

EQ Review

Educational Quality in the Developing World



EQ Review is a newsletter published by USAID's EQUIP1 to share knowledge about issues fundamental to improving educational quality and to communicate successes, challenges, and lessons learned by USAID Missions.

March 2008

Vol. 6 No. 1

Youth Service Learning



Inside This Issue:

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Ruwwad Project
- 2 Youth Service Learning in South Africa
- 3 Youth Volunteering in Brazil
- 4 Youth Tutoring Activities in Kenya

While the experiences of service and learning go back centuries, the term “service-learning” is fairly recent. It originated in the US in 1966, and the first service-learning conference was held in 1969. One of many definitions for service-learning is “... a form of experiential learning where students and faculty collaborate with communities to address problems and issues, simultaneously gaining knowledge and skills and advancing personal development. There is an equal emphasis on helping communities and providing valid learning experiences to students.”¹ Studies of service-learning programs indicate high positive correlations to academic performance, growth in personal skills and civic connectedness, and school-to-work benefits.²

As such, service-learning has gained momentum in US schools. Thirty-seven states have policies and procedures on service-learning and nearly five million students engage in service-learning.³ Increasingly, there is international recognition of the value of service to local and national development. Latin America also has a claim on service-learning as part of its heritage and language. The very popular term “solidaridad” is translated variously as: engagement, standing together as a group, social justice, and serving together. Several years ago, it was reported that over 4,300 schools in Argentina – representing 10% of all schools – had experience with service-learning.⁴

There is a distinction between service-learning and civic service programs. Service-learning is often, but not exclusively, located in schools, integrates instruction and reflection of the experience, and is for shorter periods of time. While a civic service program is typically “a long-term, intensive form of volunteering...[that] is a contribution to the local, national or world community.”⁵

A distinction also exists between service programs for in-school youth and those for out-of-school youth. Programs for in-school youth often resemble the service-learning model - as described above - where service activities often correspond with formal school curriculum objectives. Whereas, service programs for out-of-school youth constructively engage youth in livelihood skills-building, employment opportunities, and civic participation. Furthermore, these programs ideally promote and engage youth as direct contributors to the development of their local community.

The profiles of programs in this issue of the EQ Review represent a variety of positive impacts of programs that create service opportunities for youth. The Ruwwad project builds civic engagement and leadership through its “by youth, for youth” approach. The City Year South Africa program is part of the government’s National Youth Service initiative that requires all service programs to link to job readiness. The Enter Jovem project has invested in Brazilian youth by assisting them in the acquisition of employability skills and volunteerism. Finally, the Kenya Weaving the Safety Net (WSN) project has integrated a youth tutoring program to build academic and life skills among the tutors, as well as the youth they serve.

Paul Sully, Senior Youth Advisor, Education Development Center, psully@edc.org.

¹ The UCLA Service-Learning Clearinghouse Project, UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies Department, [Higher Education Research Institute](http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/slc/test/basics.html). <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/slc/test/basics.html>

² Learning in Deed, The Power of Service Learning for American Schools. <http://www.learningindeed.org/slcommission/report.html>

³ National Youth Leadership Council 2006. *Growing to Greatness 2006, The State of Service-Learning Project*.

⁴ Latin American Center for Service Learning. <http://www.clayss.org.ar/ingles/servicelearning.htm>

⁵ McBride, Amanda Moore and Michael Sherraden, 2007. *Civic Service Worldwide: Impacts and Inquiry*. Amonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe.

Ruwwad Project

In the West Bank and Gaza, the “*Ruwwad*” project has developed a nation-wide system of civic volunteers called the Ruwwad Youth Corps (RYC). Founded in 2005, managed “by youth, for youth,” the RYC gives 1,000 young men and women leadership and skills training and hands-on experience in solving social challenges, such as addressing a rural water shortage by building new wells while learning about water pollution, and improving basic education through the youth-led renovation of a local school. The RYC has two main goals. The first goal is to prepare youth for leadership roles in their communities through public service that is linked to concrete learning. Secondly, the project aims to show adults in the West Bank and Gaza—and around the world—how youth, when given the opportunities, guidance, and space, can become positive role models and problem-solvers.

The US National Youth Leadership Council, a national nonprofit organization that promotes service-learning in schools and communities across the United States, describes service-learning as the intersection of volunteerism that helps others, and knowledge or skill gains that help oneself. Structured into all of Ruwwad’s projects are similar opportunities to learn and apply new knowledge in ways that benefit high-needs communities and prepare young volunteers for adult life. Ruwwad’s approach to youth service learning centers around its unique “30/30” model: every thirty days, thirty youth are recruited to participate in a public service training program. This training is then followed by placement in a “youth-led initiative team”. From start to finish, the “30/30” model has five stages: recruitment, orientation, training, placement, and coaching.

By late 2007, Ruwwad’s 45 core leaders and 800+ youth volunteers have carried out close to 20 service-learning activities in over 140 Palestinian communities, such as beach clean-ups in Gaza, coordinating summer camps, and providing emergency food and medical aid. As the ranks of the RYC grow steadily, so does the Corps’ positive impact on community members—and on the youth themselves. Leadership surveys given to a sample of 25 youth leaders on entry into the RYC and again after three months of involvement show that on average, youth feel their task planning and positive communication skills have improved by 13% and 17%,⁶ respectively, from baseline levels.

The community level impact is notable. For example, women in Palestinian communities who took part in the RYC’s *Erada* Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign reported an 80% satisfaction rate with the medical services provided through the activity. Hardly surprising, given the poignant results of this service-learning project, which saw 30 RYC volunteers lead awareness sessions, coordinate self-examination training, and help provide free screening referrals for 140 eligible women in four Ramallah-area towns. The key lesson learned through this campaign was concrete and dramatic: Early screening saves lives. “A young woman was positively diagnosed with breast cancer during the campaign,” explains youth project organizer Manal Abdallah. “She is now going through treatment and is almost 100% cured. We were able to save her”. Crucial knowledge, leveraged to benefit youth and communities: This is the Ruwwad model in action.

For more information, contact Ruwwad CTO at the USAID/West Bank and Gaza Mission: Fadi Khoury fkhoury@usaid.gov.

Youth Service Learning in South Africa

Lack of education and skills, poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, crime and violence have all contributed to a severe lack of civic and economic participation among South African youth. To address these challenges, City Year, a United States-based organization focusing on national youth service, adapted its service-learning program for an international context. As the implementing partner for USAID funded project, EFA South Africa program from October 2005 to September 2006, City Year adapted its program model for use in Johannesburg. The City Year South Africa (CYSoA) program aims to develop a cadre of young “Service Leaders” capable of entering the workforce with marketable skills and civic leadership abilities.

To develop Service Leaders, CYSoA targeted a diverse range of inner city youth aged 17-24, providing over 1,600 hours of training and service activities emphasizing employment, civic engagement and education. During the partnership period, 273 Service Leaders and Senior Service Leaders led over 3,800 primary school learners to improve the broader community. For example, they established a community food garden and held workshops on topics such as health, democracy and racism. One highlight was the After School Program, in which Service Leader trainees provided after-school homework assistance on much-needed literacy, numeracy, and life skills.

The project also built a strong team of local staff with first-hand knowledge of national youth service policy in South Africa. As a result of this additional training, 96% of first year graduates were successful in landing jobs, continuing their education, or engaging in further training. This collaboration between City Year and EQUIP3 has helped CYSoA continue its work. Moreover, thanks to the valuable lessons learned from the adaptation of the original model, City Year may bring the program to Cape Town in 2008. EQUIP3 facilitated a learning process to help other organizations and countries understand the City Year model for possible adaptation.

For more information about the EQUIP3 EFA/ Youth Challenge Grant Program in South Africa contact EQUIP3 CTO, Clare Ignatowski at cignatowski@usaid.gov or Senior Urban Advisor for the Africa Regional Urban Development Center, Marcia Glenn at marciaglen@usaid.gov.

⁶ The tools used to measure self-perceived skill/value levels are the Ruwwad project’s own Monitoring and Evaluation surveys that track Leadership Values, Skills and Attributes. These are based on the Kirkpatrick model for evaluating social/organizational development. More information on the model can be found at: <http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/articles/k4levels/index.htm>, and also in: Opportunities, Capabilities, Second Chances: A Framework for Policy. World Development Report 2007 – Development of the Next Generation, the World Bank, Washington D.C.

Youth Volunteering in Brazil



A youth volunteer providing services at the Ação Global

Employability skills such as public speaking, proper language usage, and professional demeanor are some of the requirements for applying to an entry-level position. Other traits and skills also are used to evaluate a candidate's qualifications in the private sector. The Enter Jovem Program, a USAID-funded youth employability program, seeks to empower youth and prepare them for their first encounter with the labor market, not only with technical skills, but also by developing well-rounded citizens. Recent feedback from employers who hire entry-level youth from the Enter Jovem Program expressed concern that average youth are not aware of current issues that affect the lives of many Brazilians including role of community, citizenship.

In response to these concerns, Enter Jovem program beneficiaries in Salvador, a city on the northeast coast of Brazil, participate in a national volunteering event that offers basic health and social services to low income citizens. These basic services include medical exams, dental services, hair cuts, the chance to register for government services, and processing requests for documents, such as identification cards and birth certificates. Enter Jovem youth participated for the second time in Ação Global (a Global Action initiative to provide free services to Brazilians on a selected date) by providing résumé writing services to the general public. Other services offered included validation of the CPF (tax identification number). Every Brazilian citizen is required to file an income tax declaration to the Receita Federal (Internal Revenue Service). For individuals with a year income less than R\$ 14,992 there is an option to file a tax exempt declaration. At the Ação Global, volunteers from Enter Jovem provided this service to low income families; this in turn helps the families to keep their CPFs valid. More than fifty youth participated in the day-long event, many of whom were participating for the second time. After the event, the youth explained that they enjoyed helping others - it gave them the opportunity to put to use what they were learning in the program, whether in the creation of a résumés or explaining the importance of social services.

To build upon this positive experience of youth volunteering, Enter Jovem has incorporated a peer-to-peer work readiness mentoring component into its project design. This new element will build on the enthusiastic youth who are currently employed and partner them with unemployed youth to guide them through the interview and hiring process. This collaboration between past beneficiaries, current enrollees and the Job Placement and Mentoring Officers facilitates a smooth transition from program conclusion to entry level employment, all with a youth perspective. For three months after a youth is placed in a job, the JPMO meets with the new employee on a monthly basis to provide professional counseling. This has been essential to retain their job

For more information about the Enter Jovem Project in Brazil contact Gabriela Goulart, CTO, at ggoulart@usaid.gov or Tanya Andrade, Enter Jovem Director at tandrade@air.org.

City Year gives corps members skills and opportunities to serve in schools and neighborhood. City Year seeks to:

- *Help children succeed*
- *Build stronger communities*
- *Break down social barriers*
- *Develop young leaders*
- *Foster active citizenship*

City Year unites young people of all backgrounds for a year of full-time community service. As tutors, mentors, and role models, these young people make a difference in the lives of children, and transform schools and neighborhoods. During their year of service corps, members develop civic leadership skills they can use throughout a lifetime of community service.

For more information, visit City Year website at: <http://www.cityyear.org/home.aspx>

Youth Tutoring in Kenya

According to UNICEF, only 75% of Kenyan children who enter 1st grade eventually reach 5th grade and less than half of young people enroll in secondary school. In Kiambu District, Weaving the Safety Net (WSN) program for vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS features a peer-led youth tutoring program that aims to increase both academic performance and psychosocial support for vulnerable children with academic difficulties. This program was created by Christian Children Fund (CCF) out of a USAID grant under PEPFAR.

Potential youth tutors are identified and recommended by local implementing partners working with the program. Selected youth must be high school graduates between 17 and 25 years old, have an interest in volunteering time to help needy children, and considered trustworthy, reliable and acceptable by the community.

These selected youth then undergo an intensive three-day tutoring skills training taught by senior tutors from the Ministry of Education Teachers Advisory Centre. The course covers the following topics:

- Acquisition of literacy, numeracy and communication skills
- Development of critical and logical thinking
- Organization, planning, and management
- Monitoring and evaluating performance
- Classroom management
- Special education needs

The staff members also train tutors to provide emotional and social support to children with coping problems. The tutors are given additional training on UNICEF's Convention on the Rights of the Child to enhance their understanding of child protection issues and support community initiatives.

Tutors do a variety of activities that take from 45 minutes to two hours per day. Tutoring is conducted once a week at the school, at a church, or at a designated community center during school holidays. When schools are in session, tutoring takes place once a week after school. Tutors revisit the lessons taught by class teachers during the week, help children do their homework and regularly meet with teachers to assess progress. Youth tutors also help prepare meals for the children at community centers where they participate in weekend feeding programs organized by the community. In addition they perform skits, prepare play materials using local resources, and play with the children to stimulate their social and emotional development.

The tutoring program has 154 active youth tutors serving 2,196 children. WSN provides the tutors with teacher's guides, pens, notebooks for child progress records and a monthly stipend. Sampled records from eight centers indicate that 61% of the children receiving tutorial support improved performance by 10 points from the previous academic term. The improvement is noted generally across all subjects. CCF is making an effort to expand the tutoring program by using a TOT model whereby current tutors train new tutors, resulting in a reduction of the child-tutor ratio.

For more information contact, USAID CTO, Colette Bottini at cbottini@usaid.gov.



A youth tutor supervises children playing during a tutorial session at FOCUS tutorial center, Ruiru