PATHWAYS INTO LEADERSHIP: A STUDY OF YOUTHBUILD GRADUATES

A new CIRCLE report, entitled "Pathways into Leadership: A Study of YouthBuild Graduates," describes the transformation of a remarkable group of young people from high school dropouts into exemplary civic leaders. The study, made possible by a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, was released on June 4 at the White House Summit on Community Solutions for Disconnected Youth and then presented at a Capitol Hill briefing convened by Representatives Robert Dold (R-Il) and John Lewis (D-GA).

YouthBuild is best known as a set of local programs in communities across the country that enroll high school dropouts and provide GED classes, job training, community service opportunities, and leadership development. Previous research has found positive effects on the participants' education and, employment, and (for the students who have criminal records) reduced recidivism.

CIRCLE studied something different: a leadership pathway that begins in the local programs when students are asked to help manage the organization and continues at the national level for some alumni.

We conducted an evaluation with quantitative and qualitative components and a dimension of community-based participatory research. Surveying and interviewing alumni who were involved with the alumni programs, we found a gigantic difference between their experience before and after YouthBuild.

"I'M IMPORTANT TO ME COMMUNITY AND MY COMMUNITY IS IMPORTANT TO ME ... I BUILD EVERYTHING OFF THAT PREMISE" IS HOW ONE PERSON SUMMARIZED THE EFFECTS OF YOUTHBUILD.

Then: these were "disconnected youth," outside of school or college, jobs, and civic organizations. Almost all had dropped out of high school or had been expelled. Many were victims of violence and homelessness and a substantial minority were members of gangs or had criminal records. Half expected to die before age 30, many before age 25. As one graduate stated, "Before I joined YouthBuild, I honestly thought the depression of my life would kill me."

Now: these are civic leaders. Some hold public office or serve as pastors. All expect to live to a ripe old age and feel they have a lifetime of service to contribute. They are optimistic, satisfied, and dedicated. "I'm important to me community and my community is important

Tufts
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JULY 2012

THE RESEARCH ROUNDUP COLUMN HIGHLIGHTS RECENT RESEARCH FINDINGS COMMISSIONED OR GENERATED BY CIRCLE. ALSO INCLUDED IS AN UPDATE ON NEW CIRCLE PRODUCTS SUCH AS FACT SHEETS, RESEARCH ARTICLES, RESEARCH ABSTRACTS, BIBLIOGRAPHIES, AND DATASETS.

to me ... I build everything off that premise" is how one person summarized the effects of YouthBuild.

More than one-third work as professional educators or youth workers and almost all are leaders in their families, workplaces, and communities, focusing on the needs of the younger generation. In response to a question about aspirations, one graduate responded, "I want to get young people excited about learning and get to them to take an active part in the development of their lives and future." Another said, "I believe in myself and therefore, I have a future."

Many graduates observed that YouthBuild provided a supportive and caring family-like environment, where they would not be judged based on their past actions. "I wasn't depending on them, but I could depend on them," remarked one YouthBuild graduates. "It was a great feeling... to have someone there...to guide you and get you where you need to be."

Graduates reported that the YouthBuild staff recognized their talents and accomplishments and they felt valued by the program. For many alumni, this was the first time in their lives they had been recognized as having something of value to contribute. "They would tell me —'you have a voice and you and it needs to be heard—your concerns are important.' And they made me feel like I was important, like I did matter" recalled one YouthBuild graduate.

"THEY WOULD TELL ME —'YOU HAVE A VOICE AND YOU AND IT NEEDS TO BE HEARD—YOUR CONCERNS ARE IMPORTANT ARE IMPORTANT.'"

Participants had opportunities and encouragement to develop specific civic skills that transfer into civil society and the workplace. As one graduate recalled, "I never knew what a budget plan was, I never knew how to keep minutes, I never knew how to do all that, and when I got to the policy committee and they started showing me these things, it just kept motivating me more and more to just keep doing positive and wanting to sit on not only the policy committee at YouthBuild, but what committees can I get on in my neighborhood and can I be on a neighborhood association committee?

We draw two lessons:

First, leading and serving others is integrally connected to succeeding and flourishing in life

Second, to lead and serve requires opportunities that must be deliberately built and maintained, and very few organizations other than YouthBuild are building those opportunities for disconnected youth.

Figure 1: Civic Leadership Among YouthBuild Graduates
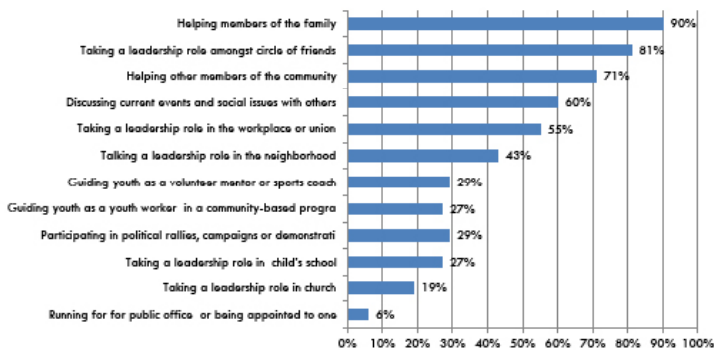
Few young people have opportunities to engage in civic leadership outside of the educational system. Within schools, civic opportunities are disproportionately offered to students from upper-income backgrounds.

WITHIN SCHOOLS, CIVIC OPPORTUNITIES ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY OFFERED TO STUDENTS FROM UPPER-INCOME BACKGROUNDS.

Given the scarcity of opportunities for civic involvement, programs such as YouthBuild that specifically focus on empowering poor and working-class young adults are more important than ever. As one graduate noted, "If I wanted to start a whole movement in the neighborhood right now, I would be able to because I know the necessary steps and I have the skills, thanks to YouthBuild, to go about these things."

The full report, findings and implications are available at: http://www.civicyouth.org/released-today-at-the-white-house-circle-study-shows-youthbuild-builds-leaders/ ★

NEW BOOK: NO CITIZEN LEFT BEHIND

Meira Levinson's book No Citizen Left Behind (Harvard University Press, 2012) began with a CIRCLE grant and develops the argument of Levinson's CIRCLE Working Paper 51, "The Civic Achievement Gap." Levinson is also a CIRCLE Advisory Board member.

Levinson combines anecdotes from her eight years of teaching middle school in Atlanta and Boston, political theorizing, and social science analysis. She argues that the United States suffers from a civic empowerment gap that is as shameful and anti-democratic as the academic achievement gap targeted by No Child Left Behind.

Levinson shows how schools can help address the civic empowerment gap by teaching collective action, openly discussing the racialized dimensions of citizenship, and provoking students by engaging their passions against contemporary injustices through action civics. The book also includes chapters on historical counternarratives, heroes and role models, school culture, and accountability.

Paise for *No Citizen Left Behind:*

"A must-read for anyone who cares to see young people from all backgrounds grow into self-confident and efficacious citizens."—Danielle S. Allen, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

"A landmark book that should influence teachers of all subjects in American schools while providing an important model for scholars."—Peter Levine, Tufts University

"Brilliant. No Citizen Left Behind is must reading for anyone concerned with the reform of civic education in America. An inspiration for both scholars and practitioners."—Robert D. Putnam, author of Bowling Alone and co-author of American Grace

HOW CAN SOCIAL MEDIA BE USED TO STRENTHEN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND CHANGE INSTITUTIONS?*

Research into social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) and online tools (e.g. GoogleDocs) has shown that online activities can increase young people's civic engagement, regardless of their prior motivations. Online tools and social media are widely discussed—but not always successfully used—in the field of youth civic engagement.

Research on social media and young people often focuses on who is online and what tools they use (Pew Research; Edison Research, 2010). Some research has begun to investigate how the Internet and social media are being used for explicitly civic or political purposes (Smith, 2011; NCOC, 2008, 2009). Recent studies have looked at whether Internet use affects youth civic behavior (Kahne, 2011), and new research has found that online political activities are complements to offline activities (Cohen & Kahne, 2012). Yet, as with other civic research, we still need to know more about how engagement plays out in specific contexts. If institutions are going to use online tools and social media to engage young people and build relationships (despite widely differing levels of technological knowledge and access), they need more information about what works.

IF INSTITUTIONS ARE GOING TO USE ONLINE TOOLS AND SOCIAL MEDIA TO ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS (DESPITE WIDELY DIFFERING LEVELS OF TECHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND ACCESS), THEY NEED MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT WORKS.

Most efforts to use these new tools to engage young people in civic life have been conducted outside of educational institutions. While this is changing, many schools are still trying to figure out how online tools and social media fit into their structured programs. This article will provide insights based on an evaluation that CIRCLE helped conduct of a national network of college campuses connected to the Bonner Foundation (www. bonner. org).

Grounded in developmental theory, the Bonner Foundation works to improve college access and civic engagement by supporting students to engage in community service for four years while they earn money for college. They receive co-curricular and curricular education through Bonner. In 2008, the Foundation received a Student Social Media grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service to learn more about how online tools and social media can be used by campuses to promote community engagement.

The project provided resources, trained staff and students, and encouraged experiments with social media in a portion of the 80-campus network. CIRCLE worked with the Bonner Foundation to understand several points, including:

1) How social media and online technology encouraged innovative work with community partners and how partners responded,
2) How social media and online technology influenced students' participation, and
3) What impact this intensive effort had on campus programs and the national network's capacity.

Using qualitative and quantitative methods, we sought to understand how social media tools were used on campuses and in communities. We gathered insights from campuses about the most effective use of various tools to engage students and to strengthen part- nerships. Data came from:

• Baseline and concluding surveys of the whole network
• Biannual surveys of a subset of campus staff, community partners, and students on participating campuses, as well as random samples of students from the whole network, and
• Interviews and written reflections of campus staff involved with experimentation

A subset of campus programs developed strategic partnerships with non-profit agencies, including elementary and middle schools, youth development programs, refugee centers, homeless shelters, a city council's agricultural sustainability efforts, an artist cooperative, and an art museum. Students in the network created videos about agencies and issues, developed strategies for training peers and agency staff, and used media to spread awareness and engage their peers in service.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE RESULTS:

In the project, online tools and social media were presented as means to other goals (not ends in themselves), and we

found that they can be assets to student engagement and community partnerships, if used intentionally and strategically. The specific local context and programmatic goals will determine the appropriate tools, which should be viewed as complements to other forms of communication. Overcoming assumptions and misperceptions about online tools and social media was critical. Many staff needed to hear that the Foundation was not trying to replace offline communication with online communication.

Campuses experimented with many different platforms and tools, but in the end they chose a few to focus on. Staff and students felt overwhelmed with information coming from multiple sources, especially since each tool had to be regularly updated.

THE SPECIFIC LOCAL CONTEXT AND PROGRAMMATIC GOALS WILL DETERMINE THE APPROPRIATE TOOL, WHICH SHOULD BE VIEWED AS COMPLEMENTS TO OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATION.

PARTNERS

67% of community partners said that the tools being used were "increasing access to other students, staff/faculty, offices or programs on this particular campus."

Partners believed that they gained new volunteers from these efforts. They reported gaining access to individuals whom they did not already know, with an average of 27% saying that they agreed or strongly agreed that the project provided these new connections.

STUDENTS

Campus staff noted consistently that student leadership affected the amount of time their programs could spend on the social media platforms and was critical to success. Turnover of student leadership often correlated with the abandonment of a particular platform, unless new students or staff took on their role.

It is not necessarily true that all young people are ready to use social media for programmatic or professional purposes, even though they are spending significant amounts of time online and on social media outlets. Campuses had to be very clear why they were using each tool.

The evaluation found that students were likely to see the tools as being helpful for coordination and for reaching other students. Fifty-four percent of students on participating campuses and 58% of students in the whole network reported that they had engaged someone else in providing service as a result of using online/internet programs or social media tools. Roughly 70% of students said that social media tools being used by their Bonner program increased their coordination with other offices and programs on campus. The students who thought that social media and online tools were increasing coordination were also more likely to say that they themselves had done additional and better service because of these tools, and had engaged someone else with these tools. Lastly, we found that students who have used online tools and social media as a part of Bonner community service projects were more likely to engage in online political activities. This preliminary finding is an example of how online activities complement programs and contribute to civic development. ★

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ENDNOTES

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* This article was written with the assistance of Ariane Hoy, Senior Program Officer at the Bonner Foundation.

YOUTH IN THE 2012 REPUBLICAN PRIMARIES

More than 950,000 young people voted in the contested Republican primaries through April 3rd, 2012, which effectively ended when former Senator Rick Santorum dropped out of the race on April 10th. Youth turnout varied by state, ranging from 15% of eligible youth in New Hampshire to 1% in Nevada, with an average youth turnout of 5%. These numbers do not readily indicate much about the 2012 contest overall. It is statistically unlikely that these youth are the same as those who participated in the 2008 primaries. If anything, these data may indicate that Republican candidates did not do a great deal of outreach to youth, nor greatly energize them, including conservative youth.

Table 1: 2012 State Primary Youth Turnout and Total Youth Votes

State	Youth Turnout	# Youth Votes
Iowa	4%	18,338
New Hampshire	15%	29,818
South Carolina	8%	54.105
Florida	4%	99,882
Nevada	1%	2,632
Michigan	7%	99,884
Arizona	6%	55,035
Georgia	5%	70,381
Massachusetts	3%	28,910
Ohio	7%	131,436
Oklahoma	5%	25,767
Tennessee	5%	44,014
Vermont	4%	3,963
Virginia	2%	31,862
Alabama	8%	61,494
Mississippi	5%	22,422
Illinois	4%	73,369
Louisiana	2%	14,910
Maryland	2%	19,041
Wisconsin	8%	71,909
Totals	NA	959,172

Source: CIRCLE analysis using overall vote tallies and National Election Pool Exit/Entrance Polls

ROMNEY WINS MOST VOTES FROM YOUTH, BUT NOT MAJORITY

Former Governor Mitt Romney, now the all-but-official Republican presidential nominee, received the most votes from young voters, capturing 29% of the youth vote. Representative Ron Paul and Santorum were tied for the lead with the greatest number of states won, with each winning a plurality of the votes in six primary states.

Table 2: Youth Vote Choice

State	Romney	Santorum	Paul
Iowa	13%	23%	48%
New Hampshire	26%	9%	46%
South carolina	16%	21%	31%
Florida	41%	13%	25%
Nevada	36%	7%	41%
Michigan	26%	32%	37%
Arizona	52%	20%	18%
Georgia	22%	22%	24%
Massachusetts	50%	17%	24%
Ohio	28%	37%	25%
Oklahoma	NA	NA	NA
Tennessee	16%	43%	25%
Vermont	NA	NA	NA
Virginia	39%	NA	61%
Alabama	16%	41%	12%
Mississippi	24%	45%	9%
Illinois	41%	36%	16%
Louisiana	15%	51%	23%
Maryland	28%	37%	23%
Wisconsin	32%	28%	30%

Source: CIRCLE analysis using overall vote tallies and National Election Pool Exit/Entrance Polls

Paul gained an early lead in the youth vote with strong performances in the first primary and caucus states. As the race progressed, Paul's lead among young people began to falter, and Santorum began to catch up with strong performances in the Tennessee, Ohio, Alabama, and Mississippi primaries. In the final weeks of the primary campaign, Santorum was unable to catch up with Romney who captured a significant portion of the youth vote in most of the later contested primaries and caucuses.

PAUL GAINED AN EARLY LEAD IN THE YOUTH VOTE WITH STRONG PERFORMANCES IN THE FIRST PRIMARY AND CAUCUS STATES.

Figure 1: Cumulative Youth Vote Count in 2012 Primaries
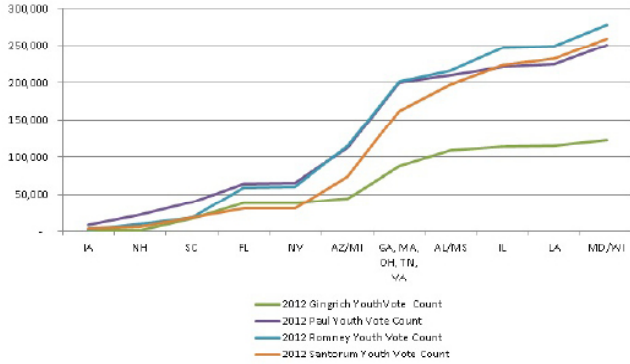
Source: CIRCLE analysis using overall vote tallies and National Election Pool Exit/Entrance Polls

2012 GOP YOUTH TURNOUT SLIGHTLY HIGHER THAN 2008; STILL DWARFED BY 2008 DEMOCRATIC YOUTH TURNOUT

In 2012, approximately 90,000 more young people voted in the contested GOP primaries than voted in the 2008 (in the same states). However, far fewer young people voted in the 2012 GOP primaries than voted in the Democratic primaries in the same states in 2008.

Figure 2: Cumulative Youth Vote Count in 2008 Primaries
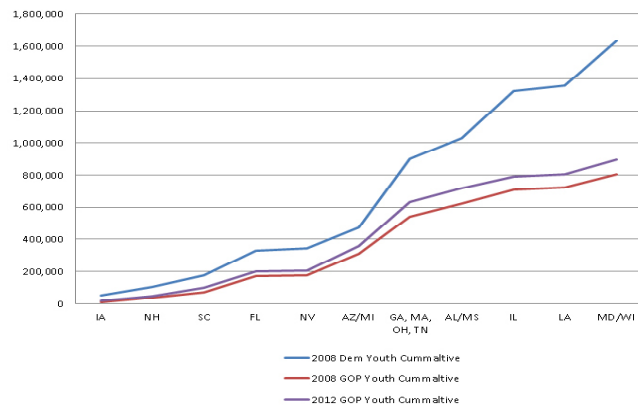
MORE YOUTH VOTE FOR ROMNEY THAN IN 2008; RON PAUL MAKES DRAMATIC GAINS AMONG YOUNG VOTERS

About 40,000 more young people voted for Romney in 2012 than in 2008, a gain of approximately 21%. Ron Paul more than doubled his youth vote totals 2008 attracting an estimated additional 130,000 voters. ★

ABOUT 40,000 MORE YOUNG PEOPLE VOTED FOR ROMNEY IN 2012 THAN IN 2008, A GAIN OF APPROXIMATELY 21%.

Figure 3: Cumulative Youth Vote Count in 2008 vs 2012 by Candidate
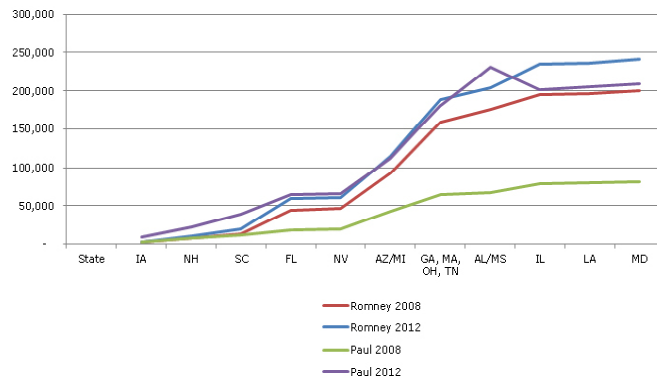
YOU ASK, WE ANSWER: THE 2012 YOUTH VOTE

At CIRCLE, we frequently field inquiries about research and data to help inform policy and practice. The CIRCLE blog seeks to log these requests - below are summaries of recent posts. To read them and review the graphs that accompany them, visit the CIRCLE website at http://www.civicyouth.org/ResearchTopics/circle-blog/ .

MAY 10TH, 2012

Research shows that college-educated youth are more likely to register and vote than non-college youth. In 2008, slightly less than half of non-college youth were registered to vote. However, more than three-quarters of registered non-college youth voted in the Presidential elections.

IN 2008, SLIGHTLY LESS THAN HALF OF NON-COLLEGE YOUTH WERE REGISTERED TO VOTE. HOWEVER, MORE THAN THREE-QUARTERS OF REGISTERED NON-COLLEGE YOUTH VOTED IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

This illustrates the importance of registering to vote and eliminating barriers to registration.
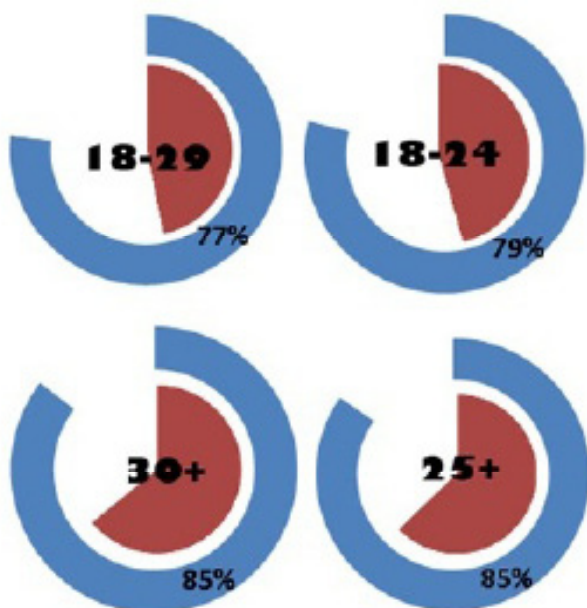
MAY 4TH, 2012

This year, there will be 46 million youth eligible to vote in the Presidential elections. Out of this group, 16.8 million are new youth voters who were not old enough to vote in the 2008 elections. Both political parties have opportunities to mobilize newly eligible youth voters through voter registration drives, as research proves they are more likely to vote if they are registered.

APRIL 25TH, 2012

Youth approval for President Obama were consistently between 57% and 61%, between 2009 and 2012 - which was made them the most supportive group. Youth, compared to older age groups, were less likely to be affected by specific events. Blacks' (18+) approval ratings were consistently at least 35 points higher than those of Whites and Hispanics. Whites had the lowest approval ratings after every major news event that affected the President's approval.

YOUTH APPROVAL FOR PRESIDENT OBAMA WERE CONSISTENTLY BETWEEN 57% AND 61%, BETWEEN 2009 AND 2012 - WHICH MADE THEM THE MOST SUPPORTIVE AGE GROUP.

MAY 1ST, 2012

In the 2008 elections, the youth vote in three states (North Carolina, Indiana, and Virginia), made the difference for Obama. If the 18-29 year old votes were not included, then John McCain would have won in those states. The infographic for this post shows how the youth vote can make a difference in election results (see page 9). ★
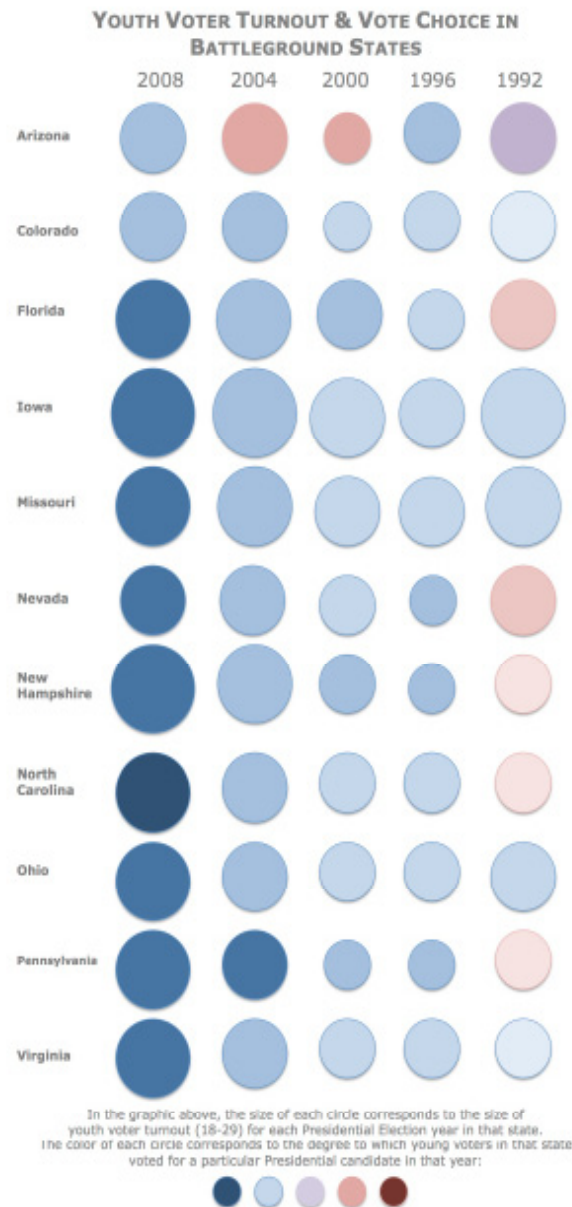
CIRCLE IN THE NEWS

A SAMPLE OF RECENT ARTICLES:

■ "OCCUPY COLLEGES AND THE 2012 ELECTION," BY KRYSTIE YANDOLI, *THE NATION,* 2/23/2012

■ "WHY DEMOCRATS HAVE A PROBLEM WITH YOUNG VOTERS," BY RICK PERLSTEIN, *ROLLING STONE*, 2/28/2012

■ "RON PAUL NOT A HIT WITH YOUTH VOTERS ON SUPER TUESDAY," BY LAUREN FOX, *US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT*, 3/7/2012

■ "HOW CIVICALLY ENGAGED ARE MILLENIALS?," BY JUDY WOODRUFF, *PBS NEWS HOUR*, 3/29/2012

■ "RICK SANTORUM SUSPENDS REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN," BY GIL KAUFMAN, *MTV NEWS*, 4/10/2012

■ "BAD ECONOMY PUTS OBAMA IN TIGHT SPOT WITH YOUNG VOTERS," BY AMY BINGHAM, *ABS NEWS*, 4/20/2012

■ "GOP, ROMNEY HOPES TO RECAPTURE SOME OF THE YOUTH VOTE FROM OBAMA," BY BYRON TAU, *POLITICO*, 4/24/2012

■ "OBAMA TALKS LOW LOAN RATES IN PITCH TO COLLEGE STUDENTS," BY RICHARD WOLF, CATALINA CAMIA, AND DAVID JACKSON, *USA TODAY*, 4/25/2012

■ "WHY THE GOP'S FUTURE COULD DEPEND ON ROMNEY'S ABILITY TO CONNECT TO YOUNG PEOPLE," BY PETER LEVINE, *FOX NEWS*, 4/27/2012

■ "OBAMA MAKING PUSH FOR YOUNG VOTERS," BY ALEXANDRA JAFFE, *NATIONAL JOURNAL*, 5/4/2012

■ "FRONTIERS OF DEMOCRACY: INNOVATIONS IN CIVIC PRACTICE, THEORY AND EDUCATION," BY PETER LEVINE, *NCOC*, 5/7/2012

■ "FOR ITS 2012 ELECTIONS COVERAGE, MTV SWAPS OUT CITIZEN JOURNALISM FOR GAMIFICATION," BY ADRIENNE LAFRANCE, *NIEMAN JOURNALISM LAB*, 5/16/2012

YOUTH VOTER TURNOUT & VOTE CHOICE IN BATTLEGROUND STATES

In the graphic above, the size of each circle corresponds to the size of youth voter turnout (18-29) for each Presidential Election year in that state. The color of each circle corresponds to the degree to which young voters in that state voted for a particular Presidential candidate in that year:

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SOCIAL MEDIA, YOUTH CIVIC PARTICIPATION & ELECTIONS

In 2008, social media and technology tools were heavily utilized by grassroots organizations. With the 2012 elections approaching, it is important to understand how social media has evolved and how it is being used by campaigns and youth organizers. CIRCLE staff spoke with Sam Patton, the Associate Director at the League of Young Voters Education Fund (LYV) — a non-profit that engages youth in the political process- to learn how the LYV and political candidates are using social media and technology as part of their larger outreach strategy.

Presidential campaigns are using social media more now than they did in 2008. First, candidates and parties recognize that Facebook and Twitter determine what is considered popular in current events. A single high-profile story, such as the Trayvon Martin shooting, can appear in numerous sources that reach various age groups. According to Patton, Presidential campaigns need to use social media to keep their target audiences aware of what they are doing and their policy positions.

A SINGLE HIGH-PROFILE STORY, SUCH AS THE TRAYVON MARTIN SHOOTING, CAN APPEAR IN SEVERAL NEWSFEEDS, SPANNING ACROSS VARIOUS AGE GROUPS.

Several former Republican candidates have used social media to reach out to youth. Herman Cain and John Huntsman both used video media to promote their messages and candidacy. Additionally, youth were engaged via Twitter, both in the Republican debates in late 2011, and by President Obama in late spring 2012, who tweeted live.

 "Twitter is the primary way to get young people involved in our online events," says Patton, suggesting it is an integral component of the LYV social media strategy. Patton has encouraged all its affiliates to use this platform as it is a means of communication amongst national organizers. For the League, Twitter works well because it provides them an opportunity to conduct outreach with limited resources. Patton elaborated on this, saying that Twitter provides "social income for volunteers via Tweets," in that a tweet that mentions someone, especially if it comes from a high-profile person or a celebrity, can lead to more resources and networking that will benefit their work. LYV also "pushes their content towards new Twitter users," in order to get more and new youth involved.

LYV's strategic plan includes turning to celebrities in order to promote their work. For example, LYV is known for their mixtape collaborations with various musicians to bring attention to issues. Though the LYV is "one of the major organizations that focus on political and current issues," they have limited resources to reach out to their constituents on a cultural topic. A "shout out" or mention of the LYV from a celebrity or high-profile person to LYV has shown to be an effective promotion strategy. LYV also organizes webcasts that discuss politics, society, and culture; the most recent one featured Dr. James Peterson, a professor at Lehigh University and the founder of Hip-Hop Scholars - he discussed race and gender as factors in the 2012 elections. Youth were able to submit their questions and comment on the webcast via Twitter.

Over the years, Information has become more accessible with major advancements and usage of the Internet. The proportion of adults who use the Internet has risen from 47% in 2000 to 78% in 2012; for 18-29 year olds; it has risen from 61% in 2000 to 94%. Furthermore, 63% of adults and 88% of 18-29 year-olds use the Internet on their phones. Smart phone technology (which offers access to the internet) gives young people opportunities to be involved in community affairs and politics in various ways. For instance, Android smart phones have an application called GeauxVote Mobile that allows eligible voters in Louisiana to see where they must go to vote. Sites like GottaRegister.com and Rockthevote.com allow people to easily access, fill out, and print out registration forms. The LYV uses TurboVote, an online application that assists in the voter registration process.

"CAMPAIGNS AND CANDIDATES NEED TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE UP TO SPEED ON MAKING THEIR SITES MOBILE-FRIENDLY," PATTON SAID.

With more people relying on their phones for internet service, new social media tactics are being used; young people, minorities, citizens with no college experience, and citizens with low-income are most likely to use their phone as their source of information and internet access as compared to the general population. Knowing this, campaigns would be wise to include smart phone outreach plans in their media strategies. "Campaigns and candidates need to ensure that they are up to speed on making their sites mobile-friendly," Patton said. For Patton, this strategy is based on his work with the LYV, where he has seen an increase in mobile activity on the LYV website. Both Obama's and Romney's campaigns have now made their websites user-friendly for smart phones, tablets, and computers, to ensure that volunteers can work from their mobile devices. Additionally, Obama's campaign team is designing a computer modeling program that analyzes data to generate information to personalize every interaction with supporters, whether it be via Facebook, Twitter, or by mobile phone.

BOTH OBAMA'S AND ROMNEY'S CAMPAIGNS HAVE NOW MADE THEIR WEBSITES USER-FRIENDLY FOR SMART PHONES, TABLETS, AND COMPUTERS, TO ENSURE THAT VOLUNTEERS CAN WORK FROM THEIR MOBILE DEVICES.

Will social media and Internet applications become the main methods to reach out to youth voters? Patton and the LYV think so - and even after the elections will integrate their online and offline work to keep youth engaged. Campaign strategists should follow their lead if they want to get the youth vote. ★

NEW CIRCLE FACT SHEET EXAMINES THE IMPACT OF AMERICORPS ON VOTING, FINDS NO EVIDENCE THAT AMERICORPS MOBILIZES YOUNG PEOPLE POLITICALLY

In a new fact sheet entitled "The Impact of AmeriCorps on Voting," Andrea K. Finlay, Constance Flanagan and Laura Wray-Lake find that young adults tend to become more civically engaged during their twenties, regardless of whether they serve in AmeriCorps. The report shows that AmeriCorps has no independent effect on the chances that disengaged youth will start voting, but it substantially broadens the civic engagement of those who do vote. They become involved in their communities in non-political ways.

The authors used data from a nationally representative, eight-year, longitudinal study of more than 3,000 people, comparing those who enrolled in AmeriCorps with those who indicated interest in the program but did not enroll.

Peter Levine, Director of CIRCLE, noted that the relationship between federal service programs and political engagement has been controversial in recent years.

"Some conservative critics have argued that programs like AmeriCorps could encourage young people to take political action in favor of liberal causes or Democratic candidates," Levine said. "Other critics have worried that the program, which promotes volunteering and has strict rules against political activity, may divert young people toward uncontroversial service and away from electoral politics."

Levine continued, "In fact, non-voters are substantially more likely to enroll in AmeriCorps, and there is little evidence that the program channels engagement away from politics. Specifically, the report shows that active voters who enroll in AmeriCorps will become more broadly active in community affairs eight years later."

APPLY TO CIRCLE'S NEW CAMPUS COUNTS INITATIVE

Colleges and universities are invited to apply to participate in a new CIRCLE research project, Campus Counts, a national study of college student registration and voting rates and patterns. By examining the voting patterns of specific groups (such as students from out of state or students who participate in specific learning experiences), you can investigate possible disparities in student access to voting and evaluate the success of your civic education initiatives. By participating in this project, your campus will be a partner in innovative national research on the trends in and motivations for student public participation.

For more information, please email nancy.thomas@tufts.edu.