

The Nuffield Foundation Newsletter

Winter 2011



Birth month matters

The month in which you are born could have a significant impact on educational achievement and well-being according to new research from the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS).

Children born in August achieve lower scores in national achievement tests than those born in September and are more likely to be regarded as below average in reading, writing and maths at age seven.

These trends continue as children get older. August-

borns are more likely to study vocational qualifications at 16 and less likely to attend a Russell Group university than their September-born peers.

Month of birth also affects the way children think and feel, with children born in August less likely to believe they control their own future than those born in September. They are also more likely to report being unhappy or bullied at school.

However, at age 14, young people born in August are less likely to drink alcohol or smoke cannabis than their

September-born peers.

The IFS also found evidence that parents are aware of the disadvantages experienced by their summer-born children and try to compensate by providing a richer home learning environment.

Researchers will now seek to identify what is driving the differences between children born in August and those born in September. They will make recommendations for how education policy could be changed to mitigate the disadvantages faced by summer-born children. [www](#)

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Welcome to the Nuffield Foundation Newsletter

Further details on all the stories marked with this icon [www](#) can be found on our website, www.nuffieldfoundation.org

The newsletter is published three times a year. For additional copies, or to be removed from the mailing list, please contact fbright@nuffieldfoundation.org

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Global grant-making



UK Charitable trusts and foundations give almost ten per cent of their funding to international development, a total of £292 million in 2009/10. This is equal to half the amount given by government (DFID) in bilateral aid via NGOs.

African countries receive the biggest proportion of this funding, accounting for an estimated £90 million in 2010. This compares to an estimated £56 million spent in Asia and £32 million in South America.

The findings come from a study of the scale and distribution of international development funding

by UK foundations. The study was commissioned by the Nuffield Foundation, the Baring Foundation and Paul Hamlyn Foundation, and undertaken by Cathy Pharoah at Cass Business School.

The study also identified a number of emerging trends in foundation funding, such as setting up new programmes relating to the impact of climate change, neglected tropical diseases and palliative care. There has also been an increase in partnerships between foundations and other funders such as governments, international agencies and corporate donors. [www](#)

NHS should pay for funerals of organ donors

The Nuffield Council on Bioethics has concluded that paying for the funerals of organ donors would be an ethical way to encourage more people to sign the Organ Donor Register. However it does not support any payment of living organ donors beyond reimbursement of their costs.

While it supports a system that would require people to make a choice about organ donation during their lifetime, the Council does not recommend introducing an 'opt-out'

system, where it is assumed that people consent to donation.

These recommendations were published in the Council's report on donating bodily materials such as organs, blood, eggs, sperm and whole bodies. Others included removing the £250 cap on egg and sperm donor expenses to ensure that lost earnings are reimbursed in full, and potentially offering payment over and above expenses to those who are prepared to donate eggs for research. [www](#)



Supportive schools?



To what extent do young people feel 'connected' with school? How do they relate with teachers and with their peers? What are the different ways they respond to the pressures of academic work?

These are some of the questions answered in *The Supportive School*, which uses the results of over 300 research studies to identify the key schooling factors which affect young people's development and well-being.

The book's authors argue that what matters is how schools bring the different elements of schooling together to create a strong 'culture of support', particularly at the transition point from primary to secondary.

Based on research commissioned by the Foundation's Changing Adolescence Programme and led by John Gray, the book also places the UK's much-criticised 'performance' on well-being issues in an international context and asks challenging questions about how far the UK is lagging behind.

The Supportive School is published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing. [www](#)

Junk food marketing

Consumers International (CI) has launched a unique step-by-step guide for governments and civil society organisations to collect evidence on the marketing of unhealthy food to children.

Developed with a grant from the Foundation, the manual is freely available worldwide and provides clear advice on how to set standard definitions of marketing to children, as well as specific guidance for different channels such as television, print, internet, outdoor advertising and school marketing. CI hopes

that the evidence gathered from using the manual can help inform government health policy.

Examples of the kind of marketing targeted by the manual include the website for KFC's Chicky Club, the biggest children's membership body in Malaysia, which pushes discounts on unhealthy products directly to children, and the Nestlé 'fuel for school' TV ad in the Philippines which alludes to increased academic performance from eating their high-in-sugar Koko Krunch cereal. [www](#)



Sitting in Judgment

Judges are moving away from the stereotype of 'out of touch' and 'old white men' and becoming more representative of the people they serve, according to findings from a research project undertaken by Penny Darbyshire and funded by the Foundation.

Over a seven year period, Penny accompanied judges in their daily work, listened to their conversations, observed their handling of cases and the people who come before them, and questioned them about their lives, careers and ambitions.

She found that reforms to training, recruitment and appointments introduced in the late 1980s have changed the make-up and practice of the judiciary. However she also found that the legal system is under stress; lacking resources but facing an ever-increasing caseload.

Sitting in Judgment: The Working Lives of Judges offers a detailed account of the experience of modern judging and the current state of the courts and judiciary in England and Wales. [www](#)

Asteroid discovery for Science Bursary student

Nuffield Science Bursary student Hannah Blyth helped astronomers discover over 20 new asteroids and a comet in the process of breaking up whilst on her research placement at the University of Glamorgan. One of the asteroids, which is more than 300 million miles away, may be named after Hannah following verification from Harvard University.

The 'broken comet' was spotted in images taken as part of a project being coordinated by UK astronomer Nick Howes, and two of the world's leading comet and asteroid imagers.

Speaking about her experience Hannah said: "It's amazing to be involved in something like this. I was busy carrying out observations for Nick and almost cut short the sequence of images of this particular comet as he had sent me another target to look at – I'm glad I didn't change my plans!"

Nuffield Science Bursaries give school and college students the opportunity to take part in STEM-related research. [www](#)



Information on all these stories can be found at www.nuffieldfoundation.org



Youth unemployment

Preliminary results from Richard Dorsett's Nuffield-funded study into young people's transitions from school to work have been presented to the ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment.

Researchers identified a number of patterns in youth labour market experience within the ten per cent of young people who experience problems in transition from school to work. They hope to identify individual characteristics that can help predict which young people will have difficulty in the transition to the labour market. [www](#)

Mediation not litigation

The Alternative Libel Project has called for mediation to be used in all libel cases and failing that, for an early neutral evaluation by a High Court Judge.

Libel claims are extremely expensive to bring or defend, meaning individuals are often unable to defend themselves against libel suits, and those who have been smeared cannot afford to bring a case to court.

Mediation is successful in 96% of libel cases and should be used as the default dispute procedure according to the Project, which will publish its final report in the new year. [www](#)



Poverty and inequality

A grant to the LSE's Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) will co-fund a major programme of work to report on the impact of the recession, spending changes and the government's social policy reforms on inequality and poverty in the UK. [www](#)

Sure Start

Former Director of the Sure Start Unit Naomi Eisenstadt has written an account of the programme, explaining its history, its benefits and pitfalls, and demonstrating the need for effective services for young people. *Providing a Sure Start* is published by Policy Press.

[www](#)



New Twenty First Century Science resources

Updated resources to support the teaching of Twenty First Century Science are now available from Oxford University Press (OUP).

Revised to match the 2011 specifications for GCSE Science, the resources include iPack OxBox CD-ROMs, which can be individually customised and contain lesson

plans, activity sheets, guidance, presentations, videos and animations.

Twenty First Century Science was developed by the Foundation in partnership with the University of York. All resources are available to order from www.twentyfirstcenturyscience.org [www](#)



William Morris, Lord Nuffield
1877-1963

The Nuffield Foundation is a charitable trust endowed by William Morris, Lord Nuffield, the founder of Morris Motors. Our aim is to improve social well-being in the widest sense. We fund research and innovation in education and social policy, primarily in the UK but also in Europe and Africa. We also work to build capacity in education and science and social science research.

Full information on all our current activities and details of how to apply for grants can be found at www.nuffieldfoundation.org

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