

Citizens of now

High-quality youth social action in primary schools

Participating in high-quality youth social action opportunities has a 'double benefit'. It benefits both the young people involved and their communities.

We want to encourage more primary schools to make the most of the opportunities and benefits high-quality youth social action has to offer. Over the last three years, in partnership with the Pears #iwill Fund, the RSA has been exploring this. We designed, delivered, and evaluated RSA4, a youth social action programme for Year 4 pupils. Our action research investigated what high-quality youth social action looks like in a primary school setting and what enables or limits teachers' abilities to embed youth social action into their practice.

This report is a celebration of the RSA4 schools' efforts and achievements, and we hope that with the practical guidance, it inspires more teachers to lead youth social action in their own settings, empowering pupils to be socially responsible citizens of now.

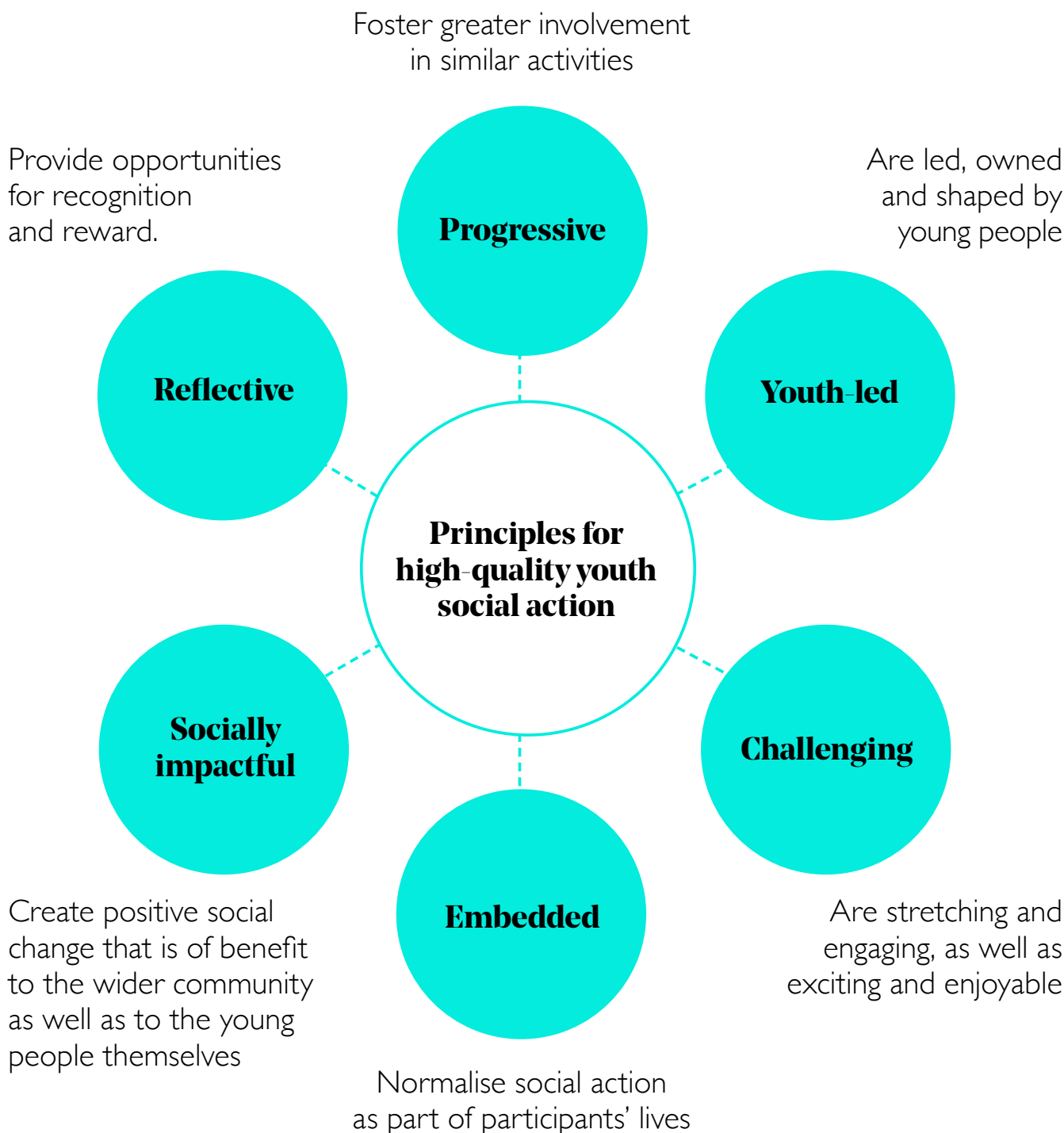
This flyer is a summary of insights and practical guidance for educators.

In partnership



High-quality principles for social action ¹

The six principles help define what high-quality social action means in practice for all young people. This should be your starting point:



¹ Ockenden, N., Unell, J., Donahue K et al. (2013) Scoping a quality framework for youth social action: The campaign for youth social action. Cabinet Office; Institute for Volunteering Research; NCVO; The Young Foundation. [pdf]. Available at: [youngfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Scoping-a-Quality-Framework-for-Youth-Social-Action-FINAL.pdf](https://www.youngfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Scoping-a-Quality-Framework-for-Youth-Social-Action-FINAL.pdf)

What are the active ingredients of high-quality youth social action?

For achieving intended outcomes:

- Pupils' ownership over the goal and the means of the youth social action project.
- Pupils' feel connected to their local community and part of something bigger.
- Pupils' perception that the project is sufficiently difficult, including feeling a sense of 'controlled discomfort'.
- Pupils' perception that the project is successful.
- Pupils' awareness of their personal development.

For overcoming practical and ethical challenges:

- School leadership drives a culture of youth social action and helps to overcome teacher-level barriers to engagement.
- Schools encourage youth-voice.
- Schools are connected and engaged with their local community.
- Teachers have confidence in teaching sensitive and/or controversial issues.

Practical guidance for educators

In order to support these active ingredients, here is some practical guidance for teachers on how to facilitate high-quality youth social action:

Explore the issue in full

Provide plenty of learning opportunities for pupils to better understand their chosen social issue.

Make it relevant to your school

Embed youth social action within your school and practice.

Agree milestones for reflections

Create a sense of commitment and accountability by agreeing on milestones, as well as what good would look like at each stage.

Give pupils agency

Allow pupils to lead, shape, and own their youth social action project.

Get to know your community allies

Your local community is a great resource for you to draw upon to enhance the quality of youth social action.

Link to your curriculum

Adapt your scheme of work to incorporate the chosen social issue across different subjects.

Full report, 'Citizens of Now' available on the RSA website [thersa.org](https://www.thersa.org)