

Program Profile:

Rwanda Youth Association for the Dissemination of Development Information (YADDI)

By Mary Rose Conroy

Ten years after the devastating genocide in Rwanda, young people in the Huye District organized to rebuild and develop their country by forming YADDI, an association designed to “bridge the development information gap among young people and network their efforts for sustainable development.” According to Executive Director and Founder Cleophas Kanamugire, by both educating youth and employing them as a resource for development, YADDI acts upon its founding belief that “in every society youth are the major tools for change.”



Maraba Telecentre Opening Celebration, Summer 2006. Photo courtesy of YADDI.

Youth comprise nearly two-thirds of the Rwandan population, nearly all of whom were deeply affected by the Rwandan genocide through either direct participation or the loss of family members and neighbors. By both providing opportunities for reconciliation and community engagement and developing young people’s strengths and skills, YADDI is pursuing an ambitious agenda to cultivate a new generation of leaders. YADDI’s programs focus primarily on

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Letter From an ICP Service Scholar

Moving Beyond the Ivory Tower

By Emma Lochery

Attending events like the World Social Forum (WSF) is important because it can provide an opportunity not only to present projects but, more importantly, to *listen*. I attended the World Social Forum in Nairobi with a specific question in mind: what role can higher education play in making another world possible—in driving social change? At ICP, I help staff the Talloires Network, an international network connecting institutions of higher education committed to engaging with their local and global communities. The network is a consortium of university leaders—presidents, rectors and vice chancellors—that is crucial in advancing the civic engagement agenda and supporting innovative projects. However, it is also important to hear the voices of other stakeholders. The WSF represented a chance to meet with other university members to discuss how they viewed civic engagement, what barriers they faced in becoming more involved with their communities, and what tools would be useful for them in their quest to overcome those barriers. In ICP’s seminar, “Beyond the Ivory Tower: Higher Education as a Catalyst for Change,” I led a group discussion that included students and university professors from Tanzania, Kenya, Cameroon, Uganda, Switzerland, Belgium, the UK, the US, Canada, and Venezuela.

Seminar participants’ principal suggestions concerned universities’ level of commitment to civic engagement. Participants stressed that the movement to advance higher education civic engagement must ensure institutions’ commitments are deeply embedded and go further than signing a declaration. To this end, the workshop provided three main recommendations. First, that local capacity for research be reinforced, particularly in universities located in poorer areas. Second, that universities’ civic engagement activities build upon previous service experiences to be most effective. Finally, that university leaders advocate civic engagement as it supports members of university communities seeking to build the necessary engagement infrastructure.

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The 7th World Social Forum: A Global *Jukwaa*

The World Social Forum is one of the biggest international civil society gatherings in the world, attracting tens of thousands of individuals and organizations seeking to engage in open discussion, networking, and debate. Based on the idea of creating a platform, or in Swahili, *jukwaa*, the event is the annual culmination of an ongoing process to build local, national, and international movements for social change. Organizations and individuals register to attend and then self-organize seminars and workshops. Seminars at the forum require flexibility; because of the open space concept, organizers are never quite sure who will arrive, when they will walk through the door, and how they will enter the discussion.

For the first time, the World Social Forum was held in an African country, Kenya. In Nairobi, individuals gathered to discuss a truly diverse set of issues—from women’s rights to migration and corruption to bilateral trade agreements. Discussion, however, found its focus in the WSF theme, “Another World Is Possible,” in the idea that solutions to social and economic injustices can be found through discussion, innovative thinking, and collaborative action.

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YADDI

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engaging young people who have left primary school or high school and have little or no opportunities to complete their formal education to work on projects that include eradicating illiteracy, promoting peace, information technology support and training, and HIV/AIDS education. These various programs are united by their emphasis on building upon and further developing youth capacity through information sharing and peer-to-peer education.

One of YADDI's key initiatives is its Youth Peace Education Program. In 1994, young people were influenced by political actors to participate in mass killings and human rights violations. Responding to the continued need for youth to become informed about human rights and engaged in conflict prevention, YADDI developed the Youth Peace Education Program to spread information about conflict and violence, peace, and human rights to young people *through* young people's work. In addition to educating young volunteers about the basics and implementation techniques of human rights principles, YADDI provides them with basic materials for education campaigns and connects them to primary and secondary schools, orphanages, and youth serving NGOs. In this manner, these peer to peer exchanges focus on strengthening understanding and tolerance amongst Rwandan youths—a critical step to healing the feelings of mistrust and hate left amongst communities in the wake of the genocide.



World Aids Day Celebration, 2006. Photo courtesy of YADDI.

Another of YADDI's key programs is designed to reduce insecurity for young people and orphans in particular. According to the 2005 Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey, 29% of the population under eighteen is classified as orphans or critically vulnerable, owing to the genocide, HIV/AIDS rates, poverty, and other socio-economic factors. The Ministry of Gender and Family Planning has overseen the creation of hosting centers that care for many of these displaced children, yet children's rights within these centres are often not clearly understood by either the children or staff, leading to mistreatment and high dropout rates. In order to encourage young people to take an active role in improving this national situation, YADDI developed the Promotion of Children Rights in Hosting Centres program. The program engages young Rwandans to work with and educate children and staff at the centres in their daily activities and to discuss children's rights, as well as to cultivate a sense of responsibility amongst communities on the need to protect those rights. In this manner, youth in the program are becoming leaders in building a national understanding of the rights and responsibilities of young people. Through this program, YADDI hopes to plant the seeds that will cultivate and mobilize a nation-wide children's rights movement.

In order to generate a wide network of organizations committed to promoting these activities and reach as many young Rwandans as possible, YADDI has developed significant partnerships and relations with local and international universities, NGOs focused on HIV/AIDS work, the National Youth Council, and other youth focused international organizations. In addition to sustaining and enlarging existing programs, YADDI is currently working to establish a satellite office in the Rwandan capital of Kigali to foster stronger links between the government, local organizations, and resources, while increasing the impact of YADDI's work. Through bringing this range of stakeholders together to support their programs, YADDI hopes to continue building the skills of Rwandan youth and empowering them as leaders with the knowledge and vision to bring about socio-economic transformation for themselves and their communities in the years to come.

You can contact YADDI with any questions or comments by e-mailing administration@yaddi.net

ISSUE # 41
MARCH 2007

USAID's Gilbert Mwendata: Rwanda and Youth Service

Former ICP service scholar Ugo Iteogu interviewed Mr. Gilbert Mwendata, a conflict resolution adviser for USAID in Kigali-Rwanda, in late 2006. The following is an excerpt:

Tell us a bit about Rwanda, and the challenges you face in your new role. What has your work at USAID been like?

Previously, when I worked with World Vision, I was in charge of a program on healing, peace building, and reconciliation. So in both positions, I have focused on matters regarding reconciliation...the fact is that we have a great number of youth who have been traumatized by the past genocide, and so we have continuously been working with them...we have funded projects which focus on research and dialogue for peace.

Do you currently have a youth policy or an organized youth service program in Rwanda?

There is an established youth policy in Rwanda and the major domains that will be covered include the following: poverty alleviation and youth employment, unity and reconciliation and social transformation, education...health and youth protection, sport and culture, gender, and cooperation. In Rwanda, we have a National Youth Council. That council has representation from the national level to the grassroots level.

...[In] the national youth policy...the most important [issue] has been about reconciliation. It is said that if we don't build the character of peace, unity and reconciliation in our youth, then even the future will not be certain. Indeed, you can build houses, buy vehicles, and do all sorts of development, but at the end if they do not build a new generation of youth that have a good understanding of things, then the future cannot be certain.

To read the full interview, please visit <http://www.icicp.org/index.php?tg=articles&topics=379>.

Judy Woodruff Speaks with Generation Next

Judy Woodruff, former CNN anchor and senior correspondent, traveled across the United States in 2006 with the Generation Next initiative to interview and report on 16-25 year-olds' thoughts about life. The Generation Next initiative's goal was to identify what motivates, compels, and altogether defines today's youth. The initiative documented Woodruff's travels and compiled her results, releasing four hour-long documentaries that were aired on PBS in 2007. You can access information about these reports and contribute your own thoughts about Generation Next by visiting Generation Next's website, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/generation-next/about/>

Generation Next: Episodic Volunteers

By Mary Rose Conroy

The Me Generation. Generation Y. Generation Next. Young people between the ages of 18 and 25 have been given various names by researchers, reporters, and social scientists attempting to define what characterizes today's youth. The recent Pew Research Center report, "A Portrait of Generation Next¹," gave youth the opportunity to speak about who they are and what they value. Of particular interest are their views about volunteering, and its role in their lives.

The survey results show that today's young people, while on the whole optimistic, tend toward cynicism in self-analysis. According to the Pew study, 42% of young people surveyed believe that their generation volunteers less than young people twenty years ago; only 35% think that they volunteer more than 'Gen Xers' did at their age. Interestingly, this perception is not founded in reality.

The Corporation for National & Community Service published a study in December 2006 that examined trends in volunteering over the past thirty years. "Volunteer Growth in America: A Review of Trends Since 1974²," shows that, contrary to what young people think, 'Generation Next' actually volunteers at significantly higher levels than young people in the seventies and eighties. According to their findings, 28.4% of older teenagers (ages 16-19) volunteer today, in contrast to 20.9% in 1974 and 13.4% in 1989.

Clearly, young people *are* invested in their communities. They work hard, they go to school and they spend time volunteering. The question then remains: why are they unaware of these facts about themselves and their peers?

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Resources

Free Youth Voice Handbook

CommonAction has published the new Washington Youth Voice Handbook. This free publication features youth workshop outlines, information about more than fifty youth programs, schools and organizations across DC, and a comprehensive resource guide of national and international websites, organizations and publications related to youth service. To download the free publication, please visit, <http://www.commonaction.org/publications.htm>.

UNICEF: The Welfare of Youth in Developed Countries

UNICEF has released a report on the welfare of young people in developed and economically advanced countries. The report

measures and compares young people's well being using six different dimensions in order to foster dialogue and stimulate development of policies that can improve young people's lives. To read the report, please visit <http://www.unicef.org/media/files/ChildPovertyReport.pdf>.

Report: Youth Participation in the Millenium Develop- ment Goals

The Ad Hoc Working Group for Youth and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has published its final report overiewing the state of youth participation in achieving the MDGs and its suggestions to further cultivate, improve and scale up youth participation. To read the report, please visit www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/youthmdgs.pdf.

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MARCH 2007

ICP News and Happenings

Charlotte McDowell and Robin Taylor will represent ICP at the Inter-American Summit on Conflict Resolution Education March 14 and 15, 2007 in Cleveland, Ohio. McDowell and Taylor will be presenting a draft of the latest Service as a Strategy paper, *Youth Engaged in Service: A Visionary Strategy for Post-Conflict Settings*, which focuses on addressing the educational, material, and social needs of youth in post-conflict settings through service-learning programs. The paper presents the latest research on post-conflict youth programs and features conflict management case studies from around the world. A final version of the paper will be available to download on ICP's website in the coming months.

In other news, ICP has posted a definition of youth service complemented by examples from National Youth Service Policies (NYSP) on Wikipedia. Wikipedia is rapidly becoming one of the largest sources of information on the Internet, and ICP hopes that this web-posting increases the visibility of youth service and the presence of NYSP worldwide.

The definition is the result of research that included internal ICP publications and publications from external sources. Please follow the link to let us know what you think and/or add additional information,
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth_service.

Service News Headlines

100 Service Learning Grants Awarded to celebrate Global Youth Service Day 2007

Twenty-nine students and seventy-one teachers and service-learning coordinators were awarded the State Farm Good Neighbor Service-Learning Grants for National & Global Youth Service Day by Youth Service America and State Farm Companies Foundation. The \$1,000 grants were awarded in 37 states encompassing all academic disciplines. Child homelessness, urban renewal, and inter-generational friendship projects were a few of the winning proposal themes. To see a complete list, please visit
http://www.statefarm.com/about/part_spos/grants/foundati.asp.

Ethiopian Youth Center Ready to Open

Construction has ended on a 1.5 million birr (168,000 USD) youth recreation center featuring a library, computer facility, and sports hall in Assosa, Ethiopia. The center hopes to foster productivity by engaging youth in sports and educational activities. The HIV/AIDS initiative and the Ministry of Youth and Sports sponsored the construction. To read the full report, please visit
<http://www.ethpress.gov.et/Herald/articlefront.asp>.

4th Arab Youth Forum Explores Role of Media in Young People's Lives

Over forty young people representing youth delegations from across the Middle East assembled in Amman, Jordan the week of February 12 to participate in the 4th Arab Youth Forum, "Arab Youth: Reality and Ambitions." This year's forum focused on the importance and power of media in everyday life. Participants presented papers and attended lectures that explored issues such as information technology, youth leadership, freedom of speech, and public speaking skills, amongst others. To read the full article, please visit <http://www.jordan.jo/en/en-news/wmview.php?ArtID=12559>

White House Celebrates Five Year Anniversary of USA Freedom Corps

On February 13th, President George Bush and Mrs. Bush celebrated the fifth anniversary of the USA Freedom Corps. Freedom Corps announced the creation of a new website that shows the 550 individuals recognized by the President for answering the call to serve their nation. To see the website and learn about volunteer opportunities, please visit www.usafreedomcorps.gov.

Upcoming Events

Gulf South Summit: Service Learning and Civic Engagement through Higher Education: March 16-17; New Orleans, Louisiana. For more information, please visit
<http://cps.tulane.edu/summit/>

International Workshop on Youth Values Development: March 18-25, 2007; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. For more information, please visit
http://www.momken.org/fullnewsarticle_en.php?item=2535

UNICEF Voices of Youth: Make A Difference-One Minute Video Competition: Submission deadline March 25. For more information, please visit
http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction_3490.html

Global Service Forum: March 28, 2007; Albuquerque, New Mexico. For more information please visit
www.nylc.org/conference

The 18th Annual National Service Learning Conference: March 28-31, 2007; Albuquerque, New Mexico. For more information, please visit
<https://programs.regweb.com/metro/NYLC2007/registration>

Act! Speak! Build! Week: Habitat for Humanity's international student initiated week of advocacy: April 16-22, 2007 For more information, please visit
<http://www.habitat.org/youthprograms/actspeakbuild/>

National and Global Youth Service Day: April 20-22, 2007. For more information, please visit
<http://www.ysa.org/nysd/>

Moving Beyond the Ivory Tower

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Participants argued that community-based research lies at the heart of higher education's potential to advance social change. However, building research models that reflect context and respect local needs involves a challenge identified right at the start of the Talloires Network: limited resources. Limited university resources, particularly in poorer countries, were a clear barrier to community engagement. Paucity of resources to support research meant that in many universities books and materials were imported from the US, Europe, and Australia and did not reflect local concerns, making it hard for courses to link to local context.

Beyond the question of research, participants questioned whether civic engagement requirements at university really had an impact on participating students if they were not backed up by earlier service experiences. "Engagement cannot begin at the age of 20," commented one university professor, "young people need to have service activities earlier to begin to understand the inequality present in their society." A student from the US explained that people need to be equipped early on with tools to "interrogate their own privilege" and work to use their own resources to strengthen their communities and societies. University engagement activities have a stronger impact when service is a social institution, an argument well in tune with ICP's wider work.

The discussion ended with a final recognition that underlines the importance of a global network such as the Talloires Network. While it is possible to criticize initiatives that work with the heads of institutions, such projects create a powerful advocacy tool that diverse stakeholders can use to advance the civic engagement agenda on their own campuses. With examples of effective infrastructure and research models, students, faculty, and staff can challenge their institutions to consider how they can help make "another world possible."

Episodic Volunteers

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Part of the answer may lie in the type of volunteer work in which teenagers engage. According to the same CNS study, "episodic" volunteering is on the rise, particularly among young people. The term, coined by Nancy MacDuff in a 1990 study entitled "Episodic Volunteers: Reality for the Future³," identified a growing trend toward one-time only or occasional volunteering, attributed to a variety of societal factors including over-scheduled lives. For many people, occasional community service or volunteer work is all they can manage, even if they want to do more. With thousands of people volunteering sporadically, young people may not realize the collective impact of their work.

One-time, large scale events, or "days of service," that are often staffed by groups of episodic volunteers should not be seen as an end unto themselves, but as opportunities by which organizations can further engage young volunteers. Using long-term volunteers to supervise, train, and reach out to episodic volunteers can build a sense of community and make volunteers feel valued and welcomed. Episodic volunteering generates substantial benefits to organizations and the individuals and communities with which they work, developing in today's young people the capabilities and the desire to remain engaged and committed to service throughout their lives.

Service News Worldwide 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.

Please direct enquiries to info@icicp.org

1. To access the report, visit <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=300>

2. To access the report, please visit, http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/role_impact/performance_research.asp#VOLGROWTH

3. MacDuff, N. (1990). *Episodic volunteers: Reality for the future*. *Voluntary Action Research* (Spring), 15-17