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Promising Youth Development Strategies



Youth Service Programs

A STUDY OF PROMISING MODELS IN
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Young people everywhere are highly energized and eager to take advantage of the opportunity to serve their country and their communities. Service programs have been an effective vehicle for promoting nation building and helping countries harness the resources and energy of young people to address urgent development needs.

**Educational Quality
Improvement Program 3**

**Engaging and Preparing
Youth for Work, Civil Society,
and Family Life**

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A Study of Promising Models in International Development

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Introduction

This study is intended to provide policy makers and program planners interested in youth service programs in developing countries with a short history of the evolution of youth service in different regions, together with four program models based on program goals and the needs of specific cohorts of youth:

1. In-school service learning for secondary school students
2. Mandatory community service for university graduates
3. Population-wide national youth service programs
4. Service programs for out-of-school unemployed youth

Each of the four program models is illustrated by a short program brief. Featured programs include *Aprendizaje e Servicio Solidario* in Argentina, the Ghana National Service Scheme, the Israeli National Youth Service, the Ruwwad Palestinian Youth Empowerment Program, and the *Jovenes Constructores de la Comunidad (JCC)* Program in Mexico. The study also includes an annotated list of recommended resources on youth service and international development.

Among the strategies typically used for youth development, particularly in relation to workforce development, service is perhaps the most overlooked. Embarking on a national youth service program can be a challenging endeavor, requiring careful planning, the engagement of multiple stakeholders, and sustainable funding support, but the rewards of service programs far outweigh their risks. Young people everywhere are highly energized and eager to take advantage of the opportunity to serve their country and their communities. The youth service experience has proven an effective deterrent to the alienation of youth from their societies, offering youth positive opportunity for community engagement. Service programs also have been an effective vehicle for promoting nation building and helping countries harness the resources and energy of young people to address urgent development needs.



Background and History

Youth service programs can be found in every region and in most countries of the world. The size and scope of such programs vary widely, depending upon variables such as their institutional context, the amount of funding available, and the goals and objectives of their sponsoring agencies.

Youth Service Programs in the United States

The genesis for youth service programs dates back to the early 20th century and the philosopher William James. In a famous speech at Stanford University, entitled “The Moral Equivalent of War”, James called on “conscriptio[n] of the whole youth population to work on the toughest jobs . . . from coal and iron mines, to fishing fleets and road building.” James’ speech provided an alternative vision of youth development from the traditional one focused on the military service then required by most governments around the world.

James’s call to action was taken up by U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt who, during the Great Depression, founded the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which channeled the efforts of out-of-work young Americans into community service and nation-building projects. CCC members built some of America’s best-known bridges and highways and helped establish the U.S. national park system. From 1933 until its wartime demise in 1942, the CCC employed an average of 300,000 young men per year worked.

Successive American presidents built upon Roosevelt’s youth service legacy. President John F. Kennedy’s famous statement, “ask not what your country can do for you, but

what you can do for your country,” paved the way for the establishment of the Peace Corps in 1961, the first large-scale international youth service program. In 1965 President Lyndon Johnson founded Vista, the first U.S. program focused on youth service for distressed American communities; it was incorporated into the AmeriCorps program launched in 1992 by President Clinton. AmeriCorps provides an average of 70,000 youth per year with opportunities to engage in community service. In 2010 President Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which will expand the numbers of volunteers in U.S.-based service programs, such as AmeriCorps, to 250,000 by the year 2017.

The programs founded by Presidents Roosevelt, Kennedy, Johnson, Clinton, and Obama represent a government-sponsored model of youth service programs. They focus on providing youth with an opportunity for civic engagement through the experience of community service. Through service, young people are mobilized to contribute to the development needs of their communities. In this model, both communities and young people benefit. An eight-year study on the impact of AmeriCorps participation found that, in addition to having higher levels of overall civic engagement, participants have a higher satisfaction with their lives than non-participants, even several years after completing the program.¹

At the same time the U.S. government set about establishing youth service programs, nongovernmental models of youth service also began to emerge, led primarily by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and educators. Models developed by NGOs, such as YouthBuild International, focused on giving at-risk youth from low-income neighborhoods an opportunity to serve their communities while also learning skills that helped them become employed.

In the 1970s and 1980s, educators in the U.S. developed a youth service program model known as *service learning*. This model explores the potential for student educational outcomes when youth service activities are used to help support formal academic instruction. Service learning achieved prominence in 1990 when the U.S. National and Community Service Act, passed under President George H. W. Bush, provided government funding for state education offices and local school districts to implement local service-learning programs.

Youth Service Programs in Developing Countries

As a growing number of developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America achieved independence, organized youth service programs emerged to support national development. Susan Stroud, from Innovations for Civic Participation, has written an excellent review² of youth service programs in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, on which this section is based.

In **Africa**, many countries established national service programs during the period of colonial independence in the 1960s and 1970s. Several programs persist to the present day, although often with significant changes since inception, as in Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Senegal, and Ghana. Others have been discontinued, as in Botswana and Tanzania. Namibia inaugurated its national program in 1999, and South Africa adopted its National Youth Service Programme in 2004.³

Most African national youth service programs focus on mobilizing young people for national development. Service programs in Africa provide young people with opportunities to become actively involved in the process of nation building. By investing their time, skills, and energy, volunteers make an important contribution to the wellbeing of their communities. Service programs provide an outlet for disenfranchised youth to transform relationships within their communal environment, change the policies and values of their nation, and bring hope for the less fortunate members of their communities. In many places, national service programs have also helped to address needs that could not be met in their countries due to the lack of human and material resources.

In **Latin America**, the dominant concept and value in youth service programs is *solidaridad*. One of the region’s leading practitioners, Maria Nieves Tapia, explains that *solidaridad* refers to “working together for the common cause, helping others in an organized and effective way, standing as a group or as a nation to defend one’s rights, face natural disasters or economic crisis, and to do it hand in hand. *Solidaridad* is one of the values South Americans cherish most, and it is the common flag of all the new and old volunteer organizations in our emerging civic societies.”⁴ This concept is reflected in a number of national service programs begun in Latin America in the 1990s: in Chile, *Adopta un Hermano* and *Servicio País*; in Brazil, the *Programa Jovem Cidadão: Serviço Civil Voluntário*; in Uruguay, *Uruguay Solidario*. In several countries, the government has taken an active role in the development of

national service programs; in other cases, NGOs have taken the lead.

In **Asia** as in the United States, since the 1960s, large-scale national youth service programs have been initiated across the region and expanded throughout the 1990s and 2000s. In 1994 the Communist Youth League established the China Young Volunteers Association (CYVA) to design and implement youth service programs. Between 1994 and 1999 approximately 70 million young people participated in programs organized by the CYVA. These programs benefited the elderly and disabled, responded to emergencies and disasters, and provided services to rural areas through the Poverty Alleviation Relay Project.⁵ In 2003 the government launched a new national service program, Go West, which sends university graduates to serve in the underdeveloped western regions of China for one or two years. In 2004, 20,000 university graduates participated in the program.⁶

The Indian National Service Scheme was created in 1969. Based on Gandhian principles, this program has the dual goals of developing civic responsibility in young people and contributing to national development. The program, based at universities and schools, involves nearly one million students. The smaller National Service Volunteer Scheme in India enrolls several thousand university graduates each year in a full-time program that deploys them in areas of need that match their academic qualifications.⁷

The government of Malaysia created a new national service program in 2004 and enrolled 85,000 18-year-old men and women. Participants are selected randomly, but participation is mandatory for three months. The program is run under the direction of the military.⁸

Across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) there are examples of both national and non-governmental initiatives for youth service. The primary host or implementing institution(s) of youth service programs vary from country to country. In Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Tunisia, Turkey, the UAE, and Yemen, for example, civil society organizations, international organizations such as the UNDP and USAID, and universities work in cooperation with the national government, but typically take the lead in delivering youth service programs. In countries such as Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Jordan, Bahrain and Morocco, youth service initiatives are sponsored or in some cases led by the government, with an equal or lesser role played by civil society, academic and international organizations. As in other countries and regions, opportunities for youth civic participation and service in the MENA region are determined by the policy context in which they exist. While a discussion of the recent changes in the MENA region such

as youth-led revolution and similar protests is beyond the scope of this study, it is important to note that youth civic engagement and service in the Middle East and North Africa is taking place within a rapidly shifting context and in many places may emerge (or has already emerged) as an essential part of this process.

A 2010 report by Innovations in Civic Participation entitled *Youth Civic Participation in Action* provides an excellent overview of youth service programs across the MENA region. Some examples of projects highlighted in the report include Alashanek ya Balady Association (AYB-SD), an Egyptian youth-led community service organization (CSO) established in 2005 by a high school student that works improve poor neighborhoods through four key approaches: family-based development, integration of training and employment, changing stereotypes, and community participation and inclusion. Women and youth are a primary target group for training and employment opportunities (p. 179). In Jordan, the community-based Jordan Youth Innovative Forum comprised of more than 1,500 volunteers, works to achieve greater youth participation and integration into the development process through national and international dialogue and service projects. In Kuwait, the IMF has worked with the American University of Sharjah to host youth forums on economic issues specific to young people such as entrepreneurship and unemployment. And in Lebanon, in 2001 the Department of Social Affairs established youth voluntary work camps that recruited young people to help implement community development projects with local NGOs.⁹

This broad overview of youth service programs reflects the interest of countries around the world in harnessing the energies and talents of young people and engaging them in the process of community building. Engaging youth in this way provides much needed support to their communities, while it helps build self-esteem and positive futures for the youth themselves.

Youth Service Program Models

This study examines several models for youth service programming from across the globe that are defined by their target populations and their intended program goals and objectives. The four most commonly found models are:¹⁰

1. In-school service-learning programs for secondary school students

2. Mandatory community service for university graduates
3. Population-wide national youth service programs
4. Service programs for out-of-school unemployed youth

In-School Service Learning for Secondary School Students

This school-based model combines in-class academics with hands-on service to enhance the learning experience, contribute to community goals/needs, and build the civic awareness of students. Service is tied to in-school learning goals and to community needs. Students and teachers (or coordinators) design and execute projects, conduct reflection exercises, and use evaluation tools to measure impact. This model can be specific to a classroom or to a whole school. In some cases it is mandatory across a school district or country, depending on laws or policies in place.

Mandatory Community Service for University Graduates

Some universities require that their graduates commit to a long-term service placement upon finishing school, often for one or two years. These programs harness the new skills that students have acquired in support of community-based projects that contribute to their countries' development. Students gain increased awareness of the value of civic engagement; often they find that their employable skills have increased as a result of their service experience. A government policy or framework is usually in place to give legitimacy to these types of programs; some additional pre-service training may be offered, and graduates typically have some expenses paid as part of their commitment.

National Youth Service (Population-Wide)

Often a government-mandated or supported initiative, a national youth service scheme generally recruits youth across the population who meet pre-established criteria. Such programs provide youth with introductory or ongoing training, placement into a service experience, and possibly a stipend to support their ability to participate in the program. Program activities usually focus on the provision of community services such as teaching, health care, and environmental protection.

Service Programs for Out-Of-School Unemployed Youth

These programs empower youth with skills to provide development services to low-income communities while

improving the young service people's access to livelihood opportunities or more formal education and training. They include two different approaches:

1. Youth service for civic engagement. These programs engage more-educated youth within environments of high youth unemployment or potential instability, seeking ways to involve youth in building their communities, taking on positive roles in identifying and solving problems, and strengthening their leadership skills. These programs may also seek to change public impressions of youth and their role in society. Duration and intensity may vary based on youth availability or program content.
2. Youth service for employment or livelihood development. These programs combine hard and soft skills training for youth with employment-related service activities such as housing construction. They are focused on helping youth develop skills needed to get a job and/or pursue a career.

The next section offers examples of these models, based upon interviews with program staff and stakeholders and on desk research.

Project Briefs

The following five project briefs provide examples of common youth service program models being implemented today. The programs vary in duration and intensity, target populations, and local contextual circumstances. They are described in terms of the best practices that they offer in the areas of policy framework, program goals and content, organization and staffing, measuring impact (monitoring and evaluation), program sustainability and, where available, cost. Project brief examples include:¹¹

1. **Secondary school service-learning:** Ministry of Education of Argentina and Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario (CLAYSS)
2. **Mandatory community service for university graduates:** The Ghana National Service Scheme
3. **Population-wide national youth service:** The Israeli Civic Youth Service (NCS)
4. **Service programs for out-of-school youth--civic engagement:** Ruwwad Palestinian Youth Empowerment Program

5. **Service programs for out-of-school youth-- livelihood development:** YouthBuild International and Jovenes Constructores de la Comunidad (JCC)

Secondary School Service-Learning: Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario in Argentina – Ministry of Education of Argentina and Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario (CLAYSS)

Aprendizaje-Servicio, or service-learning, has been in practice in Argentine schools for many years and is presented here as an example of the secondary school service learning model, one of the four youth service models described in Section II. Youth in Argentina throughout all school levels participate in service-learning activities, while special focus has been placed on secondary schools in terms of policy and mandated requirements for students. Each year, a Presidential Award for service-learning is given to schools through a survey process, recognizing achievements in service-learning delivery.

Policy Framework: Service-learning is formally established in educational policy in Argentina and is supported by the Ministry of Education in partnership with civil society organizations and the private sector. This structure has enabled 13,500 secondary schools to develop and implement more than 21,500 service-learning experiences since 1997.¹² It is now mandatory that all secondary school students complete at least one service-learning project before they graduate. The Ministry of Education promotes youth leadership, provides a platform for peer learning and international dialogue, host annual events, and currently partners with 48 civil society organizations in order to implement service learning activities with schools. One of the better known civil society organizations that work closely with the government to support secondary schools to implement this model is CLAYSS – Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario (Latin American Center for Service Learning) founded in 2002.

Program Goals: The Ministry of Education mandates the practice of service-learning in all secondary schools, state or privately run, and engages civil society organizations to work with the formal education system to implement this

model. As part of this effort, CLAYSS works to contribute to the growth of a participatory culture for developing service learning projects. CLAYSS works with secondary schools to: develop pedagogical approaches for service learning; provide project development training for managers, teachers and community leaders; and contribute to service learning project development.

Program Content: Projects vary and are developed and implemented at the school level. Projects attempt to follow the principles of service learning to support a learning agenda, youth development and community needs. One example is a physics class that might study forms of energy in the classroom then work with village families to learn what kinds of energy could bring electrical power to their homes, build electric generators according to the natural resources that are available and then involve their psychology coursework by connecting with families about what changes and impact this has had on their daily lives. Students work with their teacher to identify a community need that is related to the topic they are studying, design the project with relevant community organizations, begin implementation, participate in reflection activities, and conduct a post-project assessment.

Organization and Staffing: The Ministry of Education has a provincial staffing structure to support participating schools and provide teacher training. In addition, the ministry develops and distributes materials and publications for multiple stakeholders. CLAYSS has a presence in at least one school in each of the 24 provinces (50 schools in the 2010 – 2011 academic year). Once a school is chosen by CLAYSS, they identify key people in a school who will promote and drive the project. CLAYSS conducts an open training for teachers, community organizations and local officials in the area and then two teachers from the school participate in a four to five month online training. Throughout this process, the teachers and other stakeholders reflect on and revise the project.

Measuring Impact: Schools must apply for the Presidential Award for service learning and this application provides the Ministry of Education with a basic evaluation of the various efforts. When CLAYSS selects the winning schools, they have the original evaluation of the application from the Ministry of Education, then they work with schools to conduct self evaluations of their programs involving reflection and pre- and post- questionnaires regarding students, teachers, learning subjects and community beneficiaries. This process enables schools to learn from their experience and improve future programming.

In 2010, CLAYSS conducted a mega study of its school-based evaluations. Key findings can be summarized as follows:

- Students participating in service-learning at a young age continue show sustained enthusiasm for service –learning in higher grades, and are likely to help younger students with their projects
- Train as many teachers as possible so that good projects don't end if one teacher leaves. When a whole school learns about and supports a project, it becomes institutionalized.
- Most projects worked with two to three community organizations at the same time. This provided an opportunity to create networks in the community, expanded student skill building (communication, project management) and enabled youth to better focus the needs and activities of projects because they were working with people who were already familiar with the issues.
- Schools expanded their efforts to do more service-learning projects-- students and teachers discovered more opportunities for additional projects when they were conducting their main projects

Sustainability: Service-learning is deeply entrenched in the Argentine educational system. It will be sustained as long as it continues to be prioritized by government and included in policy. Its expansion and improvement may continue to depend upon additional partners such as CLAYSS that enhance the reach of existing government structures, staffing and funding.



Mandatory Community Service for University Graduates: *The Ghana National Service Scheme*

The Ghana National Service Scheme (NSS), founded in 1973, facilitates the mandatory year of community service for all Ghanaians over age 18 that have completed tertiary-level education. It is an example of the mandatory community service model for university graduates described in Youth Service Program Models. Each year, approximately 50,000 service personnel are enrolled and trained; they deliver vital services across the country in areas such as education, health, governance, and decentralization. Now that the National Volunteer Service has merged with NSS, they are joined annually by 10,000–20,000 volunteers. These volunteers are retired teachers and NSS graduates who commit to contributing their specific expertise to serve community needs. The 2010–2011 academic year includes 53,420 service personnel and an additional 10,000 volunteers.

Policy Framework:

The NSS is a non-partisan agency under the Ministry of Education that receives the majority of its funding from government and is chartered through laws which have evolved since its founding. All youth ages 18 and above who complete tertiary education are required to do the program; upon completion they receive a certificate that enables them to seek employment. Without the certificate from NSS, Ghanaian university graduates cannot get employment, and failure to enroll in the certification program is punishable by law, with a fine of up to 150,000 Cedis, five years in prison, or both.

The Ghanaian government is the most significant funder of the NSS; funding level is determined by the number of service personnel, reports from the Auditor General, and annual NSS assessment presentations to the Parliament. Service personnel extend the reach and impact of the government's development goals and programs.

Program Goals

The NSS seeks to develop the potential of young people and create opportunities for them to deliver quality services to disadvantaged Ghanaians. Its mission is to mobilize and deploy youth for national development. The program's core objectives are to:

- Encourage the spirit of national service among all segments of the Ghanaian society
- Undertake projects designed to combat hunger, illiteracy, disease, and unemployment
- Help provide essential services and amenities, particularly in towns and villages in the rural areas
- Develop skilled manpower through practical training
- Promote national unity and strengthen the bond of common citizenship¹³

The NSS also conducts income-generating projects both as a service to the community and as a way to increase revenue for itself in order to cover overhead costs of the program.

Program Content

Youth enroll in the program in their last year of school through an online registration system. Participants receive an in-service orientation and are sent to their placement locations, where communities try to provide housing. Specific training is conducted at the district level throughout the year. Youth receive a monthly, non-taxable stipend equal to 75 percent of the starting wage for civil service workers (approximately 202 Cedis).

Central activities to address hunger, illiteracy, disease, and unemployment include:

- Hunger – help regional farms produce and sell maize to local schools within the regions
- Illiteracy – provide non-formal education and adult basic education in underserved areas
- Disease – within the health care delivery system, provide preventive health and sanitation
- Unemployment – generate employment, build entrepreneurship skills and opportunities, operate income-generating schemes

In addition, service personnel take on roles within the public and private sectors. For example, at the district level of government, youth with relevant skills provide

government agencies with expertise in such areas as planning, accounting, and civil engineering.

Organization and Staffing

NSS headquarters is in Accra, with staff and offices in each of the 10 regions and 170 districts in Ghana. Most program implementation support takes place at the district level in the form of training, monitoring, placement, and payment of stipends.

Measuring Impact

NSS conducts ongoing monitoring at the district level of operations, tracking attendance, contact hours, individual contribution to the efforts of the organization or company where the service personnel are placed, and any extra-curricular activities the person conducts. They collect feedback from the placement supervisor and the service personnel through this monitoring effort. In addition, NSS conducts end-of-service assessments that require forms to be completed by the placement organization and the service personnel. These assessments determine if a participant will be granted a certificate; the findings are discussed at internal meetings to help improve programming for future years. The monitoring information and annual assessments are analyzed each year as NSS prepares its annual report to present to the President of Ghana and Parliament. This is part of the process used to determine the program's relevance and its funding level for the following year.

NSS has not conducted a major study or comprehensive evaluation of its program, so no compilation of the monitoring and assessment materials is available. However, the National Volunteer Service program did have an external evaluation that measured the impact of its first five years of operations (2003–2008) before it merged with NSS.

Sustainability

The National Service Scheme is widely recognized and respected throughout Ghana. It will be sustainable as long as government continues to recognize and support it as an extension of its efforts. NSS sees youth as agents for change and as valued resources for the country. It connects young people to communities and the challenges they face. It inculcates discipline and civic responsibility in the youth; sharing this with their community service placement has an impact on the people they work with in society. Service participants are respected and are treated as employees/staff where they are placed. Their role is valued and expected; each year, there is more demand for service participants than NSS can provide.

Cost

NSS estimates that it costs approximately 275 Cedis per month per service personnel (stipend of 202 Cedis and overhead of 73 Cedis). While government provides the majority of the funding, it is not enough to cover all costs. NSS has needed to seek alternative revenue sources both inside and outside of Ghana in order to fund its structure. The current per service personnel funding structure is as follows:

- Government money covers 100 percent of the service personnel stipend when they are placed in public sector agencies or with community-based organizations or NGOs. NSS is responsible for the overhead cost.
- When a service participant is placed with a private-sector company, the company pays the stipend plus 20 percent toward NSS overhead.

Income-generating projects in vocational areas enable youth to gain important livelihood skills and also provide additional revenue for the NSS infrastructure.

Population-wide National Youth Service: *The Israeli Civic Youth Service (NCS)*

The Israeli National Civic Service (NCS) is an example of the national youth service program model, one of the four youth service models described in Section II above. It is the prevalent form of youth service in Israel, and recruits, trains, and places about 15,000 youth (18-22) per year in one to two year service projects.

The Policy Framework: The National Civic Service is based on Israeli law that establishes community service as a voluntary-based alternative for Israelis who are exempted from army duty. This population of young people includes religious observant Jewish girls, youth who are medically exempt from military service, ultra-orthodox youth who study at religious schools (*Yeshiva's*), and Israeli Arabs (Muslims and Christians). The participation of the latter two groups is controversial: Among the ultra-orthodox Jews, serving in either military or civic service – as opposed to studying permanently in the *Yeshiva's* – is considered illegitimate; for the Israeli Arabs, joining the National Civic Service creates, for some, a conflict regarding their collective identity (“Israelization” vs. “Palestinization”).

Program Goals: The National Civic Service Program is intended to promote good citizenship. It also helps youth learn the value of serving their community, gain vocational skills that can help them get jobs, and develop leadership skills.

Program Content: Participants initially receive several weeks of training that covers the concepts of volunteerism, community service, and engagement with civil society; and also includes technical training skills related to the nature of their service work. NCS service projects cover a range of activities including the provision of community-based health care, assisting teachers at schools, serving as welfare helpers with at-risk youth and the elderly, and providing environmental protection and transportation safety services. Volunteers receive a monthly stipend of \$200.00, and a post-service award intended to help them buy a house, pursue higher education studies, start a business, or offset wedding expenses.

Organization and Staffing: Rather than operating NCS directly, the government has chosen to license and regulate several NGO implementation agencies. Operating organizations recruit, train, place, oversee the service of participating volunteers, and maintain ongoing relations with the volunteers’ supervisors in their places of work

Measuring Impact: A 2003 study of the impact of NCS on the attitudes and perceptions of 900 volunteers found that most of the volunteers were very satisfied with their service experience. Their motives for joining NCS were having the responsibility to serve the country, helping people, and gaining new knowledge and professional experience. Participants reported becoming more tolerant, and involved and connected to the community. For 70 percent of volunteers, the perception was that the main benefit of NCS goes to the community that is being served, while 54 percent claimed that they, the participants, benefited most. Benefits to the communities being served were largely defined as improvements in public services. 76 percent thought that the service enhanced their occupational experience, 67 percent believed NYS offered them an advantage in the labor market, 66 percent reported that service made them want to pursue higher education, and 46 percent agreed that they may pursue employment in a field similar to the one in which they had served.

Sustainability: The sustainability of the NYS program is assured as long as the 1970 authorizing legislation is not repealed by the Israeli government, and the Parliament (Knesset) obligates the funds required to support the

numbers of youth who each year are eligible to participate.

Service Programs for Out-of-School Youth--Civic Engagement: Ruwwad Palestinian Youth Empowerment Program

The EQUIP3 Ruwwad Project in Palestine is an example of a service-learning program that targets unemployed youth and focuses on civic engagement, one of the four youth service program models described earlier. Since its inception in 2005, Ruwwad, which means pioneer in Arabic, has provided leadership training for more than 800 Palestinian youth ages 14–24, and helped them organize community service projects that engaged an additional 16,000+ youth and brought benefits to tens of thousands of people in Palestinian communities throughout the West Bank and Gaza.

The project also undertook additional activities, such as building the capacity of Palestinian youth-serving NGOs, but this paper highlights only the Ruwwad service-learning activities.

Policy Framework

The Ruwwad project was intended to help the Palestinian Authority develop a new generation of youth leaders and youth service programming. Because funding was provided by USAID, the Ruwwad policy framework also was intended to help implement the local USAID mission's education and youth strategic objectives. These objectives were to help Palestinians achieve greater social stability by providing opportunities and empowering youth to become constructively engaged in civil society, economic development, and family and community life.

Program Goals

The original purpose of the project was to improve the lives and future opportunities of significant numbers of Palestinian youth in the West Bank and Gaza, and to create a social, economic, and political environment with a greater willingness and ability to invest in and develop Palestinian youth.

Program Content

The service-learning component of the Ruwwad Project

focused on organizing a small leadership cadre of youth to undertake community-based service-learning projects. Every 30 days new groups of 30 young Palestinians were given a training course to build core leadership skills, such as problem solving, working in teams, communications, and critical and reflective thinking.

As part of their training, known originally as the 30/30 program, participants were asked to visit their communities, conduct a needs assessment, and design a service-learning project. Once the designs were reviewed and approved by program staff, youth were given a small grant to implement their projects. They were expected to engage and manage other youth in the implementation process, and to document their project's results. Examples of service-learning projects that Ruwwad youth undertook include a fund-raising campaign to help fight pediatric cancer, an environmental cleanup campaign in East Jerusalem, and an effort to help Palestinian farmers harvest olive trees.

The project also implemented a special media training program, designed to build skills and empower Palestinian youth who had an interest in pursuing careers in communications. Participants in this program gained first-hand knowledge and experience designing and producing programs for local radio and TV stations, the Internet, and print media. The project also helped place youth in internships and apprenticeships with Palestinian businesses.

Organization and Staffing

The Ruwwad Project was implemented by an international NGO (Education Development Center, Inc.) through a cooperative agreement with USAID. EDC fielded an all-Palestinian team to staff and implement the project in the field. The team included a mix of technical youth development specialists; experts in media, IT, and monitoring and evaluation; and financial, administrative, and logistics managers.

Measuring Impact

Ruwwad conducts pre- and post-surveys with youth participants involved in the leadership training, media training, and the youth-led initiatives, in order to measure self-reported change in a variety of competencies. Beneficiary surveys are also conducted when youth projects reach out to additional members of the community. Under its cooperative agreement with USAID, Ruwwad is also required to upload data into a Geographic Information System (GIS) that tracks youth beneficiary information and

associated cost.

To assess the impact and promise of its service-learning component, Ruwwad conducted an internal mid-term assessment, reported in “Community-Based Service Learning for Youth Empowerment in Palestine: The Ruwwad Experience” by Dr. Trae Stewart. The report highlighted self-reported increases in areas such as positive values and personal identity among youth participants, as well as an overwhelmingly positive response from community beneficiaries about youth-led initiatives. Five primary themes were also explored through interviews with youth participants in order to gather qualitative impact findings. Highlights include:

- By participating in Ruwwad’s trainings and/or community-based experiences, participants developed a stronger civic identity, with a greater sense of responsibility for others and the society itself.
- Youth reported that they learned new content and practical skills.
- Through their community-based service activities, youth were able to apply the leadership concepts and theories they had learned during their training sessions.
- Youth gained a sense of belonging and opportunity by joining Ruwwad.

Ruwwad was able to use this report to help shape future implementation plans and program adjustments. In addition, USAID funded an external evaluation of the project in early 2011. The *Evaluation of the Palestinian Youth Empowerment (Ruwwad) Program* also found the community service program to be largely beneficial to the youth participants. It recommended that the leadership training and community-service not only be continued, but expanded to include advanced leadership training. It also recommended that even smaller scale community service projects could be undertaken by youth. Because these types of projects would require fewer resources to implement, youth could secure funding from outside of the program, thus ensuring their leadership and community service skills will be utilized beyond the end of the Ruwwad project. As the authors noted, “This could help develop an even greater sense among youth that they are part of the solution to local social issues.”¹⁴

Sustainability

The Ruwwad Project is set to conclude in September 2011.

For the past year the project has been building the capacity of three Palestinian Youth Development Resource Centers, with hopes that these institutions will be able to carry on Ruwwad’s youth leadership training activities.

Service Programs for Out-of-School Youth— Livelihood Development: YouthBuild Inter- national Mexico and Jovenes Constructores de la Comunidad

YouthBuild International works with Jovenes Constructores de la Comunidad (JCC), a partner that has built and operated programs adapted from the U.S.-based YouthBuild model in Mexico City, Chiapas, and Ciudad Juarez.

YouthBuild International is a global NGO working in more than a dozen countries, which implements the YouthBuild program that began in the late 1980s in five low-income neighborhoods in New York City. The YouthBuild program provides an integrated package of education, counseling, work, social action, and leadership development to vulnerable young people, allowing them to gain livelihood skills while addressing critical community development challenges.

YouthBuild and JCC are examples of the youth service model for out-of-school youth with a focus on addressing employment as described in Youth Service Program Models above. It combines classroom learning for youth who did not complete secondary school, with hands-on construction projects that both serve the needs of the community and complement the learning agenda in the classroom.

In nine Mexican states, young people have worked on historic restoration, hurricane reconstruction, reforestation, and building community centers and playgrounds. JCC is currently expanding the network to Tabasco and Oaxaca, and recently launched activities in Ciudad Juarez where they are directly addressing root causes of violence. The Ciudad Juarez model is being studied by the Government of Mexico for expansion to an additional 30 cities. To date, JCC has implemented 39 construction projects with more

than 1,200 youth participants, reaching over 6,000 beneficiaries. In 2009, JCC was featured among programs with best practices in youth policies and programs in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Policy Framework

JCC is a locally registered NGO in Mexico and operates through a partnership with YouthBuild International in order to adapt its model for implementation. All funds for the program are raised locally in Mexico. For every U.S. dollar raised from the private sector, JCC raises an additional seven U.S. dollars from public sources in Mexico. These public sources represent all levels of government and will support both sustainability and scaling up of the program.

Program Goals

JCC and YouthBuild International attempt to work with youth to discover their professional competencies and to develop and apply them through construction and renovation projects. Young people take part in community infrastructure building, get the experience of working with the community, and have an impact on the world around them. While these youth turn their lives around through education and work experience, they are also changing public perceptions of youth. Community members that may view youth negatively are able to see them as assets.

Program Content

Similarly to the YouthBuild model in the United States, JCC combines classroom learning with hands-on construction or renovation projects. JCC employs a methodology of “learning by doing.” The program cycle in Mexico includes recruitment of 30–50 youth per class per location for a six-month program with three months of follow-up. Each site has two cohorts of youth per year who participate in life skills training and related cultural, social, and psychological support activities, receive classroom and on-the-job training in the necessary work areas related to the project, and complete the work project as needed by the community. After the project is completed, JCC staff provide ongoing support services and career counseling for up to three months. JCC seeks to provide young people with the necessary tools to define their life plan and build life skills through a series of workshops on topics such as leadership, community service, fellowship, self-confidence, non-violent conflict resolution, and teamwork.

Organization and Staffing

In support of the methodology of “learning by doing,” JCC employs blacksmiths, carpenters, electricians, masons, and other technical specialists to teach youth these trades while also accompanying them and providing additional explanation and guidance of the construction or renovation process. Youth work in small groups, usually one teacher for every 5–10 participants, and progress is assessed monthly. Depending on the location and nature of the construction or renovation, projects last from three to six months and include community needs assessment, design and planning time, identification of numbers of youth needed, enrollment, orientation, and training, together with other administrative preparation that normally lasts four to six weeks.

Typically, projects have a regional coordinator, a human development coordinator, a technical area coordinator, workshop facilitators, building-site managers, construction professionals (master masons, carpenters, etc.), graduate interns (Promotores) who have gone through the program as youth-service members before, and the youth service members called JCC students (Becarios). The construction professionals, in addition to having the specific skill sets for the type of work required, are often from the communities where the work is being done and, therefore, are able to impart the contextual circumstances into the daily work. Youth receive a small stipend to help cover transport, meals, and some materials, making it possible for youth of various socioeconomic backgrounds to serve. JCC works closely with local partners to develop projects and implement project components.

Measuring Impact

JCC monitors and assesses progress with youth on a monthly basis and has also had several external evaluations conducted on its program.

For example, an overall assessment of the results of the training program, job training, and placement in the field indicates that:

- 49% of young people participating in the program in the Federal District have gone on to continuing education or technical training and 29 % are now employed;
- 52% of young people participating in the program in the State of Chiapas are now involved in continuing education or technical training and 33% are now employed.

JCC values the role of external evaluations to determine project impact and to inform future decisions about their work. Two significant evaluation efforts have produced materials that YouthBuild, JCC, and other programs can use to better understand the program and plan for future work:

- In four reports or study papers, the College Mexiquense AC shared its analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention model of the training program, training and job placement, specifically in the municipality of Tapachula, Chiapas.
- Cornell University has published a case study that looked closely at the role of the Promotor at JCC in *Opening Career Paths: Youth in Latin America* (in draft form as of 2010).

Sustainability

JCC is currently in expansion mode in Mexico, demonstrating the value that the Mexican government and other sectors of society have given to the program model and its impact on youth and the community. Raising a combination of private- and public-sector funds, engaging a range of community stakeholders in project selection and implementation, and continuing to provide a relevant method for youth to build their livelihood capacity and serve the community all contribute to the program's sustainability model.

Cost

JCC and YouthBuild International can demonstrate the per-participant cost and project costs of their programs and are therefore better prepared to plan for program expansion or replication. Through this costing structure, they can determine overall and detailed cost for various project sizes and determine growth or reduction plans for future years.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Youth service has important contributions to make to countries in the developing world. Service programs help build the leadership and civic engagement skills of the youth who participate, while they contribute to grass roots community development efforts that are an essential part of nation building.

Most developing countries can benefit from efforts to strengthen their existing youth service programs or build new ones. Yet in many cases such efforts may not be forthcoming due to a lack of awareness of the value of youth service, lack of experience in designing and implementing service programs, and the absence of better data that documents program impact. To try and address these constraints, we recommend that the international community take the following action steps:

- Provide greater support for networking organizations and associations of international youth service programs to conduct activities such as the efforts of Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP, the International Association for National Youth Service (IANYS) among others to convene annual conferences, build an international youth data base and publicize examples of programs in different countries. These activities make significant contributions to new learning and growth for service learning globally.
- Organize a seed fund that would provide start-up resources to countries interested in launching national youth service programs. These start-up funds could be accessed by countries that are able to demonstrate a commitment to funding a program beyond its start-up phase through government resources, or through additional private sector contributions that it coordinates.
- Sponsor efforts to collect and analyze information that documents the impact of youth service programs, both within and across countries.
- Support the provision of technical assistance and training that can help countries design, implement, and evaluate youth service programs.

Recommended Resources

Toolkits and Guides

The Complete Guide to Service-Learning – Book with CD Rom: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, & Social Action (2nd edition)

Publication year: 2003.

Author: Cathryn Berger Kaye

Covers a wide range of activities, ideas, and resources to support service learning in K–12 and higher education

A Service-Learning Tip Sheet

Authors: National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC)

Topics: Best Practices, Youth Voice & Leadership

Recommended for: Educators, administrators, youths, researchers, policymakers

Publication year: 2005

The basics of youth voice, including assessing adult readiness for facilitation of youth voice and leadership, training ideas, finding youth leaders, and respecting youths and their process of leadership. Includes one page of youth-leadership and youth/adult-partnership resources.

Youth for Action Handbook

Authors: Marakwet Educational & Cultural Heritage Foundation, Nairobi, Kenya

A handbook on youth feelings around civic participation and politics within Kenya. Also includes sections around current youth participation as well as tips on getting involved.

Available at:
http://www.youthactionnet.org/marketplace/usercontent/resources/fileresource_1219672671.pdf

Service Learning: A Guide to Planning, Implementing, and Assessing Student Projects (2nd edition)

Author: Sally Berman

Publication year: 2006

This guide presents an instructional strategy that invites students to learn content information,

processes, and skills while performing and reflecting on authentic community service. The book features nine service-learning projects and includes step-by-step instructions for selecting a project's focus, managing its various phases, and assessing student performance and learning.

Available at:
<http://www.servicelearning.org/library/resource/6945>

Service-Learning Evaluation

Measuring the Impact of Youth Voluntary Service Programs: Summary and Conclusions of the International Experts Meeting

Authors: The World Bank, Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP)

Recommended for: Educators, administrators, practitioners

Available at:
<http://www.icicp.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/6722>

Educators' Guide to Service-Learning Program Evaluation

Authors: National Service-Learning Clearinghouse *(NSLC), ETR Associates, and Research Corporation

Topics: Assessment & Evaluation, Standards

Recommended for: Educators, practitioners

Provides a step-by-step toolkit for evaluating Service-Learning programs

Available at:
<http://www.servicelearning.org/library/resource/4602>

Innovations in International Youth Volunteering: An analysis of 22 innovative youth volunteer programs from around the world: analysis and conclusions

Authors: A report by Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP) for v www.wearev.com

Publication year: January 2008

Recommended for: Educators, service-learning practitioners, administrators

This report was commissioned by v, an independent charity championing youth volunteering in England. Identifies and analyzes innovation in youth volunteering through 22 case studies and makes recommendations for fostering similar innovation in

England and elsewhere (see below for case studies from the same report).

Available at:
<http://www.icicp.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/145>
1

Youth Development: Youth Service: A Strategy for Youth and National Development, Children & Youth, The World Bank (and ICP), Vol. 1, No. 2.

Publication year: 2007

Available at:
<http://www.icicp.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/170>
1

The Generator, 2007

Reflection

Authors: Caryn Pernu, Wokie Weah, Maddy Wegner, Nate Schultz, Marybeth Neal, Siddharth Damania, Nate Schultz

Topics: Assessment & Evaluation, Standards & Curriculum Integration, Reflection

Recommended for: Educators

This issue of The Generator inaugurates a new format that helps teachers and other service-learning practitioners make better use of current service-learning research. Articles include an update on translating the Principles of Effective Practice for K–12 Service-Learning into national standards, a research summary on how reflection facilitates high-quality learning for students, and a description of a method young children can use to select service-learning projects.

Lessons from Research on Teaching and Learning: Service-Learning As Effective Instruction

Authors: Shelley H. Billig

Topics: Assessment and evaluation, standards and curriculum integration, best practices, research, and policy

Recommended for: Educators, administrators, researchers, policymakers

Publication year: 2006

This report links National Research Council findings about effective teaching and learning to service-learning methodology, and makes the case that high-quality service-learning methods must be implemented in order to achieve academic results.

Helpful chart correlates the research with implications for high-quality service-learning practice.

Promising Research-Based Practices to Improve Student Outcomes

Authors: Shelley H. Billig

Publication year: 2007

This report is a summary of research supporting the eight Principles of Effective Practice for K–12 Service-Learning. Each principle is defined and supported with the most current research. Included in this article are examples of how each principle can be incorporated into classroom practice.

How to Change the World: The Promise and Practice of Youth Social Entrepreneurs

Authors: Jim Toole, Pam Toole

Topics: Research & Policy, Benefits of Service-Learning

Recommended for: Educators, administrators, youths, researchers, policymakers

Publication year: 2004

Introductory overview of a study of 10 young social entrepreneurs. Covers four implications for the future of service-learning as more and more youths engage in social entrepreneurship. Includes definitions, examples, and characteristics common among social entrepreneurs.

Methods for Effective Youth Governance

Authors: Karen Young

Topics: Diversity, research and policy, youth voice and leadership

Recommended for: Educators, youths, researchers, policymakers

Publication year: 2004

Guidelines and advice for integration of youth voice into an organization. Models, strategies for involvement, recruitment, orientation and training, stereotypes and attitudes, and sustainability issues are addressed.

Promising Program Models

Authors: Ifna Ejebe, Lisa Cox

Topics: Diversity, Research & Policy, Benefits of Service-Learning

Recommended for: Educators, administrators, youths,

researchers, policymakers

Publication year: 2004

Highlights two youth-led peer-education programs, one in the United States and one in Uganda, focused on HIV/AIDS prevention and improved sexual and reproductive health and development.

Youth Engagement through Service-Learning

From Periphery to Center: Pathways for Youth Civic Engagement in the Day-To-Day Life of Communities.

Author: Linda Camino and Shepherd Zeldin, University of Wisconsin, Madison, United States

In this report, five contemporary pathways for youth civic engagement are described: public policy/consultation, community coalition involvement, youth in organizational decision making, youth organizing and activism, and school-based service learning. Three overarching qualities among these five pathways are also discussed: youth ownership, youth-adult partnership, and facilitative policies and structures.

Social Citizens Beta

Author: Allison Fine, The Case Foundation
A Case Foundation publication on the engagement of the millennial generation in social issues.

What Works: Engaging Adolescents in Meaningful Participation Strategies – Adolescent Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean

Authors: ICP & UNICEF

Publication year: 2009

Recommended for: Practitioners, administrators, educators

The goal of this report is to show that, regardless of the form, adolescent participation can enhance the capacity of adolescents to contribute to their own development and the development of their communities, placing them as strategic actors in promoting their rights and contributing to society. Thus, adolescent participation strengthens democracy and contributes to meaningful changes in society

Case Studies

South Africa

Foley, P. (2003). Youth service for employment: The

Umsobomvu Youth Fund initiative in South Africa. In H. Perold, S. Stroud, & M. Sherraden (Eds.), *Service enquiry: Service in the 21st century* (pp.159–171). Johannesburg: Global Service Institute and Volunteer and Service Enquiry Southern Africa.

Nigeria

Obadare, Ebenezer. (2005). *Statism, youth and civic imagination: A critical study of the national youth service corps (NYSC) programme in Nigeria*. Center for Social Development, Global Service Institute.

Eastern Europe

Powell, S. & Bratović, E. (2007b). We can. We volunteer. Pro-social values/behaviour and employability amongst young people in SEE and the impact of volunteer work. SEEYN: South-East European Youth Network. Retrieved from www.promente.org/seeyn5

Innovations in International Youth Volunteering: An analysis of 22 innovative youth volunteer programs from around the world: Case Studies

Includes: Argentina, Ecuador, Malawi, Brazil, El Salvador, United States, Chile, Rwanda, and others

Available at: <http://www.icicp.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/1453>

This report was commissioned by V, an independent charity championing youth volunteering in England. The report identifies and analyzes innovation in youth volunteering through 22 case studies and makes recommendations for fostering similar innovation in England and elsewhere.

Youth Civic Participation in Action: Meeting community development needs worldwide

Authors: Innovations in Civic Participation

Available at: <http://www.icicp.org/ht/d/sp/i/1276/pid/1276>

This publication features brief snapshots of youth civic participation programs and policies in 101 countries on six continents. Through this publication, we highlight the growing momentum for youth civic participation worldwide as more countries develop programs providing opportunities for young people to

build skills for success while also addressing critical community needs.

Websites

National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC)

<http://www.nylc.org/>

Innovations in Civic Participation: A Resource for Ideas and Action

<http://www.icicp.org/>

International Association for National Youth Service (IANYS)

<http://www.icicp.org/ht/d/sp/i/1206/pid/1206>

Campus Compact – Assessment Resources

<http://www.compact.org/category/resources/assessment/>

Learn and Serve, America’s National Service-Learning Clearinghouse: Assessment, Evaluation, and Performance Measurement: Selected Resources

http://www.servicelearning.org/instant_info/bibs/he_bibs/assess_eval/

Facing the Future: Critical Thinking, Global Perspectives, Informed Action

<http://www.facingthefuture.org/ServiceLearning/ServiceLearning/tabid/230/Default.aspx>

Asia Society: Characteristics of a Good Service-Learning Program

<http://asiasociety.org/education-learning/resources-schools/professional-learning/characteristics-good-service-learning-pro>

CIRCLE: The for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement

<http://www.civicyouth.org/ResearchTopics/research-topics/>

Youth Service America

<http://www.ysa.org/resources>

¹ Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Policy Development. 2008. *Still Serving: Measuring the Eight-Year Impact of AmeriCorps on Alumni*, p. 5.

² Progressive Policy Institute. (2005), *An International Perspective on National Service*, <http://www.ppionline.org/>

³ South Africa National Youth Commission, www.nyc.gov.za

⁴ Tapia, Maria Nieves. (2003). ‘Servicio’ and ‘Solidaridad’ in South American Spanish. Part 3: The Language of Service, Chapter 11 in *Service Enquiry*. Global Service Institute. Retrieved from http://www.service-enquiry.org.za/first_edition_download.asp

⁵ Ding, Yuanzhu. (2000). Worldwide workshop on youth involvement as a strategy for social, economic and democratic development [paper on China for Ford Foundation report].

⁶ *People’s Daily Online*, June 18, 2004

⁷ *Service News Worldwide*, Issue 9, ICP, 2004, www.icicp.org

⁸ *Service News Worldwide*, Issue 14, ICP, 2004, www.icicp.org

⁹ Youth Civic Participation in Action, 2010. Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP). 2010, pp. 175–202.

¹⁰ This section describes the four models; the Project Briefs section gives examples of each. Interviewees for the briefs include: Lic. Maria Rosa Tapia, CLAYSS, Argentina; Mr. George Gado, Ghana National Service Scheme; Tim Cross, YouthBuild International for JCC Mexico; Naser Al-Ardah, Ruwwad Palestinian Youth Empowerment Project, West Bank/Gaza; and Dr. Reuven Gal, Senior Research Fellow, Samuel Neaman Institute for National Policy Research for the Israeli Civic Youth Service.

¹¹ Interviewees for the program briefs include the following individuals: Lic. Maria Rosa Tapia, CLAYSS, Argentina; Mr. George Gado, Ghana National Service Scheme, Ghana; Reuven Gal, Samuel Neaman Institute for National Policy Research for the Israeli National Youth Service, Israel; Tim Cross, YouthBuild International, for JCC Mexico; primary authors Ron Israel and Sarah Nogueira-Sanca, in consultation with Naser Al-Ardah, Ruwwad Palestinian Youth Empowerment Project, West Bank/Gaza.

¹² www.me.gov.ar/edusol

¹³ www.nssghana.org

¹⁴ Hyatt, Susan and Sarah Auten. 2011. *Evaluation of the Palestinian Youth Empowerment Program (Ruwwad)*. p.13

About EQUIP3

The USAID-funded Educational Quality Improvement Program 3 (EQUIP3) is designed to improve earning, learning, and skill development opportunities for out-of-school youth in developing countries. We work to help countries meet the needs and draw on the assets of young women and men by improving policies and programs that affect them across a variety of sectors. We also provide technical assistance to USAID and other organizations in order to build the capacity of youth and youth-serving organizations.

EQUIP3 is a consortium of 13 organizations with diverse areas of expertise. Together, these organizations work with out-of-school youth in more than 100 countries.

To learn more about EQUIP3 please see the website at www.equip123.net/equip3/index_new.html.

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