 10 | 6 | Humanistic | |
| 14 'HUM/MED' | 12 | 11 | | |
| 15 'HUM/LO ' | <u>6</u> | <u>2</u> | | |

100% 100%

The Humanistic Worldview

*affirming human experience and
human reason,
rather than adopting religious
traditions or 'spiritual' paths.*

Values in the humanistic ethos

- *Individualism*
- *Relativism of truth and values*
- *Tolerance*
- *Sovereignty of reason*
- *Egalitarianism*
- *Human rights, social justice*
- *Spontaneity*

- *Individualism*

affirms the infinite worth of the human individual and the inviolability of personal freedom and autonomy

Religious Group by Agegroup in Census 2001 and GenY Survey.

| | Agegroup | | | Total |
|-----------------------------------|----------|---------|---------|--------|
| | 1 13-17 | 2 18-22 | 3 23-57 | |
| 1 Anglican: CensusSurvey | 17.4% | 16.1% | 20.0% | 19.1% |
| | 10.3% | 6.0% | 12.6% | 11.6% |
| 2 Catholic | 28.9% | 27.8% | 25.9% | 26.5% |
| | 24.0% | 21.2% | 21.8% | 22.0% |
| 3 Uniting Church | 6.5% | 5.6% | 5.9% | 5.9% |
| | 2.9% | 2.7% | 5.1% | 4.6% |
| 4 Other Christian | 13.4% | 12.9% | 13.9% | 13.7% |
| | 13.7% | 18.5% | 16.6% | 16.5% |
| 10 Non-Christian | 5.0% | 5.7% | 5.7% | 5.6% |
| | 5.1% | 7.1% | 3.5% | 4.1% |
| 15 NoID/NS | 28.8% | 31.9% | 28.7% | 29.2% |
| | 44.0% | 44.6% | 40.3% | 41.2% |
| Total | 175 | 184 | 1196 | 1555 |
| | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Comparing Australian and American teenagers

[Cf. Smith, Christian with Denton, Melinda 2005, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, New York, Oxford University Press.]

- Strongly individualistic and relativistic approach to religion (USA ✓ AUS ✓)
- Teenage religion is conventional / little conflict with parents (USA ✓ AUS ✗)
- Religion is seen positively, as good for people, therapeutic (USA ✓ AUS ✗)
- Little sense of quest, or of spirituality vs. religion; not many New Age or Eclectic (USA ✓ AUS ✓)

| Believe in God | GENY 13-17 | NSYR 13-17 |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 49% | 84% |
| Unsure | 34% | 12% |
| No | 18% | 3% |

Source: NSYR – *Soul Searching* p. 41

GENY: 'Spirit of Generation Y' survey, 2005

| Attend religious services | GENY 13-17 | NSYR 13-17 |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Weekly or more often | 40% | 15% |
| Monthly or more often | 59% | 25% |

Source: NSYR – *Soul Searching* p. 37

GENY: 'Spirit of Generation Y' survey, 2005

Spirit of Generation Y

Influences on Youth Spirituality: Insights from the First Qualitative Phase of the Project

Paper by Dr Andrew Singleton
Sociology, Monash University
Presented to the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion
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The second aim of our project is to explore possible influences shaping the forms of spirituality Michael has just described. In this paper I will discuss insights generated from the first, qualitative phase of the project. Qualitative research, with its emphasis on personal narration and meaning-making, can offer insights that are obscured by the closed-answer format of a survey.

My paper will highlight qualitative insights in three main areas:

Influences on Youth Spirituality

- *The environing culture and youth spirituality*
- *Acquisition of spirituality*
- *Spirituality and changes across the life course*

Overall, immediate contextual factors such as spirituality within the peer network, and that of the family appear likely to be the most important influences. But broader cultural factors independent of both family or school may also exert some influence, especially on non-religious spiritualities. It is also important to note that several key developmental stages and transitions seem to be involved in a complex dynamic during the teenage to young adult years.

The Environing Culture and Youth Spirituality

To begin I want to discuss the relationship between the environing culture and youth spirituality. We found that broader cultural factors exerted some influence on the worldviews of young people, especially those we classified as having the humanistic spirituality type.

Most significant among these cultural factors is the pervasiveness of individualism.

Reporting on the US National Study of Youth Religion (the NSYR), Christian Smith (2005) notes the pervasiveness among American teens of what he describes as ‘therapeutic individualism’. According to Smith (2005, p.173), ‘Therapeutic individualism defines the self as the source and standard of authentic moral knowledge, and individual self-fulfilment as the preoccupying purpose of life. Subjective, personal experience is the touchstone of all that is authentic, right, and true’.

This self-authenticating ‘therapeutic individualism’ was also apparent among our informants in the interview phase of our project.

In order to further explore this dimension in our national survey of youth spirituality we asked a question from the US NSYR that taps into the moral relativism that is part of the ethos of therapeutic individualism (Smith 2005, p.173). This was the question: Some people say that morals are relative, that there are no definite rights and wrongs for everybody. Do you agree or disagree?

The following table shows the results from both the NSYR and the SGY survey.

Table 1. Moral reasoning: A comparison between SGY Survey and NSYR, Ages 13-17 (Percentages)

| | SGY (Australian) | NSYR (US) |
|--|------------------|-----------|
| Believes that morals are relative, that there are no definite rights or wrongs for everybody | 59 | 45 |

Sources: Smith, C (with Denton, ML) 2005, *Soul searching: the religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers*, Oxford UP, New York.
SGY National Survey, 2005.

Table based on one presented by Smith with Denton (2005:229)

The NSYR had a yes/no answer, and we had 5 point scale, so for the purposes of this table we have tallied our categories of 'agree' and 'strongly agree'.

While therapeutic individualism is prevalent among Australian youth, in our interviews we also detected other dimensions to the individualism of Australian teens, notably, the incontrovertible belief that it is up to the individual to 'take personal responsibility for their success, happiness, and livelihood' (Harris, 2004, p. 4).

Let me illustrate what I mean. During the interviews, we showed informants a series of evocative photos and asked them to choose one that says most about their life. This is what 18-year-old Steven said:

The tracks that show possibilities [chose picture of railway tracks]. I'd just think so endless possibilities you know, I guess that's my life, I plan on doing 1000 things. And so there is all these tracks going off everywhere you know all these great possibilities. Um just because it looks like a real adventure and sometimes I guess I get a bit bogged down, but most of the time my life is an adventure because that is what I want it to be and it's exciting, going back on this all the possibilities just so exciting and I guess I am working towards this adventure, 'cause I am living it.

Steven (HUM/HI, 18, no denomination).

Such sentiments were expressed not only by the middle-class, socially engaged and well-educated informants. The belief that it is the individual who must take responsibility for, and has ownership of, the way his or her life turns out was a common theme, even among the most marginalised young people with whom we spoke.

The emphasis on personal autonomy, self-direction, and self-realisation had led us to expect in advance that many of our informants would have spiritualities that were highly individualised – an eclectic collage of beliefs and practices made up of items drawn from the 'spiritual marketplace' (Roof 1999).

Unfortunately, in the interviews, we encountered little evidence of informants engaging in an autonomous, self-reflexive spiritual quest, leading to the formation of a coherent, alternative and individualised spirituality. Our survey confirms this: it

reveals that about only 6 per cent of those aged 13-24 could be classified as having a NEW/MED spirituality type, and 3 per cent with a NEW/HI type.

That said, the societal emphasis on the individual does exert considerable influence on the worldviews of young people, especially those we classified as HUM. As I will show in a moment, these young people often formulate answers to life's existential questions by casting around from a range of often quite diffuse sources, accepting what they like based on their own experiences and sense of what works for them.

Evidence of individualism was also apparent among those with the TRAD spirituality but perhaps not to the same extent; for many of these young people, their will is consciously subsumed to that of a transcendent other. Those who are not influenced by a tradition seem more liable to become the centre of their own world.

The Acquisition of Spirituality

Our interviews show a patterning of spirituality type consistent with the way informants were raised – the religiousness of the family, family worldview, ethnicity, schooling and past church attendance. This impression is confirmed by the survey data.

In his paper, Michael outlined the various spirituality types. One of these is the Christian type, with categories ranging from XTR/VHI to XTR/QST. Previous research on the acquisition of religious identity has identified parental religiosity as the most important factor influencing the religiousness of an adolescent. This pattern appeared in the interviews and is substantiated by our survey data. For example, among those 13-29 year-olds in the national survey we classified as XTR/VHI, 82 per cent of their mothers attend church weekly, while for those classified as XTR/LO, their mothers were most likely to attend a few times a year. The mothers of the XTR/VHI group were most likely to be very enthusiastic about their religion, while the mothers of the XTR/LO group were most likely to be mildly enthusiastic about their religion.

But what about others, those with a humanistic (HUM) spirituality?

What parents believed and practised was still extremely influential among this group. 18-year-old Fiona (HUM/HI, no denomination), held strong views about science. She told us:

Does your family belong to a church or religious group of any kind?

My dad is Church of England and my mum is Catholic but neither of them practise. Apart from going to church at Easter when we were younger we have had very little religion, a lot of it is based just on technology or morals. I think my mum is a bit into feminism and clinical

research stuff but it's a bit pretty bare bones. So I don't believe in any religion or practise one and I just don't really believe in a higher power.

Fiona (HUM/HI, 18, no denomination)

The humanistic spirituality type does not manifest itself in easily identifiable rituals or practices. At Christmas time, parents may tell their children why they don't attend church, or describe Jesus as a fictional character, but overall, it was clear from the interviews that those with this spirituality type have not been socialised into a clear tradition and worldview that might provide answers to life's existential questions.

The qualitative phase of the project gave us unique insights into how these young adults make sense of their lives and world. As I mentioned earlier when talking about individualism, humanistic informants often made sense of life's existential questions by putting forward explanations drawn from a range of sources. This included beliefs in reincarnation, or the infallibility of science and reason, or self-authenticated knowledge.

Katie (HUM/LO, no denomination), a 14-year-old, lived in a metropolitan location and attended a Catholic secondary college. She recounted the following views on what happens after death:

And what do you think happens after death?

Um, I don't really know because I've never had anyone close to me die. So I haven't had a lot of experience of death, but I guess our soul gets used for other people.

Oh, OK, so like reincarnation?

Yeah, similar, but not our body. Our body goes somewhere and our spirit lives on.

Oh, OK. So where do you think it lives on?

In other people, in our family.

Oh, OK, yeah. So like your ancestors, I don't know, great grandparents who have died or something like that, you feel like they're still around somehow?

Yeah, as long as we remember a person, I believe that they're always there like in photographs and things.

So does your family sort of attend a church or a Mass or not?

No, we're not very religious people.

Katie (HUM/LO, 14, no denomination)

Changes across the Life Course

The other major influence I want to discuss is the changes that take place as a person gets older. It was clear from the interviews that several developmental stages and transitions seem to be involved in a complex dynamic across the teenage to young adult years.

One key pattern to emerge among those with a traditional, Christian spirituality type was the move from TRAD/HI or TRAD/MED to TRAD/QST between childhood and the early to mid teens. 13 of our teenage informants were TRAD/QST at the time of interview, but had been more certain in childhood.

Our interviews suggest that a move towards QST is at least partially the result of changes associated with the life stage. We know that during and up to the early adult years, a person will be subject to a wider range of influences compared to their pre-pubescent years, including a greater emphasis on peer activity and acceptance, increased exposure to a range of ideas and values that are contrary to the ones with which they were raised and less dependence on one's parents.

There is little doubt that this process of independence accelerates and intensifies in the later teen years. American psychologist Jeffery Arnett (2000) proposes the term 'emerging adulthood' as an appropriate label for those aged 18-25. Arnett (2000, p.469) argues that emerging adulthood is 'a distinct period demographically, subjectively and in terms of identity explorations, a time in which young people explore a variety of possible life directions in love, work, and worldviews'.

In our sample, there were a few cases of emerging adults who have moved from spirituality type TRAD (MED or LO) at age 12 to HUM at the time of interview. In these interviews, we saw ample evidence of the 'declaration of independence' mostly clearly associated with emerging adults.

Michael, a 22-year-old participant at Youth Voice, provides an excellent example of this process:

Just talking a little bit more about your involvement with organised religion, you did indicate that you were baptised.

That was my parents decision, obviously.

Right. And that was in the Uniting Church?

When I was a baby.

Right. Do you mind just talking a little bit about your involvement with organised religion that ...

I never had a huge involvement with it. I guess what it is that turns me off most about it is Christian people who I talk to. You know, people who try and harass you about their faith, and also media, media portrayals of it. But I did when I was younger go to Sunday

school. It seems like another world for me now. As an adult, or sort of an adult I would never make that choice now. It was my parents choice to give me that, um, but I don't think at that young age it gave me much ... my own views on religion ... that has come through the media and chatting to people now. Now that I am a free-thinking university student or something like that. So yeah, it was minimal, I didn't grow up in a religious family, I was just sort of taken along to Sunday school as a bit of a thing but I've never really felt religion very strongly in a country like Australia.

Michael (HUM/HI, 22, no denomination).

It is clear that as an emerging adult, Michael is in a position to make his own reasoned and informed choices. In his case, it is a turning away from religion.

Conclusion

Overall, our interviews tend to confirm 'social learning theory' which states that young people learn attitudes and behaviour – including spirituality – from what significant others such as parents, teachers and peers, model and reinforce for them (Hoge *et al.* 1993 p. 243). Broader cultural factors independent of both family or school also exert some influence. The survey in phase two of the project will provide further data to test this assertion. Questions in the survey were also designed to provide further information about the transition from childhood to adulthood and the complex changes that take place during this phase of life.

References:

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Ruth Webber

Consequences of spirituality as it relates to citizenship.

Slide 2

Social consequences of spirituality

Third aim of project

1. links between people's spirituality & their social ethic,
2. attitudes of civility and sociability, social & political awareness
3. participation, pro-social and anti-social behaviour & citizenship activities.

The third aim of our project is to examine the consequences of the different types of spirituality in the ways in which members of Generation Y participate in society.

We wanted to see if there are any factors that promote active and positive citizenship.

We investigated 3 main questions:

1. What are the ingredients of active citizenship, and which factors might promote or to hinder its development?
2. Are Australian young people active citizens in ways appropriate to their age, or are they as individualistic and self-enclosed as some critics have asserted?
3. Are they likely to become active citizens in a fully adult mode?

Slide 3

Dimensions of civic orientation

1. *Civic knowledge & appreciation* - basic human rights, social/political structures, social change, social justice, equity, cultural diversity, community engagement
2. *Civic capacities & skills* - a range of skills and personal competencies:
3. *Civic attitudes* - attitudes & actions showing an orientation towards the common good
4. *Civic participation* - engaged in volunteering/community service, civic & political activities

We defined civic orientation in the following way.

'Civic orientation' is a term used to denote an orientation to the common good, which includes reciprocity, cooperation, and trust. It involves a sense of responsibility towards one's community and a belief that despite individual differences, everyone has something to contribute to the common good. It is an important aspect of social capital in that it contributes to a culture of trust and reciprocity.

The term civic orientation denotes four particular dimensions of active citizens. Other researchers had used similar dimensions of civic orientation to the four we selected. (Mellor, Kennedy & Greenwood as part of a 28-nation study, 2002). These four dimensions incorporate civic behaviour as well as knowledge, attitudes and skills. More specifically they include:

Civic knowledge & appreciation includes basic human rights, social/political structures, social change, social justice, equity, cultural diversity, community engagement

Civic capacities & skills include a range of skills and personal competencies:

Civic attitude includes: attitudes & actions showing an orientation towards the common good.

Civic participation – engaged in volunteering and civic activities including signing petitions, writing letters and going on protest marches

For a detailed analysis of these dimensions you may like to consult the report of stage 1 of the project that is posted on our website.

'Spirit of Generation Y' project: <http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/ccls/spir/spir.htm>

Slide 4

Classifying civic orientation

On each dimension they were rated

High

Medium

Low

High on 3 dimensions and medium to high on 4th. ensured a high overall civic orientation rating

Low on all 4 ensured a low civic orientation rating

We gave the young people an over-all rating according to how they rated on each dimension. For example:

If young people scored high on all dimensions or high on three and medium on the fourth dimension, they were rated as having a high level of civic orientation.

If young people scored low on all four dimensions, then they received a low rating.

Again for a more detailed account of these you may like to consult the report on our website.

Slide 5

| Civic orientation | Total |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| High | 9 |
| Medium | 20 |
| Low: apathetic | 26 |
| Low: anti-social | 3 |
| Total | 68 |

Because of the way the group was selected there are more respondents receiving a high score in stage 1, than would normally be anticipated.

Twenty-eight per cent of participants were rated as **high civic orientation**.

We clearly understand that this in no way represents the over- all population. For example, an initial analyse of the telephone survey data indicates that the percentage scoring high on civic orientation is lower.

Although only three participants were rated as **Low: anti social**, they provided a most interesting and challenging viewpoint

Seventeen- year old Nathan is an example of 'low-anti social' and aptly demonstrated the level of hostility and anger he feels. The interview transcript contained many references to his involvement in violence. For example, He said that he was most alive when he was violent towards his father:

Just before I got booted out, me and my mum were arguing and she grabbed me, so I grabbed her and then my dad grabbed me by the throat, so I grabbed him by the throat and smacked around his face, and that was cool.

Slide 6

Spheres of participation -stage 1

- **Personal - baby sitting**
- **Local - sporting clubs, school service**
- **National - environmental, youth related**
- **International - amnesty, globalisation**

MOST OPERATED AT SPHERE 1 AND 2 ONLY

The level and type of civic participation was an important area of interest for this study and the type of activity involved was wide- ranging. We acknowledge that to assist one's family cannot be compared with active involvement in the wider society so we decided to analyse civic participation into terms of 4 spheres.

These four spheres are: **personal, local, national, and international**. We also were interested in the extent of involvement in each sphere.

Most young people were involved in helping and being involved in assisting family and friends. Many were involved at a local level like Travis (25, TRAD/HI, Catholic)

Coaching? Oh, I love it. I've got the passion there for the sport and I enjoy the kids. I'm not actually one to worry about winning but actually seeing a team improve. It makes you feel good when a kid learns a new skill and improves.

We were quite surprised at the number of young people who were involved participation at a national and international level. These same young people tended to be involved at the previous two levels as well.

For example, one young woman in year 12 was involved in the local and the national debating team as well as being involved in a range of social justice issues that involved an international focus.

Slide 7

The factors associated with dimensions of civic orientation in stage 1

- **Age - younger participants lower on all dimensions**
- **Family - provide opportunity, resources, values**
- **Mentors & peers - provide opportunity, resources, values**

- **Opportunity for participation -**
 - school
 - Church, youth group
 - Parent connections
 - Youth organizations

A number of factors appear to be related the four dimension of young people's civic orientation. There was some consistency across the dimensions, with some factors being relevant to all four dimensions.

Age is just one that was critical to all of them.

I am going to focus to some extent on civic participation rather than the three other dimensions of civic orientation today.

In terms of civic participation, age is again a factor but so are a number of other factors.

Opportunity. Young people need assistance to enter a new field of service. They are unlikely to knock on a door of an organisation and volunteer. They need access, encouragement, and an organised entry point. For example, family, peers, mentors, schools and youth groups were important in assisting a young person both to want to be involved in civic activities, but they also helped them to be linked to an organisation.

Just because young people were not well educated, didn't mean that they did no service. One teenage parent with two young children and whose partner was a heroin addict sponsored a world vision child. Another one in a juvenile justice diversionary program occasionally helped her mother at an opportunity shop – (Goodwill shop)

Slide 8

Civic Participation – getting outside their comfort zone

- **Organised activities allowed them to go outside their comfort zone with safety**
- **It was difficult or unlikely for them to do this without support or encouragement - eg school community service**
- **It also gives them a taste for community involvement**

Young people were unlikely to go outside their comfort zone in terms of civic participation eg family, friends, local organisation, unless they were assisted to do so.

For example, Olivia (18, HUM/HI, Youth Voice) said:

It was quite scary because there were people there that were not only old but mentally disabled too. There was this one lady and you had to make sure you had your hands in your pockets because she would just walk up to you, wouldn't even look at you, just grab your hand and wouldn't let go and just walk around with you all day. That was excellent but really hard to start off with.

However, once they had a positive experience of volunteering, they seemed to develop a taste for it. Some of the young people we interviewed spoke about their enjoyment at doing volunteer work. Many had become 'hooked' on it. Like Stuart (16, HUM/HI, Youth Voice)

... the school I went to in UK also really encompasses community service. For example, there were huge floods in a place in Scotland and they had billions of dollars worth of damage and I went for a few days helping people... I am really open to community service I think it is good.

I am more aware of the need for helping in certain places and I am more active in things like that. If I see someone who needs a hand I will go and help them. If volunteers have been asked for in certain areas I will probably go and do that because I realize how much of a difference it makes.

Slide 9

Some tentative conclusions stage 1

- **The social issues of most concern: war in Iraq, asylum seekers, children in detention centre, poverty, racism, environment**
- **For many the only volunteer work they do is through the school or for family**
- **For others it was their interests that drive their volunteerism - sport, music**
- **Some do extraordinary amount of volunteerism - become addicted.**

I draw your attention to just a few of the tentative conclusions we have drawn to date about civic orientation.

- There were a number of social justice issues that concerned young people.
- Most of them were able to name a number without any difficulty, although those that were older talked about the issues in more complex terms.
- I have only listed the ones cited most often here.
- The social issues of most concern to the participants were: war in Iraq, asylum seekers, children in detention centre, poverty, racism, and environment
- There was some particularly strong anti-Bush sentiments expressed about the Iraq war.
- Volunteer activity tended in the first instance, to be centred on a person's own interest areas and arose out of activities like sport, music, or leisure.

Slide 10

Stage 2

Results - citizenship

AGES 13-24

1619 people were interviewed by telephone in stage two of the study, which was conducted in the first half of 2005.

There were:

401 in 13-15 age group,

272 aged 16-17,

546 aged 18-24,

400 aged 25-59.

Slide 11

Survey - values' question

Ages 13-24

Level of confidence to write/email area of real concern

| | 13-17 | 18-24 |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 5 very confident | 18% | 37% |
| 4 | 32% | 27% |
| 3 | 32% | 24% |
| 2 | 13% | 9% |
| 1 not confident at all | 5% | 3% |

We asked a number of questions in the telephone interviews that tried to measure the four dimensions of civic orientation.

I am only going to discuss a few of them.

The one noted on this slide was measuring an aspect of **civic capacity and skills**.

At least half of the younger age group did not feel confident about writing or sending an email about an area of concern.

We looked for factors that seemed associated with their response to this question. For example age and gender was a factor.

Females indicated much more confidence as did older participants.

Slide 12

Survey - values' question

Age 13-24

Likely to speak up or express an opinion with people you don't know

| | <u>13-17</u> | <u>18-24</u> |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 5 very likely | 27% | 42% |
| 4 | 36% | 32% |
| 3 | 8% | 9% |
| 2 | 22% | 12% |
| 1 very unlikely | 7% | 5% |

No gender difference

This question about how confident they are about speaking up or expressing an opinion with people they don't know, was also trying to measure civic capacity and skills.

Again age was a factor here but there were no gender differences.

Overall, participants were more confident about speaking up than they were about writing.

Slide 13

Survey - values' question

Ages 13-17

Suppose you won \$100,000 how would you spend it?

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Keep it to yourself | 17% |
| Give at least \$10,000 away to | |
| family members | 35% |
| friends | 1% |
| charity or good cause | 47% |

This question asked them how they would spend the money if they *won \$100,000*.

The question was trying to measure **civic attitudes and actions** for the common good.

While almost half said they would give a significant amount (\$10,000) to a good cause, there were some interesting trends as the next slide illustrates.

Slide 14

Who is most likely to give money away to charity? (1)

Positive direction

- gender, females (42%) males (33%)
- Civic participation
- Humanitarian values - *helping others, protecting environment, social justice, spiritual life, world peace*

Negative direction

- Age - younger more generous
- Morals are relative

Gender was a factor here with more females than males stating that they would give some of the money away to a charity

Values and attitudes that showed a concern for the common good were related to giving prize money like from a lottery away to charity as apposed to giving it to family or friends or keeping it for oneself.

Age was related to their level of generosity but in a negative direction. The older you were the less likely you were to give money away.

The value of money and the important of it to self seemed to increasingly take over, as young people got older. Maybe realism crept in or maybe the philosophy of individualism and self-interest took over.

Slide 15

Who is most likely to give money away to charity? (2)

- Positive direction
- Importance of spiritual life & religious faith in shaping daily life
- Closeness to God
- Religious practice - regular prayer, church attendance

There were a number of variables that stood out that were related to specific religious or spiritual practice.

Importance of religious life and religious practice was a factor.

The survey shows a strong relationship between key aspects of religiosity and this aspect of civic action, i.e. giving money away to charity

Praying occasionally was not related, but **praying daily** or more often was.

There were also some interesting other factors related to this around religious or spiritual activities.

Slide 16

| Survey – hours of volunteer/community work per month | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| <i>Not school organised</i> | | |
| | <u>13-17</u> | <u>18-24</u> |
| 0 | 70% | 72% |
| 1-5 | 21% | 14% |
| 6-10 | 5% | 4% |
| 11-29 | 3% | 6% |
| 30-180 | 1% | 4% |

We sought to measure community participation in a number of ways – one of which was by the hours of volunteering done per month; another way was by noting the type of activity in which they engaged.

Slide 17

Survey ages 13-24

Volunteering

- Positive relationship
- Confidence - email, speaking up
- Humanitarian values
- Importance of spiritual life & religious faith in shaping daily life
- Closeness to God
- Religious practice - regular prayer, church attendance

- Generosity - giving \$ away
- Education level
- Females more likely than males

There were a number of factors that related to active civic participation including:

Confidence. Not surprisingly, those who were confident that they could write a letter or speak out if they saw something occurring that they believed was unjust were more likely to be actively involved in civic participation

Importance of religious life and religious practice. The survey shows a strong relationship between key aspects of religiosity and the two indicators of civic action (volunteering and giving money away).

For example, praying sometimes did not seem to be related to amount of civic action, but praying daily or more often did. This finding matches in some aspects a recent study done by Saroglou et al (2005) in a study in Brussels of young university students. They found that religiosity and spirituality were associated with helping people.

Humanitarian Values:

Participants were asked a number of questions that focussed on their humanitarian values. For example, they were asked a question about how much they personally cared for poor people and another question about equal treatment of all Australians irrespective of race, religion, and culture. Those who hold these values strongly were more likely to be involved in community participation than those who did not.

Gender. More males than females did **no** volunteer work or civic participation.

Education level low year 7-8, 10-12, high peak at year 9 & post tertiary/TAFE

References:

Mellor, S, Kennedy, K & Greenwood, L 2002, *Citizenship and democracy: students' knowledge and beliefs, the IEA civil education study of fourteen year olds*, ACER, Melbourne.

Saroglou, V, Pichon, I, Trompette, L, Verschuere, M & Dernelle, R 2005, 'Prosocial behavior and religion: New evidence based on projective measures and peer ratings', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 323-48.