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Survey highlights barriers preventing young people from acting on concerns

Young people say lack of time and knowledge on how to get involved prevent them from acting on their concerns about global and local issues, according to a report launched today by v, the youth volunteering charity.

However, the majority do act on their own personal passions for activities such as sports and music by sharing information and helping other people.

These are the main findings from a survey of 1,000 16-25 year olds commissioned by v and published today as a summary report, 'Barriers preventing passionate young people acting on their concerns'.

As a result, the charity is calling on the sector to develop positive opportunities for young people, which tap into the issues they are concerned about while providing opportunities to enjoy their personal passions.

The global issues young people are most concerned about include:

- Terrorism (63%)
- War (63%)
- Poverty (61%)
- Climate change (54%)

The local issues they are most concerned about include:

- Lack of things to do (42%)
- Negative perceptions of young people (38%)
- Crime (37%)
- Local environment (35%)

When asked what were the main barriers preventing them from getting involved in these issues, the young people said:

- Lack of time (51%)
- Not sure how to help (50%)
- Don't feel have anything to offer (23%)

The top three personal passions for 16 – 25 year olds are sport, friends and music which young people act on by sharing information (62%), helping people (51%), creating resources (47%), and joining clubs or groups (45%).

Commenting on the findings, Terry Ryall, v Chief Executive, says: “The survey results highlight the lack of involvement young people exhibit in response to the local and global issues that concern them most, compared to the ease with which they take positive action in relation to their personal passions.

“If, as a sector, we want to seriously increase the number of young people volunteering, we need to develop positive opportunities for young people, which tap into the issues they are concerned about while providing an opportunity to enjoy their personal passions.”

The summary report sets out two key challenges for all organisations involved in youth volunteering:

- How do we create innovative approaches to youth volunteering?
- How do we package volunteering in a way that engages the passions of young people?

v is currently working with the voluntary sector to tackle these challenges by:

- Encouraging the development of innovative youth volunteering opportunities through its Grant and Match Funds
- Giving young people a genuine voice in how these opportunities are developed, through its v20 youth advisory board and vInspired youth panel.
- Developing youth-led funding schemes such as vCashpoint, which puts money directly into the hands of young people so that they can act on their local concerns
- Creating the vInspired.com portal to act as a one stop shop for information on volunteering. This addresses the “how to help” and “not sure how to go about it” concerns identified in the survey.
- Running an awareness raising campaign targeting young people through radio, print and online media

This is the first in a planned series of reports from v aimed at providing practitioners and policy makers with the information that they need to better engage young people with volunteering. To download a copy of the summary report, visit www.wearev.com/vlearning/index.php.

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Media enquiries: contact

katharine.preece@geronimocommunications.com or 020 7299 8778
or v PR manager Petra Coveney on 020 7960 7016

Notes to Editor

Case study – Oxjam: uniting a global issue with a personal passion

In October 2006, v linked up with MTV, Galaxy and Oxfam to create an innovative youth volunteering project called Oxjam, which uniquely allowed young people to take positive action about something of global concern (poverty) through one of their key passions – music. Oxjam is a public fundraising initiative that supports local musicians and enthusiastic young volunteers to organise music events whilst raising money for Oxfam.

Oxjam harnesses the passion of local volunteers, aspiring musicians and music promoters from across the country to take action against poverty. More than 1,000 events were organised in October 2006. Oxjam supported volunteers who wanted to run their own festivals and events with training, toolkits and technical resources. They organised their own gigs, recruited local musicians, sourced venues and controlled entry charges on the door with the proceeds going to Oxfam.

Match Fund Partners MTV and Galaxy gave in kind support worth over £285,000 in the form of broadcast and production time. v provided funding to the value of these relationships.

Oxjam tapped into a new generation of volunteers by uniting their passion for music with a cause they cared about. Through the partnership with v, MTV and Galaxy, 450 part time volunteering opportunities were created and 10,000 short term volunteering opportunities for 16 – 25 year olds.

- v is the new youth volunteering charity launched in May 2006 whose mission is to inspire a million more young volunteers in England aged 16-25.
- The charity was set up to implement the recommendations of the Russell Commission outlining a new national framework for youth action and engagement, following a nationwide consultation which included 6000 young people.
- v is led by the cares, interests, passions and beliefs of young people. A Youth Advisory Board made up of twenty young people called v20 is involved in all aspects of the charity's work. Four members of v20 sit on v's Board of Trustees.
- v works with and builds upon the current voluntary sector infrastructure, funds the creation of volunteering opportunities through grants rounds and implements programmes to create awareness and positive understanding of volunteering for young people.
- v has been formed as an independent charity using an innovative new model which allows funds raised from the private sector to be matched by the Government. Up to £50 million has been allocated by the Government for this purpose over the next three years. For more information on v, please visit www.wearev.com
- v commissioned Dubit, the youth focused research agency, to conduct a survey of 1,000 young people aged 16 to 25. The survey was conducted with respondents spread in terms of age, gender, location, disability and ethnicity to represent the national demographic in England.
- v has created a web-based portal designed by young people to provide a unique environment for them to find out about volunteering and search for volunteering opportunities in their area. For more information, please visit www.vinspired.com