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## Are young people really ‘Good for Nothing’?

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Today sees the launch of a new campaign that aims to spark a debate around whether young people really are ‘Good for Nothing’. Turning negative youth stereotypes on their head, **v**, The National Young Volunteers Service, showcases four of its young volunteers who give up their time for free to benefit their community - putting a whole new meaning behind the concept ‘Good For Nothing’.

The new campaign challenges the idea that young people are automatically associated with anti-social behaviour or crime and asks the public to pause for thought before they make a split second judgement on someone, based on age or appearance.

New research shows that 69% of British adults think that young people treat others with a lack of respect and consideration in public<sup>1</sup>; 40% think teenagers have a predominantly negative impact on their community and one in ten adults overestimate youth crime by a staggering eight times<sup>2</sup>. However, the latest statistics about youth behaviour actually tell a very different story. They reveal that 78% of 16-25 year olds do respect their elders; 48% of 16-25 year olds have given up their time to do something for the benefit of people in their local area<sup>3</sup> and young people are, in reality, more likely to be a victim of crime rather than a perpetrator.<sup>4</sup>

Having commissioned over 900,000 youth volunteering opportunities since its inception 3 years ago and now working in partnership with over 500 voluntary, community and public sector organisations, the National Young Volunteers Service **v** is more aware, than most, of all the good work that 16-25 year olds are engaged with across the country. And with online applications to [vinspired.com](http://vinspired.com) increasing by nearly 200% over the past 12 months and this trend seemingly set to continue, **v** and its network of partners are keen for young people to get the due recognition they deserve.

Terry Ryall, CEO of **v**, The National Young Volunteers Service said: “The four volunteers featured in the campaign have all been victims of negative stereotyping and yet continue to give up their time for free to benefit the community. They represent a whole generation of young volunteers who are positively contributing to society or in simple terms doing “good” for “nothing”. Before casting aspersions about today’s youth we should be sure to open our eyes to their true potential first.”

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<sup>1</sup> Research from YouGov State of the Nation (October 2009)

<sup>2</sup> Research from findings commissioned by national charity Catch22 on behalf of The Philip Lawrence Awards (2009)

<sup>3</sup> Research from **v**, The National Young Volunteers Service new online youth insight project – Voicebox Stereotypes & labels (2009)

<sup>4</sup> Research from Joseph Rowntee Foundation: What and who it is we don’t trust (2008)

**Tim Loughton MP, Conservative Shadow Minister for Children & Young People**

'It's time to recognise that hundreds of thousands of young people give Britain something for nothing. Negative stereotyping is the psychology of laziness – we have to challenge it.'

**Liam Snusher, 23 from Milton Keynes** manages projects which encourage other young people to express themselves through art, photography and film. He also campaigns for legal graffiti walls and has set-up skateboarding projects to give young people focus and help to keep them off of the streets.

*"We give a regular platform for the young skaters and artists to engage in something they have a passion for and to show their talents. Good For Nothing is going to show other young people the rewards you get from literally doing good stuff, for nothing."*

**Rosie Kilburn, 17, from Gloucester** set up an art auction to help support those affected indirectly by cancer after being diagnosed herself in Feb 2008. She has since raised over nine thousand pounds to fund her business 'The Knock on Effect' that now sells t-shirts in which the all the proceeds are donated to cancer charities.

*'The messages [on our t-shirts] are designed to be positive, and I know they are also controversial. I didn't want to shy away from telling people about cancer. Volunteering is a great way to help your community and I wanted to be part of Good For Nothing to send out a positive message about young people. I'm fed up of all the negative press we get.'*

**Rui Jorge Octavio, 21 from Edgware** set up a comedy club to help young people develop their self-confidence and communication skills. He provided them with a forum in which they can enhance their soft-skills for when they enter the work environment and also provide an opportunity to interact with other young people off the streets in a more productive environment.

*'Once you get involved, doors open. If you sit around waiting, nothing will happen. Get yourself active and out there. Develop your skills now. Show people you do Good For Nothing.'*

**Seja Majeed, 23 from London** has been involved in volunteering for several years and is an advocate for Abrahamic religions, working to ease tension and promote dialogue. As part of this Seja visited Iraq to produce a film highlighting the social unrest within the country. What's more, Seja has set up a project to help young people gain skills, experience and the confidence they need to get into the fashion industry.

*'Volunteering is character-building, and you learn how determined you are as a person. People respect you. It's a great way to learn who you are. Ultimately it's about getting to know yourself and other people. I'm proud to be part of v's Good For Nothing campaign and hope to show that there's more to young people than meets the eye.'*

**Dawn Primarolo, Children and Young People's Minister said:**

"I welcome v's new advertising campaign because hopefully it will make everyone think twice about young people before they believe in or contribute to the negative stereotyping. It is fantastic that almost half of all young people give up their free time to volunteer in their communities. A higher percentage of young

people volunteer than in any other age group and it's about time that we celebrate the positive contribution they make and recognise and reward them for their hard work and respect of others.

"I hope this campaign reaches out to young people that have not thought about volunteering in the past, so they can also take advantage of the chance to broaden their life experiences and skills."

If you're aged 16-25 and have experienced negative stereotyping and want to have your say, please visit [www.vinspired.com/goodfornothing](http://www.vinspired.com/goodfornothing). As well as reading the full case studies of our young volunteers, you can see behind the scenes film footage of the photo-shoot and post your views on the v.org blog.

- ENDS -

If you would like more information or would like to interview one of the individuals featured in the campaign, please contact us on the below details.

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OR Jane Eggleton at v [jane.eggleton@vinspired.com](mailto:jane.eggleton@vinspired.com) 020 7960 7018

#### Notes to Editors:

v, The National Young Volunteers Service aims to inspire a new generation of volunteers (aged 16-25) across England. It does this by creating a diverse range of volunteering opportunities to help young people take action to improve lives, communities and the planet. Please visit [www.vinspired.com](http://www.vinspired.com). 'Good for Nothing' is a new advertising campaign from v the National Young Volunteer Service that will be launched across England on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2009





# GOOD FOR NOTHING

Rui Jorge from Engage gives up his time to run workshops for young people, developing their communication skills and self-confidence. The **Grab Your Mike** workshops use stand-up comedy to provide a fun way to learn. Rui Jorge wanted to educate and inspire young people to reach their full potential.

✦ The National Young Volunteers Service has created over 100,000 volunteering opportunities. If you are 16-25, wherever you are, whatever your interest, there is something for you.

If you want to do good for nothing or to find out more about Rui Jorge's story visit [www.vinspired.com/goodfornothing](http://www.vinspired.com/goodfornothing)

**V** inspiring a new generation of young volunteers



# GOOD FOR NOTHING

Saeed from London set up the **Cosmetic HIVE** project, and volunteered her time to run make-up and hair workshops for young people interested in getting into fashion and media through involving industry professionals in the event. Saeed was able to provide realistic opportunities for 16-25 year olds to learn relevant skills.

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