**Data Collection, Sources and Methodology**

The dataset contains information collected as part of a large-scale field experiment to test for the effect of different kinds of endorsement on volunteering with young adults. In the autumn of 2013, students across five English universities were randomly allocated to one of three treatment groups, or to a control group. Each group was sent a different form of endorsement by e-mail, or a control e-mail, with volunteering outcomes across the groups compared.

Five universities were selected to ensure representation of students from different backgrounds and from different parts of the country. The sample included a London university (University College London), a university in a relatively deprived metropolitan borough of North West England (University of Salford), a university in a coastal city in the South of England (University of Southampton), and two universities in cities in the South West of England (University of Exeter and University of Plymouth, with the former attracting relatively more affluent students than the latter). The final sample consisted of 100,974 students.

The research was conducted in collaboration with student volunteering services, student records teams, and data protection officers in each university. Each university’s student records service provided a dataset containing student ID numbers and a range of variables, including gender, ethnicity, nationality, parental education, year of study, mode of attendance (full or part time), faculty of study (i.e. broad disciplinary area), and level of study (undergraduate or postgraduate).

Students were sent an e-mail containing the specific endorsement message relevant to the treatment or control group to which they had been randomly allocated on the week beginning 14 October 2013 (for practical reasons the exact dates varied by university but all e-mails were sent within a three-day period, i.e. Wednesday to Friday of that week).

The main outcome measures were the binary variables of (i) whether or not the student clicked on the link to volunteering opportunities contained in the first, or the second, e-mail they received (1 = yes, 0 = no); (ii) whether or not they had formally registered for volunteering opportunities with their student volunteering service (1 = yes, 0 = no); (iii) whether or not they had participated in actual volunteering (1 = yes, 0 = no); (iv) whether or not they had attended a training or induction session for a volunteering role (1 = yes, 0 = no). Self-reported outcome measures concerning the extent of students’ volunteering were collected via the survey sent to all students.

The data for the first measure of website clicks were obtained using mailchimp software. The e-mails themselves were sent via mailchimp (apart from in the one institution which handled the e-mail sending). This software allows users to track the individual recipients of e-mails who click on links contained within them. The registration, training and volunteering data were collected by the universities’ volunteering services (and also in the case of the actual volunteering data, external organisations offering the student volunteering activities) and provided to the research team. The self-report survey was an online survey, a link to which was e-mailed to all students across the five universities.