

MTV Releases Results from

JUST CAUSE: RESEARCH STUDY PROVIDES INSIGHT ON MOTIVATING YOUNG PEOPLE TO VOLUNTEER

Findings Deconstruct Youth Activism and Find "Activation Gap"
Disparity Between Interest In and Involvement In Social Causes

New York, NY - Thursday, April 27, 2006 - MTV released today the results of Just Cause, a research study which deconstructs how youth perceive "activism" and explores the motivating factors and barriers in their decision to become involved in social causes. On behalf of MTV, U30 Group conducted the segmentation study with more than 1200 young people, including expert interviews, ethnographies and a national poll of a representative sample with participants ages 12 to 24, from December 2005 to April 2006.

"As MTV continues its commitment to engage young people and drive their civic participation, Just Cause offers great insight into how young people define and connect to social issues and causes," said Christina Norman, President, MTV. "Moving forward, Just Cause's findings will help MTV most efficiently engage, educate and empower young people to get involved and take action."

Four key themes emerged from the Just Cause research:

1) With the emergence of the Internet and other technology, **communities are defined and redefined in new ways** - not simply geography or family, but more so along common interests. The term "community" encompasses all people and places to which they feel connected, particularly in the virtual communities they inhabit online. And, although more young people get information about volunteering and social causes from the Internet than from any other media source, the study also found that:

- 62% say that the issues that really matter to them are the ones that have personally touched them or someone they know
- 70% of involved middle-school students said their parents' encouragement played a big role in getting them to volunteer
- 75% of involved youth say wanting to help others is what drives them

2) With 70% believing in the importance of helping the community, 68% already doing something to support a cause on a monthly basis and 82% describing themselves at least "somewhat involved," it's clear that the majority of young people are convinced that supporting a social cause is something they should do. However, there is a strong disparity between interest and involvement, an "**activation gap**," and there is significant room for growth.

- Less than a third do something on a weekly basis and interest far exceeds involvement, as 38% describe themselves as very interested, but only 19% are

very involved. However, on the opposite spectrum, 18% are not at all involved, while only 4% not at all interested.

- The spectrum of involved youth seemed to fit into 6 general categories:

1. "Candy Strippers" (23%) Altruistic young people with a sincere interest in helping others who volunteer once or twice per month
2. "Teacher's Pets" (14%) Eager-to-please résumé builders or those motivated by social aspects who volunteer almost every week
3. "Growers" (25%) Followers who need a push to get involved who volunteer a few times per year
4. "Watchers" (13%) Idlers with a lower interest level who volunteer a few times per year
5. "Blasés" (6%) Young people with low social awareness made up of a high proportion of young professionals who volunteer a few times per year.
6. Uninvolved (18%) Just don't identify with activism and never volunteer.

3) Young people need **specific direction, encouragement, flexibility, and an early start**. Respondents identified personal identity (18%), desire to hangout out with friends (15%), lack of time (14%), and not knowing how to get started (14%) as among the top roadblocks to getting involved.

- Additionally, 35% indicate that lack of encouragement is a barrier to involvement and half of (51%) young adults say busy work schedules are a barrier
- The third most frequently identified reason for not being more involved is lack of good resources on volunteer opportunities
- Those who identified themselves as "highly involved" got their start, on average, at age 12

4) And, anecdotal response from respondents offers clues into successful strategies into **closing the "activation gap."** Better resources to find out about opportunities (12%), having more time/more convenient activities (14%), and opportunities to volunteer with friends (15%) were the three most frequently mentioned factors that young people said would get them more involved.

- Young people mention volunteering with friends, more than any other factor, when asked what would get them more involved
- 43% of involved youth say that organized religion played a big role in getting them to volunteer
- 71% of involved youth say enjoying volunteer activities played a big role as well