

# Encouraging and Evaluating Young Philanthropy

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*Many philanthropists have made the journey from casual to strategic givers. Most can critically assess the likely impact of causes they support without losing the passion of the giving. But could this be taught in schools as part of the process of becoming an informed citizen? And if so, how would you evaluate the impact of someone trying to make it happen? The Citizenship Foundation are asking, and starting to answer those questions.*

Picture this: a room full of primary school teachers are beginning their 'Go-Givers' training ([www.gogivers.org/training](http://www.gogivers.org/training)). They're going to learn how to help their pupils understand the work of charities, inspiring empathy and compassion along the way. But where to start? These teachers all know what charities do. They have seen the Go-Givers materials and understand why over half of English primary schools have signed up to use them.



*Andy Thornton*



*Giving Nation examples*

**W**e ask teachers to identify a 'golden moment' in their childhood where they woke up to the great paradox of giving. Can they pinpoint when they first that warm glow from the act of losing something yet feeling better for it?

The teachers get it quickly. They can readily summon it up and share such a moment with their colleagues. It's an experience that unites, and the room grows in energy as they recognise that part of their new task is to pass on the 'golden moment'.

By extension we might say that philanthropists have turned that golden moment into a 'golden lifetime'. Yet as strategic givers they demand evidence of the social impact that their investment has made. To create a more effective philanthropic culture the teacher needs to help pupils make a connection between the giving and the efficacy of the giving, because giving in order to feel good doesn't always change the world for the better.

This is why our primary and secondary school social action programmes Go-Givers and Giving Nation [www.g-nation.org.uk](http://www.g-nation.org.uk) have two clear aims: to support children and young people's choice to give, and also

to understand the connection between the donation and its effect. To do this learners need both action and reflection, helping them to discern how to be confident that their giving makes a difference. This turns the fun into fulfilment: touching head as well as heart.

But how can we be confident that we have achieved that? How can we evidence it?

When I started our Giving Nation secondary school programme in 2002 I embarked on a tour of larger UK charities to understand their approach to young potential donors. The dominant mind-set was exemplified in a candid statement from the nation's largest: They did not invest in young donors because the return on investment could not be guaranteed over a time-frame that reassures them it's been money well spent. Put simply, they can't measure it.

And for this reason they left young people out of their work.

After 12 years Giving Nation is now used in around 650 secondary education settings. The programme usually takes place during class time. Each class becomes a mini-charity for around 5 weeks. Students are thrown in at the deep end with £50 to start helping a cause they care about (start-up money they give back for next year's classes). But they have to decide who, how and what to do. We give them guidance, resources, parameters, on-line tools. Their teachers are on hand.

We measure the effect. For example by the end of it 93% think giving money to charity is a good thing; 87% believe we should all try to help those who are worse off than ourselves; 74% said everyone should give a little time to others on a regular basis; 72% would like to give their time to help others if there was an opportunity.

But that's not social impact – it may just be short-term attitudinal change.

We'd rather use this evidence around the net effect. Last academic year we supported over 70,000 young people to design, deliver and evaluate their own student-led social action projects. In sum they benefited 1,800 good causes. From £80,000 of seed-grants young people added passion and entrepreneurial spirit to raise more £400,000 while volunteering 350,000 hours outside of the classroom. In short; for every £1 we entrusted to a young person, they raised £5 for good causes and volunteered 5 hours outside of school. And by coincidence, Giving Nation can be delivered for as little as £5 per student because it happens where they are already in the process of learning and are ready to work together: school.<sup>1</sup>

So how would we translate that into social impact calculations? We would say it happens in two dimensions: firstly the scheme is effectively 'cost neutral' to wider society. Money invested in young people's engagement is converting into money going out to valuable charity projects: streamed in the direction that young people feel a concern about. And secondly, precisely because that money flows through their hands it arouses young people's interest and investment in social issues, triggering connections they might not have otherwise made. They've understood causes of social need, learned to identify what unsettles them and articulate why it matters to their peers such that they turned £1 into five using their spare time. That has to be an indicator that some kind of light bulb has gone on, though we can't know how 'golden' the moment was.

Our research into Go-Givers work in primary schools is not only thorough, but this year is undergoing a Cabinet Office-funded Randomised Control Trial to show the many collateral benefits that it brings. By having 20 'matched' control schools we will probe those who participate for indicators relating to growth in attainment, character, skills, empathy, understanding, motivation and identification with those around us. We would be happy to share the results with Philanthropy Impact.

But here's why we're a little circumspect on that. Last year we also had outside researchers look at the attitudinal changes that Go-Givers effects in 10 - 11 year olds. Through pre- and post- activity questionnaires

*Giving Nation*



we discovered significant changes in positivity towards helping others. But in fact, for this age group the baseline is high. So we'd end up with 89% of them declaring "I think it is important to share what I have with other people"<sup>2</sup>, but the baseline was 85%. No big shakes when starting from such an enthusiastic base, perhaps.

In fact there was only one indicator that shifted really significantly and it went up by 15% as a result of taking part in the Go-Givers Make a Difference Challenge. This difference was a rise in how many agreed with this statement: "Our community is being harmed because people don't care enough about each other".

In other words, they started the project thinking that people cared, but when they got involved with the community they had a disappointing awakening alongside their golden moment. Somehow the light in others wasn't as bright as they had believed even though it didn't dim their own enthusiasm - that indicator went up.

This is the territory the Citizenship Foundation occupies. We can't always tangibly identify a single measure of the social impact that the young people who participate our Go-Givers and Giving Nation programmes bring about, but we can demonstrate tangible changes they have brought about in their community e.g. a park in London that's now open through their campaigning; a bridge that has been refurbished where they were once scared to cross; a children's hospital full of new toys - endless small gestures that add up to a thousand golden moments.

Our proposition is that you can help nurture and measure the social impact of philanthropy by school students by supporting their educational journey. However, any has to go further than '£1 in = X community impact out' approach.

We think our methodology around measuring social impact and value for money is compelling but it could be argued that the institutional science is stretched to the limits with second tier activities. The Cancer Research UK ROI model of 'Prove it or Dump it' win the day for many bigger donors but is not right in every case. Visionary philanthropy which marries rigorous evaluation with a more human approach, unbounded by the absolutes of that science, is what is needed.



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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/lib\\_res\\_pdf/1736.pdf](http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/lib_res_pdf/1736.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.gogivers.org/files/D2E0EB68-155D-0101-34662E43F7A5FAAC.pdf>