

Character Education for Social Action: A Conceptual Analysis of the #iwill Campaign

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- Applies Aristotelian character education to youth social action.
- Analyses the quality principles of #iwill, a cross-sector collective impact campaign in the UK.
- Suggests how Aristotelian insights can frame a habit of reflective and impactful social action.
- Reconceptualises the relationship between individual and community benefits of social action.
- Provides a conceptual framework that can be useful for other social action campaigns.

Purpose: This article integrates two distinct discourses to show how an Aristotelian account of character education can supply a valuable framework for developing a habit of social action.

Approach: We use a review of relevant secondary literature, a documentary analysis of #iwill materials, and an Aristotelian conceptual framework to analyse the quality principles of the #iwill campaign—a cross-sector, cross-party collective impact campaign that encourages youth social action in the UK.

Findings: We show how an Aristotelian account offers useful resources for conceptualising and applying #iwill's six quality principles and addresses four practical and theoretical challenges in #iwill's model. In particular, an Aristotelian account provides a more capacious conception of a habit and offers a revised model for understanding social action's benefits to individuals and communities.

Practical Implications: With over 800 partner organizations in the UK, #iwill has a significant impact on how social action is practised and supplies a valuable model for other campaigns to follow. By informing #iwill's quality framework, this Aristotelian account seeks to amplify efforts to cultivate social action as a virtuous habit for life.

Keywords: character education, social action, habit, #iwill, Aristotle

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1 Introduction: Youth Social Action in the UK

In recent decades, governments, schools, and non-profit organizations in the UK have actively encouraged youth to engage in social action—an umbrella term used interchangeably with ‘volunteering’ that refers broadly to activities that help or serve other individuals, the community, or the environment. While social action campaigns have increased youth involvement, these efforts occasionally lack a cohesive framework for conceptualising and cultivating social action as an enduring habit, even as they aspire to do so in practice. This article argues that an Aristotelian account of character education can supply a valuable conceptual framework for identifying and developing a habit of social action.

In making this case, this article seeks to overcome a divide in how character education and social action are typically promoted and practised. Often, practitioners of character education construe character individualistically without proper attention to the social sources and impacts of individual development (Kisby, 2017). Meanwhile, an Aristotelian account of virtue has not yet been explicitly applied to the quality principles of youth social action. We aim to bring these discourses into conversation and explore what an Aristotelian account can contribute to practical efforts to improve and increase social action. In this way, this article adds to extensive literature on youth volunteering in the UK (see Hill, Russell and Brewis, 2009) and contributes to the *Journal of Social Science Education’s* efforts to provide a ‘bridge’ between character education and citizenship education (see Davies, Grammes, and Kuno, 2017, p. 2, and the other articles in *JSSE*, 2017-3; see also Althof and Berkowitz, 2006).

To advance our analysis, we apply an Aristotelian approach to the quality principles of the #iwill campaign, a cross-sector collective impact campaign in the UK that seeks to improve the quality of social action opportunities, shrink the socioeconomic gap in participation, and increase participation in ‘meaningful’ social action by 2020.¹ Coordinated by the charity Step Up To Serve, the #iwill campaign aims to make social action a ‘habit for life’ (Step Up To Serve, 2014). Established in 2013 following a review commissioned by then Prime Minister David Cameron, the #iwill campaign enjoys cross-party support. It is backed by HRH The Prince of Wales and was referenced in the manifestos of both the Conservative and Labour parties before the 2015 election (#iwill, 2017).

#iwill offers a relevant object of analysis for three reasons. First, #iwill has developed a sophisticated conceptual framework for quality social action that promotes both individual and community benefits and seeks to make social action a habit of character, integrating discourses around social action and character education in ways that transcend typical divides. Since non-formal educational opportunities have been identified as promising areas for integrating character education and citizenship education among youth (Park, 2017, pp. 25–27), #iwill’s efforts to combine character and social action stand as a particularly relevant model for this work. Second, with over 800 partner organizations, #iwill has a significant impact on how social action is conceptualised and practised in the UK and potentially beyond. Third, #iwill enjoys widespread political support and has an ambitious goal of making social action the norm among 10–20-year-olds, which means it has the potential to make an impact across political and cultural divides. For these reasons, the #iwill campaign constitutes a valuable object of analysis and a potentially useful model for other campaigns to follow. Closer analysis of #iwill’s quality framework, however, reveals conceptual challenges in integrating



and applying the model that an Aristotelian account of character education can help to address.

Our argument proceeds as follows. Section 2 presents an overview of #iwill's 'six quality principles' as they relate to developing social action as a 'habit for life'. Section 3 identifies four aspects of #iwill's framework that would benefit from conceptual clarity. Sections 4 and 5 highlight how an Aristotelian account of virtue can clarify and expand #iwill's quality principles and address the four challenges of conceptualising and cultivating a habit of social action.

2 #iwill's Quality Principles

#iwill is informed by extensive research on how to ensure both the quality and impact of social action. In the campaign's early days, stakeholders from the voluntary, education, and business sectors undertook a literature review on social action, conducted interviews with stakeholders, and studied 50 existing quality assurance frameworks to develop a quality framework for youth social action. Their three-part framework includes 1) a definition of social action, 2) an outcomes framework for individuals and communities, and 3) six quality principles that 'define great youth social action' (The Campaign for Youth Social Action, 2013a, p. 6).

The #iwill campaign defines social action as 'young people taking practical action in the service of others in order to create positive social change that is of benefit to the wider community as well as to the young person themselves' (The Campaign for Youth Social Action, 2013a, p. 6). Social action encompasses activities such as fundraising, campaigning, tutoring, coaching, mentoring, supporting others (not friends or relatives), helping to improve the local area, and giving time to help a charity or cause (Cabinet Office and Ipsos MORI, 2016). Central to the #iwill campaign is the concept of a 'double benefit', whereby social action benefits both the person helping and the community, cause, or person being helped (The Campaign for Youth Social Action, 2013a, p. 7, 10–13; see also Snyder and Omoto, 2007, p. 955).

The double benefit model is represented in the outcomes framework in Figure 1. The outcomes for individual participants are grouped into three broad categories: 1) optimism, 2) determination, and 3) emotional intelligence.² The community outcomes are broader and include benefits ranging from increased voting and civic participation to better health, employability, and educational engagement (The Campaign for Youth Social Action, 2013a, p. 7, 10–13; 2013b, p. 14).³

| Benefits for the individual | | Benefits for the Community |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Optimism | Communication | Can be wide-ranging, from civic participation, health, educational engagement to safer communities, sustainability, voting, resilience and employability. |
| | Creativity | |
| Determination | Confidence and Agency | |
| | Planning and Problem Solving | |
| | Resilience, Grit | |
| Emotional Intelligence | Leadership | |
| | Relationships | |
| | Managing feelings, Self control | |

Figure 1: #iwill’s outcomes framework (The Campaign for Youth Social Action, 2013a, p. 7)

To achieve these benefits, #iwill developed six quality principles identified in Figure 2. Quality social action should be 1) reflective, 2) challenging, 3) youth-led, 4) socially impactful, 5) progressive, and 6) embedded.



Figure 2: #iwill’s six quality principles of youth social action (Step Up To Serve, 2014)



2.1 Progressive

The ‘progressive’ principle holds that social action ought to be developed and maintained over time. It entails that youth should be directed to multiple opportunities for ongoing social action so they are engaged in a journey rather than one-off experiences (Generation Change *et al.*, 2014, p. 16).⁴

In practice, social action providers have created an ‘engagement pathway’ to guide youth through projects requiring ‘increasing levels of responsibility’ (Ibid., p. 21). One provider—The Key—uses a four-stage approach where students must complete work at the lowest stage before progressing to increasingly challenging projects (Ibid.). Others have mentors and coaches that ‘support young people to take the next step’ upon completing a project, while some showcase alumni and highlight skills for future education and employment (Ibid., p. 16).

2.2 Youth-led

The ‘youth-led’ principle encourages social action to be ‘led, owned and shaped by young people’s needs, ideas and decision making’ (Ibid., p. 15). That social action is ‘youth-led’ encourages participants to exercise their agency, contribute their ideas and voice, and take ownership in choosing, participating in, and leading social action (Ibid.). In a content analysis of 23 providers’ external communications, ‘leadership’ was the second most common virtue they claimed to develop and one of the most important capacities that youth themselves said they develop (Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor, 2015, pp. 11–13).⁵

Providers have implemented the youth-led principle in various ways. Some emphasise the planning stages in which youth’s needs and opinions inform which causes to support and strategies to implement. Others focus on the execution stage, letting ‘young people make [their] own decisions’ to lead the project or training staff to guide younger participants through planning and execution (Generation Change *et al.*, 2014, p. 15).

2.3 Reflective

‘Reflective’ social action involves youth reflecting on what they learn through their social action and considering ways to improve (Ibid.). Compared to 30 other concepts studied by Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor (2015, pp. 11–12), reflection was the seventh most common practice mentioned in providers’ external communications, though, strikingly, it was not prioritised by any CEO of those providers when interviewed.

#iwill’s ‘reflective’ principle includes both into reflection and recognition. In terms of reflection, Envision uses a ‘Skills Passport’ whereby adult volunteers help students articulate and understand the ‘qualities they’ve developed during the programme’ (Generation Change *et al.*, 2014, p. 23). Other providers—such as London Youth—incorporate a reflective element for staff and use an impact questionnaire to assess how participants develop traits of confidence, resilience, and leadership (Ibid.).

Recognition is also a core part of many youth social action programmes. The Russell Commission even recommended a framework of accreditation and rewards that included a ‘personal development and progression plan’, a Youth Achievement Award, and ‘a direct link



between full-time volunteering and vocational qualifications' (2005, pp. 87–90). Thus, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, vInspired, and Diana Award all reward exemplary youth social action, and #iwill recognises the social action work of 50 outstanding youth each year as #iwill Ambassadors (#iwill, 2016). Other providers recognise youth through ceremonies such as graduation or 'waymarkers' such as uniforms and badges (Generation Change *et al.*, 2014, p. 15).

2.4 Challenging

The 'challenging' principle holds that social action should be 'stretching and engaging, as well as exciting and enjoyable' (The Campaign for Youth Social Action, 2013a, p. 6). #iwill argues that challenging social action stretches participants in meaningful ways while helping them understand and address social and political challenges that affect particular communities.

The 'challenging' principle has been implemented in numerous ways. Some providers emphasise the amount and intensity of social action, tailoring the level and difficulty to participants' aptitudes to stretch their skills and experiences (Generation Change *et al.*, 2014, p. 16). City Year UK, for example, offers an intense year of service where 'challenge is crucial to the year's appeal' (*Ibid.*, p. 19). Others focus less on the intensity of the work than on the types of problems addressed. By 'meeting people from different backgrounds' or participating in experiences that participants would 'not typically have elsewhere at school or home', youth are challenged to think critically about their assumptions and expectations, try new things, and confront difficult problems (*Ibid.*, pp. 16, 19). Others engage participants by incorporating competitive elements into their programs (*Ibid.*, p. 16).

2.5 Embedded

The 'embedded' principle entails that social action should be 'accessible to all and well integrated into existing pathways to become a habit for life' (*Ibid.*, p. 14). This reflects the importance of integrating social action into familiar aspects of a young person's life—including families, social networks, and religious communities; schools, colleges, and universities; and apprenticeships, internships, and jobs. Embedding social action in existing communities and integrating it into aspects of everyday life minimises barriers to participation, makes social action more accessible and inclusive, and fosters genuine engagement within existing communities.

Although the progressive principle has theoretical links to developing the habit of social action, in practice providers connect habituation to the embedded principle. Some focus explicitly on developing a habit that will 'last into adulthood' by valuing habituation in the organization's operational strategy and mission statement (*Ibid.*). Some providers seek to involve youth in social action at critical transition moments, such as changing schools, leaving school, or starting a job (*Ibid.*). Others graft social action programmes onto existing youth groups, networks, and services to make 'the activity more accessible and visible' (*Ibid.*). Similarly, some providers encourage social action through 'positive peer pressure' and 'role models', which 'helps normalise the activity and make it aspirational' (*Ibid.*).



2.6 Socially Impactful

Finally, social action should be ‘socially impactful’, having ‘a clear intended benefit to a community, cause or social problem’ (Ibid., p. 17). At the core of this principle is the ‘double benefit model’, which ensures that social action benefits youth participants as well as the individual, community, or cause being helped.

Providers have taken varied approaches to ensuring social impact. Some use evidence-based assessments of local challenges to determine which issues to address, while others prioritise community partnerships and ‘beneficiary led interventions’ that rely upon ‘input and direction from the people they hope to benefit’ (Ibid.). Others emphasise measuring project outcomes through ‘before and after comparisons’ to assess whether efforts have achieved, and might continue to achieve, the desired social impact (Ibid.).

3 Toward Conceptual Clarity

#iwill’s commitment to promote a habit of social action that aligns with the six quality principles constitutes a significant achievement and valuable model for other campaigns to follow. Yet—as anticipated at the start of the campaign⁶—theoretical and practical challenges have arisen as the framework has been applied, tested, and evaluated. Building on work done by the Jubilee Centre, along with a review of relevant secondary literature, a documentary analysis of #iwill materials, and the application of an Aristotelian conceptual framework, we wish to highlight four aspects of #iwill’s framework that would benefit from additional conceptual clarity.

First, social action providers tend to operate with a limited view of a habit. For providers, ‘habit’ often refers to frequency of behaviour and intention to participate in the future.⁷ While intentions are important for habit formation, intentions alone do not constitute stable and enduring dispositions, and evidence suggests they prove unsuitable as a single measure of habit when behaviour is tested (Marta *et al.*, 2014; Snyder and Omoto, 2007). Moreover, by emphasising behavioural outcomes (future participation in social action), this conception of a habit downplays the emotional, motivational, and dispositional aspects emphasised in #iwill’s mission and outcomes framework. While psychologists (Ajzen, 1991; Verplanken and Orbell, 2003) and philosophers (Miller, 1974; Ravaisson, 1838; Snow, 2010; Steutel and Spiecker, 2004) have sought to define and measure a habit in a range of areas, this work has only recently been applied to youth social action (Arthur *et al.*, 2017). It is too soon to tell whether or how this recent research will inform practitioners’ work, though it was conducted in partnership with the #iwill campaign and involved major providers including NCS, vInspired, Envision, and the Diana Award.

Second, many providers are unclear about how the two spheres of the double benefit model relate. While #iwill clearly outlines the intended individual benefits (optimism, determination, and emotional intelligence), community outcomes remain more ambiguous. This owes partly to the difficulty of using standardised quantitative instruments to measure the diversity of activity within #iwill’s broad definition of social action (Tyler-Rubinstein *et al.*, 2016, p. 12).⁸ While this ambiguity is understandable, the lack of specification in community outcomes is



potentially problematic for two reasons: first it risks overemphasising individual outcomes at the expense of community outcomes, and second the separation of individual and community outcomes potentially neglects the fundamentally social sources and impacts of individual development.

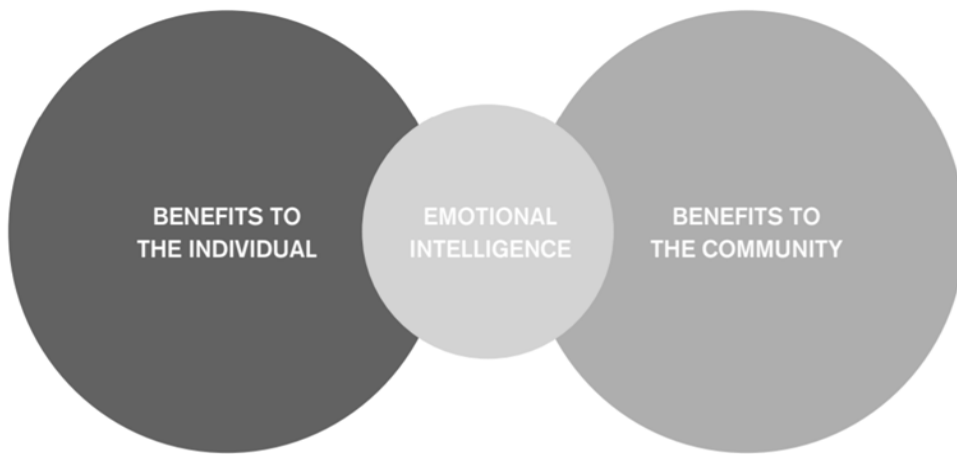


Figure 3: Original double benefit model (Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor, 2015, p. 16)

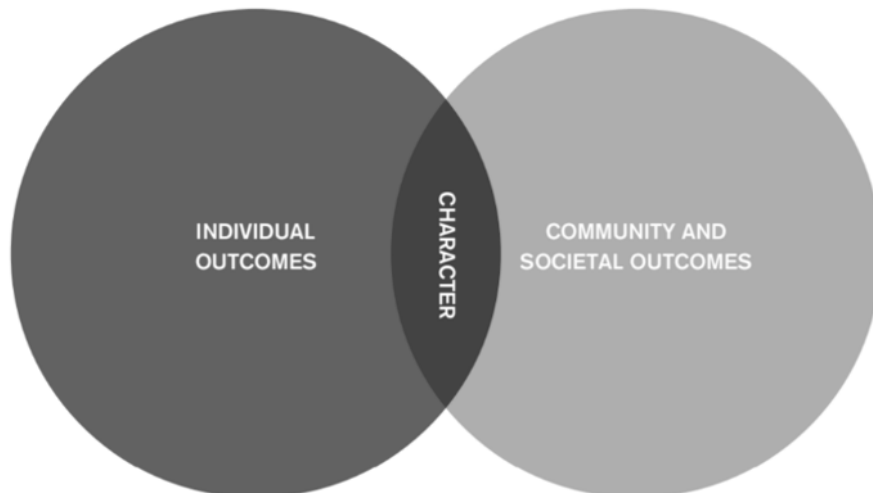


Figure 4: The Jubilee Centre's revised double benefit model (Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor, 2015, p. 23)

The original double benefit model (Figure 3) positioned individual outcomes as separate from community outcomes, with 'Emotional Intelligence'—defined as social awareness and empathy—linking the two (The Campaign for Youth Social Action, 2013a, p. 12). However, more recent studies by Generation Change *et al.* (2014, p. 12) and Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor

(2015, p. 23) attempt to reconfigure the double benefit model (Figure 4) by positioning character as the link between individual and community outcomes and recognising a more substantial overlap between the two.

This revised model (Figure 4) coheres with providers' views about their work. Of the CEOs of youth social action providers interviewed by Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor (2015, p. 4), 87% 'said that developing young people's character is fundamental to their organisation's work. Over half said it is their top priority'. Yet many CEOs had not 'necessarily thought about its meaning until prompted in the interview and gave personal rather than organisational definitions' (Ibid., p. 10). If 'character' is to link the double benefit model, #iwill's quality framework would benefit from more clarity about how character is conceptualised and developed.

Third, some providers overemphasise particular virtues. Recall #iwill's three categories of individual outcomes: 1) optimism (communication and creativity), 2) determination (confidence and agency, planning and problem solving, and resilience and grit), and 3) emotional intelligence (leadership, relationships, managing feelings, and self-control) (The Campaign for Youth Social Action, 2013a, p. 11). Noticeably, many of these outcomes are virtues—in particular, *performance* and *intellectual* virtues. Performance virtues are typically defined as 'behavioural skills and psychological capacities that enable us to put many other virtues into practice', while intellectual virtues are those 'required for the pursuit of knowledge, truth and understanding' (Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor, 2015, p. 6).⁹ But *moral* virtues—virtues that direct us toward morally good ends, guide our actions, thoughts, and emotions in morally appropriate ways, and 'enable us to respond well to situations in any area of experience'—are largely absent in providers' external communications, though interviews suggest that moral virtues are central to their actual work (Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor, 2015, p. 21).¹⁰ If 'developing young people's character is fundamental to their organisation's work' (Ibid., p. 4), then social action providers might carefully consider which virtues they seek to develop and how they communicate their efforts, and they might include moral virtues alongside performance and intellectual virtues among their intended outcomes.

Fourth, there are potential discrepancies in how #iwill's framework has been understood and applied. For example, there is a significant gap between virtues that participants and providers think they are developing. Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor (2015, p. 13) found that the 'top three virtues prioritised by providers and young people in the interviews and focus groups are, respectively, leadership, citizenship, and service, and confidence, respect, and communication'. This difference highlights the need for more clarity in how #iwill's outcomes framework is conceptualised and applied.

Moreover, the six quality principles have been understood and implemented in disparate ways (Generation Change *et al.*, 2014). Such diversity is expected and even encouraged for campaigns as large and multifaceted as #iwill, but if #iwill seeks both consistency and coherence in the use of its quality framework, additional conceptual clarity could be useful. An Aristotelian account of virtue, we believe, can help to unify the potentially disparate elements of #iwill's quality framework and provide valuable resources for other campaigns seeking to increase the quality of social action.



4 An Aristotelian Framework for a Habit of Social Action

Following the helpful suggestion that ‘character’ is a better link between individual and community outcomes than ‘emotional intelligence’ (Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor, 2015), we seek to specify what ‘character’ might consist of as it relates to a habit of social action. We believe an Aristotelian approach is most relevant for this task. First, the features of an Aristotelian conception of virtue¹¹ coincide with #iwill’s six quality principles, and an Aristotelian account of virtue as a habit developed over a lifetime tracks #iwill’s emphasis on social action as a ‘habit for life’ (Step Up To Serve, 2014). Second, while some varieties of character education disproportionately emphasise the individual, Aristotelian character education gives proper weight to the communal contexts in which social action takes place (Kristjánsson, 2014b, p. 58; Kisby, 2017). Third, because Aristotelian character education appeals to a universal human nature and aims at a universal conception of human flourishing, it is compatible with a wide variety of approaches and offers ‘an effective cross-cultural currency of moral evaluation’ that is capable of navigating the challenges of cultural differences (Kristjánsson, 2014b, pp. 49–55 at p. 54). Finally, unlike more technical ethical theories, Aristotelian character education demonstrates ‘respect for ordinary moral language’ (Ibid., p. 56), which makes it more accessible to a broad spectrum of social action providers and participants. For these reasons, an Aristotelian virtue theory supplies a particularly useful frame for analysing #iwill’s quality principles.

4.1 Virtue as Habit (‘Habit for Life’)

On a basic Aristotelian account, a virtue is a settled disposition to think, feel, and act reliably toward good ends in the right ways at the right times across different circumstances.¹² Unlike a mere thought, feeling, or act, a virtue is a stable, deep, and enduring quality. It develops over time and forms part of a person’s moral identity and character (Aristotle, 1999, 1105b20–1106a14).¹³

Aristotelians typically understand a virtue as a kind of *habit*—a settled disposition developed over time through habituation.¹⁴ Such an approach implies that the very concept of a virtue is framed by its process of cultivation. An Aristotelian account of virtue is fundamentally ‘developmental’ (see Annas, 2011, pp. 4–5, 16–32, 38; Broadie, 1991, pp. 72–74; Russell, 2015, pp. 17–20).

An Aristotelian account also provides a corrective to a purely *behavioural* conception of a habit that downplays a habit’s *emotional*, *motivational*, and *dispositional* aspects. On an Aristotelian account, a virtue is a habit that disposes one not only to *act* but also to *feel*, *think*, and *deliberate* in appropriate ways (Annas, 2011, pp. 66–82; Broadie, 1991, pp. 75–76, 81–82; Zagzebski, 1996, pp. 126–134). Thus, a conceptualisation of a habit as a more holistic disposition along Aristotelian lines might help to promote the ‘emotional intelligence’ and quality principles that #iwill prioritises.¹⁵

5 Aristotelian Character Education and the Six Quality Principles



5.1 Developmental and Aspirational ('Progressive')

If a moral virtue is a kind of habit, it must be developed through practice, by repeating certain feelings, thoughts, or acts iteratively until they become seemingly automatic.¹⁶ When we possess this habit with sufficient strength and stability, we become reliably disposed to feel, think, or act appropriately when relevant situations arise.¹⁷

This Aristotelian conception of habituation tracks the #iwill campaign's 'progressive' principle. To reflect a virtuous habit, social action must constitute an ongoing practice, not merely a one-off experience. #iwill promotes progressive social action by directing youth to new opportunities, encouraging them to take the next step after finishing a project, and supporting them through critical transition points—changing schools, leaving schools, starting jobs (Generation Change *et al.*, 2014, p. 16). Together, these efforts provide participants with the consistent and sustained experiences necessary for habituation.

Although #iwill focuses on *youth* social action, it acknowledges the importance of developing the habit into adulthood and ultimately 'for life' (Ibid., p. 14). An Aristotelian account supports this view (1999, 1099b25–1101a22). Given the difficulties, limitations, and contingencies of human experience, Aristotle believes that a complete virtue cannot be fully possessed or perfected in this life.¹⁸ For this reason, an Aristotelian account of virtue is both *developmental* and *aspirational*; it is a habit developed over a lifetime of practice, oriented toward an aspirational ideal (Annas, 2011, pp. 16–32, esp. 25).

This aspirational account of virtue has practical import for the #iwill campaign. If a habit of social action is not simply an *intention* to act but a *disposition* developed over a lifetime, providers might be encouraged to spend more time not only increasing participation in social action (a behavioural outcome), but also helping youth to develop the proper emotional, motivational, and cognitive responses to perform that social action consistently and well over a lifetime.

5.2 Learning by Doing ('Youth-Led')

Aristotle's developmental and aspirational account also supports #iwill's emphasis on 'youth-led' social action. In particular, an Aristotelian approach affirms why childhood and adolescence are good times to cultivate a habit of social action and offers a developmental justification for enabling youth to lead.

First, Aristotle holds that the development of virtue should begin early in life (1999, 1095b5–13, 1179b32–1180b7). Otherwise, youth might acquire bad habits that would make it difficult to cultivate virtuous habits later (Ibid., 1179b5–1180a6). While character is always in the process of development (Roberts, Walton, and Viechtbauer, 2006, p. 21), early childhood and adolescence are particularly important times for developing habits that will shape decisions, choices, and character later in life (see Boerger and Hoffman, 2015). This early engagement is relevant for the habit of social action. Arthur *et al.* (2017, p. 5) show that 'those who first get involved in service under the age of 10 were found to be more than two times more likely to have formed a habit of service than if they started aged 16–18 years'.



Cultivating this habit early is especially important given trends among ‘emerging adults’, those between ages 18-29 (see Nofle, 2015). Because emerging adults experience less stability in their jobs, residences, and relationships than previous generations, they can be less embedded in their communities and more ‘self-focused’ (see Arnett, 2000, 2014, p. 159). If #iwill is able to foster social action as a habit in adolescents, participants may be able to resist some of the instability, isolation, and self-focus that often characterise emerging adulthood.

In addition to affirming #iwill’s focus on youth, an Aristotelian account offers a second justification for ‘youth-led’ social action: it ensures that participants have the type of experiences necessary for habit formation. A virtue of character, like a quality habit of social action, cannot be developed merely by reading a book or attending a lecture.¹⁹ To become a stable and enduring part of one’s character, a virtue must be habituated through repeated action—much as one would learn a skill.²⁰ As Aristotle argues, ‘we become builders, for instance, by building, and we become harpists by playing the harp. Similarly, then, we become just by doing just actions, temperate by doing temperate actions, brave by doing brave actions’ (1999, 1103a34–1103b2).

This Aristotelian insight helps to illuminate a developmental motivation behind the ‘youth-led’ principle. Youth cannot develop a high-quality habit by simply watching a video or participating in a one-off project. They must learn by doing (Generation Change *et al.*, 2014, p. 12). When youth repeatedly exercise their agency in choosing, planning, and leading social action projects, they engage and develop their full selves. This Aristotelian emphasis on development is especially important since, as studies suggest, providers consider ‘leadership’ the most important capacity developed by participants (Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor, 2015, pp. 11–12). To foster such leadership, some providers train staff and provide coaches or mentors to guide youth through the process of planning and executing projects (Generation Change *et al.*, 2014, p. 15). By offering wise mentors and role models, these providers facilitate reflective action, which aligns with another feature of an Aristotelian account.

5.3 An Intelligent Habit (‘Reflective’)

While the cultivation of virtue requires habituation, simple repetition of action might foster a routine or mindless habit, not necessarily a virtue or ‘intelligent’ habit (Annas, 2011).²¹ As Julia Annas emphasises, to learn and grow from our actions, we must reflect on our experiences, understand how and why we acted in particular situations, and deliberate about how we might act differently in the future (Ibid., pp. 16–40).²² An Aristotelian account makes reflection central to character formation.

This Aristotelian approach aligns with #iwill’s ‘reflective’ principle. In terms of social action, youth maximise their experiences when they reflect on their actions and consider how their experiences affect themselves and their communities. This dialectic of action and reflection ensures that youth develop an intelligent habit of social action, not simply a mindless routine.

Moreover, this dialectic helps youth develop a habit of practical wisdom.²³ For Aristotle, practical wisdom is the intellectual capacity to recognise the salient features of a situation, deliberate how best to act, and make judgments toward action in particular circumstances (1999, 1140a25–1145a14).²⁴ Implicit in #iwill’s ‘reflective’ principle is a commitment to



cultivating this virtue of practical wisdom. #iwill does not value the *mere act* of reflection for its own sake but for its contribution to developing a *cultivated capacity*, a virtue that guides this reflection and ensures that social action is performed well. An Aristotelian approach highlights why the virtue of practical wisdom might be added to the list of #iwill's 'individual outcomes' since it is not currently captured by their focus on 'optimism', 'determination', and 'emotional intelligence'.

An Aristotelian approach, moreover, might inform #iwill's understanding of how this virtue is cultivated. Like moral virtues, practical wisdom must be learned by doing—by reflecting on one's experiences and deliberating about how to think, feel, and act in similar circumstances. In addition, Aristotle believes that youth can cultivate practical wisdom by emulating wise role models who can 'see correctly because experience has given them their eye' (1999, 1143a20–b14).²⁵ An Aristotelian approach thus highlights the need for providers to offer structured opportunities for youth to reflect on their experiences²⁶ and interact with role models who exemplify virtue and wisdom.²⁷ Such opportunities are particularly important since reflection is not prioritised by many providers (Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor, 2015, pp. 11–12). An Aristotelian approach, therefore, affirms the work of those providers, such as Envision and London Youth, who do create opportunities for youth to reflect on the capacities they have developed and train their staff to 'support young people to take the next step' (Generation Change *et al.*, 2014, pp. 15–16, 23).

5.4 A Cultivated Excellence ('Challenging' and 'Enjoyable')

Cultivating a stable, enduring, and intelligent habit of social action is not easy. After all, a virtue is a kind of *excellence*, a developed capacity that allows us to act at the limit of our powers and respond appropriately to difficulties (Aristotle, 1999, 1105a8–17; see also Aquinas 1974, I-II.55; II-II.129.1–3). Without such difficulties, a virtue would not be worthy of admiration and praise (Aristotle, 1999, 1109a25–30). That a virtue responds to 'challenges' is thus built into the very structure of Aristotle's aspirational conception of virtue.

This aspect corresponds to #iwill's 'challenging' principle. By encouraging youth to confront challenging social issues, recognise their own biases and assumptions, and think critically about how to respond, providers stretch participants' capacities and push them to the current limits of their powers. Both the intensity and type of challenge can increase youth capacity and character—as long as providers are intentional about helping them through this process. If providers simply confront youth with difficult problems without providing the emotional, social, and educational support they need to learn from these challenges, these experiences may overwhelm participants. This is why an explicitly Aristotelian focus on development—supplemented by reflection and support from wise mentors and role models—is a helpful framework for the 'challenging' principle. Without this framework, the 'challenging' principle may undermine rather than support the development of social action as a habit for life.

This Aristotelian approach also highlights a second aspect of the 'challenging' principle downplayed by some providers. Not only does virtue respond to challenging *situations*, but the *process* of cultivating virtue itself is challenging. Even if youth *know* the right thing to do, they may not be *motivated* to do it. And even when they do the right thing, they may be motivated by self-interested reasons that do not accord with virtue. Aristotle identifies these two states,



respectively, as ‘incontinence’ and ‘continence’ and argues that moral formation should aim to move the incontinent and continent to a state of ‘virtue’, where one is able to act reliably from a settled habit of character.²⁸ If #iwill seeks to foster a habit of social action, then it must encourage youth to perform social action when they are not motivated to act, and to act for virtuous reasons when they are so motivated.

As mentioned above, one way #iwill encourages this progression is through ‘recognition’. At first glance, recognition might seem to undermine an Aristotelian commitment to character. Aristotle, after all, argues that fully virtuous action should be done for its own sake, not for extrinsic rewards (Ibid., 1105a29–35, 1140b7–8). Shouldn’t youth, then, be motivated by the benefits to their community and the development of their own character, not solely by awards and accolades?²⁹

An Aristotelian approach offers nuanced insight into this question. Its aspirational aspect emphasises that perfect virtue requires doing the virtuous action for its own sake rather than for extrinsic rewards, but its developmental aspect acknowledges that praising youth for acting virtuously can be one way to cultivate virtue. Indeed, praise offers positive reinforcement that helps youth overcome internal resistance to doing the right thing and motivates them to act virtuously in the future (Ibid., 1101b33–34, 1172a20–26). The hope is that the more youth act virtuously, the easier it will be for them to do it again.³⁰ Eventually, they might overcome all internal resistance to acting virtuously and see the reason for acting virtuously for its own sake—regardless of recognition. They might even find a certain kind of pleasure and ease in acting virtuously, knowing they are doing the right thing when it might otherwise be difficult (Aristotle, 1999, 1120a24–27).³¹

This Aristotelian process of initially acting virtuously for the wrong reasons before coming to act virtuously for its own sake—what some call ‘putting on virtue’ (Herdt, 2008)—offers two useful resources for #iwill. First, it supplies the missing link between ‘challenging’ and ‘enjoyable’ aspects of social action. In presenting the ‘challenging’ principle, #iwill is careful to emphasise that social action must be ‘stretching and engaging, as well as exciting and enjoyable’ (The Campaign for Youth Social Action, 2013a, p. 6), but it does not adequately explain why it includes ‘enjoyable’ social action within the ‘challenging’ principle. An Aristotelian approach provides one way to conceptualise the relation. While social action might be ‘challenging’, it must also be ‘enjoyable’ enough to motivate youth to continue doing it, especially when it is difficult or overwhelming.³² While finding social action ‘enjoyable’ might not be the best reason to do it, it could help participants ‘put on virtue’ when they do not yet see the joy in acting virtuously for the sake of their community and their own character development. An Aristotelian developmental conception of virtue provides a way to incorporate an ‘enjoyable’ aspect of social action into the ‘challenging’ principle by highlighting how ‘enjoyment’ can be both a means of virtue cultivation and a quality that attends mature virtuous action (1999, 1104b5–16; see also Burnyeat, 1980, pp. 76–77; Annas, 2011, pp. 66–82).

Second, an Aristotelian approach provides a way to reconcile #iwill’s focus on ‘recognition’ with a developmental framework focused on character. On an Aristotelian approach, offering recognition to those who excel in social action or demonstrate impressive commitment and character serves several educational functions. For example, it provides youth with access to



role models to emulate and motivates them to perform similar actions, even if initially for the sake of recognition.³³ Eventually, as participants see the value of benefitting their community and developing their character, they may be less motivated by awards and recognition. They may even find pleasure in performing social action and thereby act with the characteristic ease that follows from possessing a virtue.

One danger is that this approach might reinforce an achievement culture that overemphasises recognition, particularly since studies suggest that some forms of extrinsic recognition can undermine rather than enhance intrinsic motivation (Deci *et al.*, 2001). But not all extrinsic rewards have the same effect (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Activities that are challenging, interesting, or enjoyable enhance intrinsic motivation, and rewards that affirm the agency, autonomy, and competence of the individual, that are offered within a supportive environment, and that are valued by their community can enhance the integration of a value into one's identity (Ibid.). These qualifications are important for #iwill since its efforts to offer recognition are situated within the six quality principles. That social action is 'challenging' and 'enjoyable' helps to increase intrinsic motivation; that it is 'youth-led' encourages agency and autonomy; that it is 'embedded' and 'socially impactful' facilitates the sense of belonging that promotes internalisation; and that it is 'reflective' and 'progressive' supports integration into one's identity, all of which serve to decrease the undermining effects of extrinsic rewards.

The value of an Aristotelian approach is that it joins these different principles into a coherent conceptual framework that emphasises both the aspirational ideal of virtue and the developmental role of recognition, not as an end in itself but as a means to cultivating good character.³⁴ Such an approach might encourage providers to reframe recognition as an occasion for education rather than simply an opportunity to win esteem. Moreover, it might challenge providers to be more explicit and intentional about the purpose of the awards, whom they choose to recognise, and why they choose them. In light of research about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, for example, providers might reward youth who have effectively exercised their agency, engaged challenging situations, and exhibited growth in character, all of which might enhance intrinsic motivation.³⁵ In other words, framing an award less as a 'prize' than a 'reward' for growth might facilitate the process of 'putting on virtue'.

5.5 Community as the Context of Character ('Embedded')

For Aristotle, the development of character does not occur in isolation but in community, within cultures, relationships, and practices that shape us in fundamental ways. Human beings are, to use Aristotle's terms, social and political animals embedded within communities, from families and households to cities and states, all of which condition our aims, identity, and character (1999, 1097b9–12, 1169b17–23, 1170a12, 1179a34–1180b7; see also Annas, 2011, pp. 21–22, 52–65). Participating in community is part of what it means to be human.

An Aristotelian anthropology thus affirms #iwill's commitment to 'embedding' social action within particular communities. #iwill emphasises embeddedness as a way to make social action 'accessible to all and well integrated into existing pathways to become a habit for life' (Generation Change *et al.*, 2014, p. 14). Embeddedness encourages motivation by reducing barriers to social action, making opportunities more 'visible', and incentivising youth to connect to their own communities (Ibid.). It offers support, examples, and instruction from



peers and mentors in the community, and it encourages habituation by utilising ‘existing pathways’ to make social action more accessible and sustainable (Ibid.).³⁶

Although #iwill relates both the ‘progressive’ and ‘embedded’ principles to developing the habit of social action, an Aristotelian account provides conceptual resources for delineating the two principles. Broadly, the ‘progressive’ element pertains to the relationship between social action and the process of habit formation, regardless of where that process happens. The ‘embedded’ principle captures the role that a young person’s particular context or community plays in developing the habit. The ‘progressive’ principle thus pertains to the *process* of habituation while the ‘embedded’ principle highlights the *communal context* of that process.

Within this communal context, Aristotle emphasises the role of friendship in character formation. Friendships provide pleasure and support, offer useful instruction and examples, and supply occasions to habituate virtue and serve others.³⁷ These Aristotelian insights align with #iwill’s justification for embedded social action. Indeed, Arthur *et al.* (2017, pp. 22–24) found a positive correlation between possessing a habit of social action and having a parent, guardian, or friend that also serves in the community. These role models provide youth with examples, support, and encouragement.

An Aristotelian approach offers an additional justification for embeddedness: accountability. For Aristotle, friendships provide occasions for mutual accountability and correction. Friends hold a mirror to each other, correct each other when they go wrong, and acknowledge when the other’s actions harm or hinder the community they share (1999, 1172a11–14; cf. 1155a13–16). This insight offers a useful supplement to #iwill’s ‘embedded’ principle. ‘Embedded’ social action might promote accountability by encouraging youth to engage in existing communities where they are more likely to be held accountable and where they will be more aware of how their social action helps or harms a particular group of people.³⁸ In this way, accountability might help to ensure that embedded social action is also responsible and ‘socially impactful’.

5.6 Connecting the Individual and Community (‘Socially Impactful’)

So far, we have explored how #iwill’s habit of social action aligns with features of an Aristotelian virtue. At this point, one distinction between a habit and a virtue becomes critical: whereas habits, like skills, can be ordered toward good or bad ends in good or bad ways, virtues are necessarily good habits oriented toward good ends in the right ways (Aristotle, 1999, 1103b8-25, 1105a17-1105b9, 1106a16-24, 1120a24-28).³⁹ This distinction explains why a habit of social action must be considered a virtue, not a mere habit or skill.

Helpfully, #iwill offers resources to conceptualise the habit of social action as a virtue. Indeed, its six quality principles, which parallel the features of an Aristotelian virtue, specify how this habit can be ‘good’. To complete the comparison, however, we need to specify what constitutes the ‘good’ toward which #iwill’s habit of social action is directed. Here, #iwill’s ‘socially impactful’ principle and ‘double benefit’ model become especially relevant. #iwill holds that youth social action must be ‘socially impactful’ and positively influence the



communities in which the action is performed. #iwill promotes youth social action that achieves a ‘double benefit’ for both individual participants and the community being helped.

In Section 3, we argued that one limitation of #iwill’s current outcomes framework is a lack of clarity about how individual and community benefits relate. An Aristotelian approach further illuminates Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor’s (2015) positioning of character as the link between individual and community outcomes and suggests an even more comprehensive model for understanding the relationship between individuals and communities.

Aristotle identifies the ‘good’ toward which virtue aims as ‘flourishing’ (1999, 1097a35–1098a21). In modern Western societies, we often interpret ‘flourishing’ as an individualistic form of happiness, a state of subjective joy or satisfaction. Aristotle, however, offers a more capacious view that defines flourishing in terms of objective well-being, not subjective mental states. For Aristotle, flourishing consists in achieving the excellences or virtues characteristic of a being of a certain kind. A flourishing human being, for example, achieves a kind of excellence in the distinctive activities, dispositions, and relationships that form a human life.⁴⁰ If a human life is fundamentally social and embedded within particular communities, an individual cannot fully flourish when the community is not flourishing, and a community cannot fully flourish when an individual member is not flourishing (Ibid, 1097b9–12, 1169b17–23, 1170a12). An individual is related to the community as a part to a whole.

This Aristotelian account affirms the importance of #iwill’s ‘double benefit’ model but also adds a twist to how the model is conceptualised and communicated. Consider Figure 5 below, with the centre circle representing an individual and the surrounding circles representing various communities of which an individual is a part. This model visualises the ways in which individuals—and thus individual outcomes—are nested within various communities. Of course, this figure is simplified for visual clarity: communities are often nested within other communities and overlap in asymmetrical ways, while others hardly overlap at all. The diagram below can accommodate asymmetries or variations, so long as the individual is fully circumscribed within their respective communities.

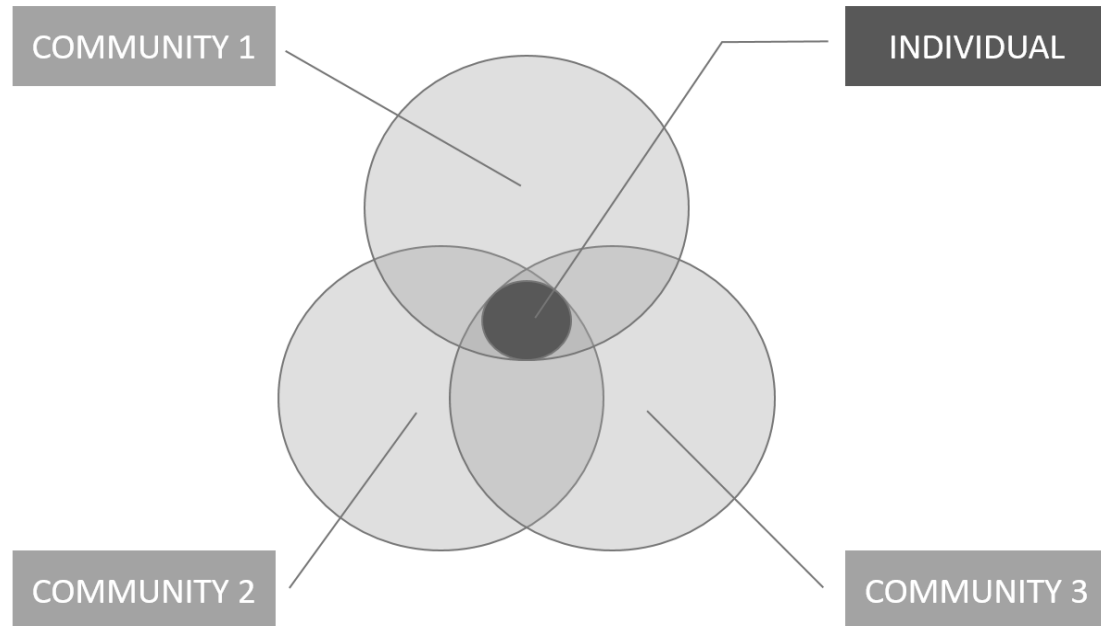


Figure 5: An Aristotelian double benefit model.

Notice how this Aristotelian model compares with the two models in Figures 3 and 4. The original double benefit model in Figure 3 presents individual and community benefits as completely separate, with emotional intelligence as the only link. The revised double benefit model in Figure 4 rightly recognises a stronger connection between individual and community outcomes by presenting the two as partially overlapping circles, with character as the link. The Aristotelian model in Figure 5, however, fully embeds the individual within various overlapping communities, highlighting how both types of individual benefits should not be understood apart from their communal contexts.⁴¹

This model has four implications for #iwill and youth social action providers in general. First, an Aristotelian model provides conceptual clarity on the relationship between individual and community benefits, which, as mentioned in Section 3, is missing from #iwill's current framework. More conceptual clarity might help social action providers and youth consider, practically, how the benefits relate to each other.

Second, the Aristotelian model promotes benefits for individuals and communities while discouraging outcomes that sacrifice or diminish benefits to one or the other. As it stands, the current model suggests that certain individual outcomes fall outside the circle of community, which creates the risk that social action might achieve individual benefits that neglect, or even undermine, benefits to the community. Consider the recent phenomenon of 'voluntourism', where individuals (often youth) parachute into a distant community for a week or two at a time, performing community service with little knowledge of the existing community or its larger social structures. While such work can help to address discrete needs, voluntourism can also cause harm (Guttentag, 2009), not least for its potential to propagate neo-colonial attitudes among participants (Palacios, 2010). As such, voluntourism can sometimes undermine community outcomes rather than support them. An Aristotelian model that

recognises the interrelation between individuals and communities places constraints on the types of social action that might be considered ‘socially impactful’.

Third, and relatedly, this Aristotelian model might allay a powerful objection to youth social action. One concern is that some forms of social action (especially when conceived as pure ‘charity’) perpetuate power differentials, intentionally or not, by encouraging participants to perform a kind of ‘self-sacrifice’ for the sake of the community.⁴² This presumption of privilege prevents participants from forming genuine relationships of solidarity with those whom they encounter. An Aristotelian model might help participants avoid this hazard by showing they are not separate from the community but part of it. Their flourishing is tied to the flourishing of their community.

Finally, this model emphasises moral and social virtues downplayed in #iwill’s current outcomes framework. Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor (2015) note that #iwill’s individual outcomes tend to prioritise *performance virtues* and neglect *moral virtues*.⁴³ Positioning ‘character’ as the link between individual and community outcomes helps to bring moral virtues back into view. An Aristotelian approach further specifies these virtues and how they relate to quality social action. In this context, a particularly relevant virtue is *justice*, which governs social relationships and ensures that others are given their due.⁴⁴ For social action to promote just relationships within and between communities, participants need to develop not only ‘optimism’, ‘determination’, and ‘emotional intelligence’, but a virtue of justice, which would enable them to understand social relationships and structures, recognise how to put disordered relationships and structures aright, and motivate them to do this important work. Justice thus encourages ‘socially impactful’ action that promotes just relationships and directs character education toward social and structural concerns, not simply toward the individualistic ones that have often been its focus (Kisby, 2017, pp. 16–17). Without an explicit focus on justice, social action risks unintentionally promoting unjust relationships or structures.

Of course, as Aristotle understood, to know what justice demands in particular situations requires the virtue of practical wisdom (1999, 1144b31–1145a2). Without practical wisdom, we may know what justice demands in the abstract, but not know how to act justly in particular circumstances. To ensure that social action is just, reflective, and socially impactful, practical wisdom is necessary.

The relationship between justice and practical wisdom highlights the relationship between #iwill’s ‘reflective’ and ‘socially impactful’ principles. It also suggests that virtues of justice and practical wisdom might be useful additions to #iwill’s list of individual outcomes. While these virtues may be implicit in #iwill’s quality framework, an Aristotelian approach that recognises the interconnection of the virtues and the overlapping relationships between individuals and communities explains why they ought to be a more explicit part of the framework. A focus on justice and practical wisdom can help to ensure that social action is done for the right reasons and in the right ways.

6 Conclusion



This article has attempted to show how #iwill's conception of a habit of social action aligns with an Aristotelian account of virtue. In particular, #iwill's 'progressive' principle coheres with an Aristotelian emphasis on habituation 'for life', and its emphasis on 'youth-led' social action fits with an Aristotelian approach to learning by doing. #iwill's commitment to 'reflective' social action elevates the importance of Aristotelian practical wisdom, while its focus on 'challenging' and 'enjoyable' social action aligns with the aspirational and developmental process of 'putting on virtue'. Finally, #iwill's emphasis on 'embedded' and 'socially impactful' action corresponds with an Aristotelian account of the integral relationship between individuals and communities.

Throughout our analysis, we have also attempted to show how an Aristotelian account can inform #iwill's framework and address the four conceptual challenges identified in Section 3. First, it provides a more capacious conception of a habit as a cognitive, motivational, and affective disposition that cannot be reduced to behavioural outcomes or intentions toward future participation. Second, it clarifies the relationship between the two spheres of the double benefit model in a way that gives proper weight to community outcomes. Unlike character education frameworks that emphasise 'personal ethics' at the expense of 'public ethics' (Kisby, 2017, p. 16), this model directs social action toward community flourishing, acknowledges the social sources of individual development, and constrains social action that does not benefit both the community and the individual. Third, an Aristotelian approach highlights the value of moral and intellectual virtues, such as justice and practical wisdom, that ensure social action is sensitive to particular circumstances and promotes just relationships and structures. Finally, it offers resources that can increase clarity and consistency in how #iwill's framework is understood and applied by diverse providers.

While these aspects of Aristotelian character education might supplement #iwill's quality framework, we acknowledge that there are limits to an Aristotelian approach (Kristjánsson, 2014b, pp. 61–65), particularly as it has been applied recently by proponents who take a more individualistic approach to moral and political issues and direct character education toward personal and professional 'success' rather than human flourishing (see Kisby, 2017, pp. 8, 13–17). In advancing our Aristotelian account, we have attempted to avoid these limitations by linking character education directly with social action and highlighting how individual outcomes cannot be considered apart from the community in which they are embedded. With Kisby (2017), we recognise that character education, while necessary, is not sufficient, and that a comprehensive account of a habit of social action would benefit from insights from other approaches, especially those of citizenship education (see also Althof and Berkowitz, 2006). But since activities like youth social action provide important avenues for integrating character education and citizenship education (Park, 2017), we hope to have shown one practical way that an Aristotelian account can contribute to the education of socially active citizens.

While #iwill is only one campaign, its ambitious goals, widespread support, and sophisticated conceptual framework make it a particularly valuable model for others to emulate. As #iwill and other campaigns seek to increase the quantity and quality of youth social action, we believe an Aristotelian approach can provide valuable conceptual resources that amplify efforts to cultivate social action as a virtuous habit for life.⁴⁵



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Endnotes

¹A young person who has participated in ‘meaningful’ social action has taken part in social action in the past 12 months at least every few months or in a one-off activity lasting more than a day and has recognised the benefit to themselves and others (Ipsos MORI, 2015).

²This is drawn from frameworks developed by McNeil, Reeder, and Rich (2012) and the CBI (2012).

³Significant work has been directed toward understanding these principles and helping organisations integrate them (Generation Change *et al.*, 2014; Bown, Harflett, and Gitsham, 2014; Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor, 2015; #iwill, 2017b).

⁴This is reflected in funding to support the #iwill campaign (Cabinet Office and Nick Hurd MP, 2014).

⁵Youth-led social action is also emphasised by the National Citizen Service (Booth *et al.*, 2015) and the Russell Commission (2005, p. 7).

⁶The Campaign for Youth Social Action (2013a, p. 13) invited further research on the #iwill campaign since ‘the campaign, and the definitions and principles that underpin it, will evolve and develop over time’.

⁷Youth are typically asked about their intentions to continue participating in social action (Booth *et al.*, 2014; Ipsos MORI, 2015; Kirkman, Sanders, and Emanuel, 2015; National Youth Agency, 2013).

⁸Studies have attempted to fill the gap in quantitative evidence on community outcomes (Tyler-Rubinstein *et al.*, 2016), for example, with cost-benefit analyses (Cameron *et al.*, 2017, p. 5).

Nonetheless, research in this area remains limited.

⁹We utilise these categories of virtues to add clarity, but we acknowledge that some philosophers classify virtues differently. For example, what some call ‘intellectual’, ‘moral’, and ‘performative’ virtues can all be ‘civic virtues’ when used in communal contexts or oriented toward civic ends, which usually applies in the context of youth social action.

¹⁰Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor (2015, p. 19) found that although providers understand the importance of moral virtues, they are unclear on how to measure them. Providers focused on employability may also perceive performance and intellectual virtues as disproportionately important for getting a job and performing well and thus downplay moral virtues (*Ibid.*, p. 10).

¹¹We engage a broadly *Aristotelian* account of virtue, not necessarily *Aristotle’s*, though we occasionally draw on Aristotle’s insights to explicate the view.

¹²This account of virtue is shaped by Annas (2011) and Zagzebski (1996, pp. 84–137).

¹³See Russell (2015, pp. 20–23) for a helpful overview.

¹⁴Aristotle differentiates virtues of thought from virtues of character partly by how they are acquired: ‘Virtue of thought arises and grows mostly from teaching’, while virtue of character ‘results from habit’ (1999, 1103a15–18).

¹⁵See also Arthur *et al.* (2017, pp. 9–13).

¹⁶For Aristotle’s discussion of habituation, see Aristotle (1999, 1103a15–1104b4).

¹⁷Aristotle offers an example: ‘abstaining from pleasures makes us become more temperate, and once we have become temperate we are most capable of abstaining from pleasures’ (1999, 1104a34–1104b1).

¹⁸As Annas argues, ‘Virtue is not a once for all achievement but a disposition of our character that is constantly developing as it meets new challenges and enlarges the understanding it involves’ (2011, p. 38).

¹⁹See Aristotle (1999, 1103b27–30, 1179a34–1179b32) and Wilburn (2007, pp. 71–73).

²⁰On the ‘skill analogy’, see Annas (2011, pp. 8–51) and Russell (2015). For the distinction between skills and virtues, see Aristotle (1999, 1105a26–b5) and Zagzebski (1996, pp. 106–116).

²¹For Aristotle, virtue requires that we not only perform the right action but also perform it for the right reasons (1999, 1105a17–b9). See Annas (2011, pp. 13–15), Broadie (1991, pp. 108–109), and Kisby (2017, p. 12).



²²See Aristotle (1999, 1095a2–4, 1095b4, 1141b10–23, 1142a12–15, and 1143a20–b14); Broadie (1991, pp. 72–74); Russell (2015, pp. 19–20); and Burnyeat (1980, pp. 70–73).

²³On the relationship between reflection and practical wisdom, see Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (2014).

²⁴Russell (2015, pp. 27–29) offers a helpful comparison between practical wisdom and skills. For a connection to social action, see Arthur *et al.* (2017, p. 10).

²⁵Compare to Aristotle (1999, 1095a2–4, 1105b7–9, 1107a1–3, 1140a25–1141b23; 1142a12–15). See also Annas (2011, pp. 12, 16–32), Broadie (1991, pp. 73–74), and Burnyeat (1980). Contemporary scholars have affirmed the developmental importance of emulating role models who exemplify virtue and wisdom (Narvaez and Lapsley, 2005, pp. 150–159; Russell, 2015, pp. 32–36; Vianello, Galliani, and Haidt, 2010; Colby and Damon, 1992; Kristjánsson, 2016; Zagzebski, 2017).

²⁶Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor (2015, p. 24) make a similar recommendation.

²⁷Recent research found that youth who had developed a habit of social action were also more likely to identify with exemplars of moral and civic virtues than those without a habit (Arthur *et al.*, 2017).

²⁸For Aristotle’s discussion of continence and incontinence in relation to virtue and vice, see 1999, Books 2 and 7. See also Burnyeat (1980, esp. 86–88) and Wilburn (2007, pp. 74–76).

²⁹For a helpful distinction between merely doing virtuous actions and acting virtuously for its own sake, see Broadie (1991, pp. 85–90) and Burnyeat (1980, pp. 77–78).

³⁰Recent evidence confirms that recognition and the habit of service are positively correlated. See Arthur *et al.* (2017, p. 33).

³¹See also Burnyeat (1980), Annas (2011, pp. 40, 66–67), and Russell (2015, pp. 26–27, 32–33).

³²Arthur *et al.* (2017, p. 28) found that ‘respondents who enjoyed their service “a great deal” were 47% more likely to be in the Habit group than those who enjoyed it “a fair amount”’.

³³Recognition might also make particular quality norms salient and help participants internalise these norms when developing their character. On how making norms salient shapes character, see Miller (2014, pp. 232–233).

³⁴Aristotle (1999, 1105a27–1105b9) holds that virtue must be chosen for its own sake. Burnyeat (1980, pp. 77–78) offers an insightful account of how we develop this capacity.

³⁵For a similar suggestion in relation to rewards for intellectual virtue, see Baehr (2015, p. 214).

³⁶In the wider literature on habits, it is argued that important others, such as parents, friends, partners, and teachers, influence whether or not a behaviour becomes habitual (Andolina *et al.*, 2003; Clary and Miller, 1986; Law, Shek, and Ma, 2013; Hart and Fegley, 1995; Pancer and Pratt, 1999; Callero, Howard, and Piliavin, 1987; Marta and Pozzi, 2008). Arthur *et al.* (2017, p. 33) found that ‘those with a habit of service were more likely to be at educational institutions which had actively encouraged their involvement rather than passively allowed them to participate’.

³⁷For Aristotle’s extended discussion of friendship, see 1999, Books 8 and 9. Aristotle thought that friends are necessary for all persons (1155a5, 1169b3–23), can exemplify and mirror behavior (1169b34–1170a4, 1171b12–13), share ‘conversation and thought’ (1170b6–19), lighten burdens in stressful times (1171a22–31), and present opportunities to habituate virtuous actions and affections (1155a6–10, 1171a22–27, 1171b13–28). For a helpful analysis of Aristotle’s philosophy of friendship, see Cooper (1980) and Kristjánsson (2014a).

³⁸Arthur *et al.* (2017, p. 22) found a positive correlation between participating in youth social action and having a parent, guardian, or friend who also serves in the community. They also found that those with a habit of social action ‘were more likely to say they had the support and encouragement from their friends and family that they needed to be involved in service’ (p. 23).

³⁹On the relationship between virtue and goodness, see Annas (2011, pp. 100–118) and Zagzebski (1996, pp. 89–102, 110–113).

⁴⁰See Aristotle (1999, 1097b22–29, 1106a17–24, 1139a16–18). See also Russell (2015, pp. 20–23) and Annas (2011, pp. 119–168).



⁴¹This Aristotelian model might be conceptually consistent with the revised double benefit presented by Arthur, Harrison, and Taylor (2015) in Figure 4. Since they focus on the relationship between *types of outcomes* rather than individuals and communities themselves, the difference may simply be in the presentation of the model, not its content. But given that presentation and perception shape practice, a revised Aristotelian model might more effectively inform how providers implement the ‘embedded’ and ‘socially impactful’ principles.

⁴²For discussion, see Catlett and Proweller (2011); Marullo, Moayed, and Cooke (2009); Morton (1995); Tilley-Lubbs (2009).

⁴³#iwill’s individual outcomes (which include ‘determination’, ‘managing feelings’, and ‘self-control’) may more easily accommodate moral virtues—such as courage or temperance—that govern *internal* affective and volitional responses to particular obstacles or difficulties rather than moral virtues—such as justice—that govern *external* relationships with others.

⁴⁴See Aristotle (1999, Book 5).

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