

## Youth Service in Northern Ireland: Working toward a Unified Community

By Robin Taylor, ICP Intern

Youth service in Northern Ireland has been undergoing exciting growth this decade. As Northern Ireland works to bridge the deep divide between the Catholic and Protestant communities, youth service is increasingly being acknowledged and utilized as a key tool in the healing process by both government and non-governmental organizations.

Northern Ireland's youth policy is administered by the Department of Education, which recently issued the "Strategy for the Delivery of Youth Work in Northern Ireland 2005-2008" to coordinate and implement the goals of achieving inclusive youth programs and preparing youth with the skills and knowledge they will need to be successful citizens. This three year plan contains frameworks, review and assessment mechanisms, and future strategies for meeting the goals.

### Youth Council for Northern Ireland

Successful implementation of the youth policy requires the cooperation of many different departments, but the chief responsibility lies with the Youth Council for Northern Ireland (YCNI), which administers grants received from the Department of Education to service programs around Northern Ireland. YCNI programs are divided into two categories: Community Relations and European/International. The Community Relations programs seek to build trust between Catholic and Protestant communities through youth work. In these programs, youth develop trust and respect for other cultural traditions through service. The European/International program seeks to expand young participants' understanding of other cultures and traditions from around the world. In addition to being the primary funding body for these youth service projects, the YCNI supports a research arm and a policy division that works to further the development of sound youth policies.

### Non-Governmental Youth Service Programs: YouthAction and YouthNet

Northern Ireland has also recently seen the development of non-governmental organizations dedicated to youth service. For example, YouthAction is Northern Ireland's largest youth development

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## The Next Generation of Service: ICP's Executive Director Testifies Before Congress

By Robin Taylor, ICP Intern

Innovations in Civic Participation's (ICP) Executive Director, Susan Stroud, testified before the Subcommittee on Healthy Family and Communities of the House Committee on Education and Labor on April 19, 2007 to discuss the potential for the next generation of national and community service. She was invited to testify based on her leadership in the national service community and ICP's efforts in creating the case for expanding service programming for middle-school aged students in the summer months. The hearing came in the same week as the April 17<sup>th</sup> introduction of the Summer of Service Act of 2007 into the House and Senate by Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Senators Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Thad Cochran (R-MS).

As Stroud explained in her testimony, Summer of Service is a program that would enable young Americans to participate in service and service-learning the summer before entering high school. She cited ICP's report that points to the concern that middle school students have critical needs that are often overlooked, such as inadequate supervision from being too young to work but too old for many summer programs, and are faced with the sometimes difficult transition to high school. According to Stroud, a Summer of Service program for this age group would serve numer-

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## Youth Take Charge on National and Global Youth Service Day

On April 20-22, 2007, millions of young people from over 100 countries participated in this year's National and Global Youth Service Day (N&GYSD) by implementing service and service-learning projects in their communities. Participant's projects focused on un-met community needs such as poverty, school violence, poor voting turn out, literacy, climate change and others. To read more about specific projects and N&GYSD highlights, post results of your own project, and/or learn about next year's schedule, please visit

<http://ysa.org/NatlGYSD/tabid/59/Default.aspx>.



Courtesy of Youth Serve America, 2007

## ICP AND THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE (IANYS)

By Katherine Hutter, ICP Projects Coordinator

During IANYS' most recent business meeting at the end of March in Albuquerque, New Mexico, ICP was selected to become the new Permanent Secretariat for the Association. IANYS is an organization dedicated to stimulating and facilitating the exchange of information about national youth service (NYS) and to offering assistance to nations wishing to consider the introduction and/or re-shaping of NYS programs. IANYS takes a pro-active position on national youth service, recommending that every country give it serious consideration. The Association also embraces service-learning, where students utilize their education to serve others and reflect on their service experiences to inform their learning.

Members of the IANYS Steering Committee felt that ICP was the natural fit for assuming the secretariat role, given the similar goals of the organizations and ICP Executive Director Susan Stroud's long-standing involvement in IANYS. ICP will become the Association's Permanent Secretariat, and Susan its Executive Director, responsible for IANYS on an operational level. ICP and IANYS will remain discreet entities with independent financial and governance structures. Under ICP's leadership, IANYS' current Steering Committee will become a Global Council, comprised of dedicated individuals from all parts of the world who will provide general oversight and direction for the organization. ICP will also house the IANYS website and dedicate space in its newsletter, *Service News Worldwide*, to highlight IANYS members and activities.

To read more about these developments, please follow the link:

<http://www.icicp.org/index.php?tg=fileman&idx=get&inl=1&id=9&gr=Y&path=&file=IANYS.pdf>

### *Northern Ireland*

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program, and works with disadvantaged youth to help them achieve goals they set themselves. The program reaches out to rural and urban communities, and focuses on issues of development, gender equality, and work skills, among others. Central to the core themes that underpin YouthAction is a commitment to voluntary work. Like other programs, service in pursuit of a common goal is used to help build bonds between youth of different backgrounds.

Another independent youth service organization in Northern Ireland is YouthNet, which works to coordinate independent youth service groups, administer private grants, and propose new policy. In order to foster Northern Ireland's growing youth service community, YouthNet acts as a support and resource network for related organizations by providing guidance on pertinent legislation, hosting seminars to address issues facing youth today, and supporting the growth of new programs.

As the range of governmental and non-governmental initiatives highlighted above demonstrate, youth service programs are playing a critical role in addressing divisions in Northern Ireland. The desire to build a more unified community is central to all youth policy, and as youth service programs increase and improve in quality, the dream for a unified Northern Ireland seems closer than ever before.

**For more information on these initiatives, please visit:**

YouthAction: <http://www.youthaction.org/index.asp>

YouthNet NI: <http://www.youthnetni.org.uk/>

Youth Council for Northern Ireland: <http://www.ycni.org/>

Department of Education: <http://www.deni.gov.uk/>

**Publication:**

Strategy for the Delivery of Youth Work in Northern Ireland 2005-2008: [http://www.deni.gov.uk/youth\\_work\\_strategy\\_pdf\\_216kb](http://www.deni.gov.uk/youth_work_strategy_pdf_216kb)

## The New Horizons Foundation: Resources for Further Inquiry

In the latest edition of ICP's Newsletter (Issue # 42, April 2007) ICP intern Mary Rose Conroy profiled the New Horizons Foundation (NHF), an NGO in Romania that ICP supported via its small grants program. The article, 'The New Horizons Foundation: Engaging Romanian Youth,' highlighted NHF's major projects and noted recent developments.

Interested parties may also want to read Cathryn Thorup and Sheila Kinkade's report on NHF in 'What Works in Youth Engagement in the Balkans.' This report, part of the 'What Works' series produced by the International Youth Foundation (IYF), explores issues facing Romanian youth and discusses how NHF engages youth to overcome such issues.

To access the report, please follow the link:

[http://www.iyfnet.org/uploads/WW\\_Youth\\_Engagement\\_2-7MB.pdf](http://www.iyfnet.org/uploads/WW_Youth_Engagement_2-7MB.pdf)

To read the original article from *Service News Worldwide*, Issue # 42, April 2007, please follow the link:

<http://www.icicp.org/index.php?tg=fileman&idx=get&inl=1&id=17&gr=Y&path=&file=Issue+42.pdf>

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## Upcoming Events

**AmeriCorps Week:** May 13-20, 2007. For more information, please visit

<http://www.americorps.gov/about/ameriCorpsweek/index.asp>.

**Civics World Assembly:**

May 23-27, 2007; Glasgow, Scotland. For more information, please visit

<http://www.civicsyouth.org/worldassembly.html>.

**Canadian Dialogue on Community Service-Learning:**

June 20-22, 2007; Brescia University College, London, Ontario. For more information, please visit

<http://www.communityservicelearning.ca/en/canadiandialogue.cfm>

**The Fourth World Environmental Education Congress:**

July 2-6, 2007; Durban, South Africa. For more information, please visit

[http://www.comminit.com/africa/events\\_calendar/2007-events/events-4611.html](http://www.comminit.com/africa/events_calendar/2007-events/events-4611.html)

**National Conference on Volunteering and Service:**

July 16-18, 2007; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. For more information, please visit

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

**Community Works Institute on Service-Learning:**

July 24-28, 2007; Shelburne Farms, Vermont. For more information, please visit

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

**TUNZA International Youth Conference:**

August 26-30, 2007; Liverkusen, Germany. For more information please visit

<http://www.unep.org/tunza/youthconference/About/index.asp>.

## Testimony

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ous purposes, including “teaching the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; helping young people learn about (and become connected to) their communities; forge common bonds across economic and ethnic groups through common experiences; and helping young people develop in a positive, healthy way.”

Stroud’s testimony also highlighted the importance of strengthening existing national service programs in order to create a continuum of service that would enable all age groups to engage in projects addressing critical national needs. She urged the subcommittee to allocate funding that would match historical levels of \$43 million for Learn and Serve America in order to create year-round engagement for students by expanding service-learning throughout the school year. She also emphasized the necessity of strengthening the AmeriCorps and SeniorCorps programs through knowledge sharing and research to secure the foundations for national service.

After speaking about existing programs, Stroud’s testimony pointed to several new service proposals being developed by various institutions and organizations. Stroud noted that Pathways to Teaching, an ICP and University of Washington project, “would tap into the 500,000 current and past AmeriCorps members” to help fill teaching vacancies in high-shortage and low-income districts.

To read more, please follow the link:

<http://www.icicp.org/index.php?tg=fileman&idx=get&inl=1&id=9&gr=Y&path=&file=susan+testimony+article.pdf>

To read Susan Stroud’s written testimony, or watch a video of the hearing, please visit ICP’s website at <http://www.icicp.org/index.php?tg=articles&topics=379>.

## Resources

### National and Global Youth Service Day Everyday

Youth Service America (YSA) and Youth Venture have joined forces to provide young people with resources for developing and launching sustainable, civic minded organizations and businesses. The YSA/Youth Venture Program was established to keep the spirit of National and Global Youth Service Day alive throughout the year by providing young entrepreneurs with toolkits, contacts, start-up money, and other resources for their ventures. For more information, please visit <http://www.genv.net/en-us/region/ysa>.

### New Report Analyses Volunteering Trends by State

The Corporation for Community and National Service has released its second annual report analyzing the state of volunteerism in America. “Volunteering in America: 2007 State Trends and Rankings in Civic Life,” provides a break down of volunteering practices and habits by state and region, and features the Corporation’s first ranking system of levels of civic engagement by state. To access the report, please visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/volunteering/index.asp>.

### Publication Analyses Asian Youth Participation in Political and Civic Ventures

The CYE Journal, an online publication focusing on news about children, youth and environments, has published 18 new papers in volume 17 of its series, “Critical International Perspectives on Youth and Child Participation.” The series focuses on child and youth participation in regions throughout the world, with the newest publication focusing on countries in Asia. To read the publication, visit <http://www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/>.

### New Tools Available for Assessing Quality of Youth Programs

The Forum for Youth Investment has published two new reports that focus on assessing and improving the quality of youth service programs. The reports, “Measuring Youth Program Quality: A Guide to Assessment Tools” and “Building Quality Improvement Systems: Lessons from Three Emerging Efforts in the Youth-Serving Sector,” offer assistance to organizations trying to assess and/or improve the quality of their programs. To learn more, please visit <http://www.forumfyi.org/index.cfm>.

## ICP News and Happenings

### ICP Staff Present at National Service Learning Conference.

ICP Executive Director, Susan Stroud, and Projects Coordinator, Katherine Hutter, attended the 18<sup>th</sup> annual National Service-Learning Conference organized by the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) in Albuquerque, New Mexico from March 28-31, 2007.

During the pre-conference Global Service Forum, Susan and Katherine led an interactive workshop called "Youth Leading Change: Successes, Challenges, and Increasing Impact of Youth Service." They engaged participants in a dialogue about key elements of effective and innovative youth service policies and programs, as well as challenges for the youth service field and approaches to moving the field forward.

During the lunchtime plenary session, Susan discussed how youth service can be used as a strategy for strengthening democratic practices,

increasing youth employability, and promoting recovery in post-conflict settings.

As part of the international track of the main conference, Susan moderated a dynamic forum entitled "Service-Learning: Britain and Beyond," during which Elisabeth Hoodless, Executive Director of Community Service Volunteers and ICP Board Member, and Nieves Tapia, Executive Director of CLAYSS, discussed some of the differences and similarities between service-learning models in the United Kingdom and Argentina.

Finally, Katherine attended the biannual meeting of the Ibero-American Service-Learning Network, of which ICP is a founding member. For more information about the conference, please see [www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org), and for more information about ICP's presentations, please contact Katherine at [hutter@icicp.org](mailto:hutter@icicp.org).

## Service News Headlines

### Students Discuss 'Education for All' for Global Action Week

Over four hundred disadvantaged students gathered in Hanoi, Viet Nam on April 27<sup>th</sup> to advocate for unrestricted access to education for young people from all social, economic and religious backgrounds. The gathering was organized by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training in partnership with UNESCO for this year's Global Action Week: 'Education for All'. Students participated in discussions and forums that focused on education barriers and methods to overcome them. To read the full article, please visit

[http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=53135&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=53135&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html).

### US Students Politically and Civically Conscious

A new report from Tufts University's Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service found that college students and non-college age students vote at nearly the same level as the rest of the voting eligible population, de-

constructing the commonly held view that young people are politically and civically disconnected from the world. The report, "Civic and Political Engagement of America's Youth," is the first publication that stems from a six-year study that Tisch College is conducting to analyze the connection between university experience and post graduation political and civic engagement. To read more about the study and results, please visit, <http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/?pid=330>.

### Public Service for University Funding

Southern California state legislator Mike Feuer is drafting a bill that would minimize debt for California University students attending state universities. If students promised two years of employment in public service fields following graduation, the state government would pay four years of students' tuition and fees. Feuer hopes that if passed, the bill would encourage students to pursue jobs for civic-minded reasons rather than financial ones. To read more about the bill, please visit <http://www.sacbee.com/111/story/155182.html>.

*Service News World-wide is produced by Innovations in Civic Participation. This monthly newsletter is intended to be a resource for current news and events related to service, country information, and relevant publications and internet resources, in addition to in-depth discussions of different types of service and the issues that accompany them.*

**Comments and/or suggestions are welcomed, and we strongly encourage contributions for future issues.**

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