

Strengthening Youth Service Programming and Policy ICP Hosts South African National Service Review Delegation

By Charlotte McDowell and Robin Taylor

Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP) co-hosted a South African delegation studying lessons from the United States' national youth service experience. In South Africa, the National Youth Service is currently gaining momentum as a potential path toward economic development and in light of the National Youth Commission's review of the broader National Youth Policy Framework. The study trip delegates represented the Office of the President, the National Department of Housing, and the National Youth Commission. Led by Busani Ngcaweni, head of the Youth Desk and Senior Policy Analyst in the Policy Unit in the Presidency, the delegation is currently reviewing and researching the expansion of South Africa's National Youth Service program with an eye to identifying policy gaps and generating new ideas at the program level.

A main focus of the delegation's visit to Washington DC and Philadelphia was to improve the impact of service programming for unemployed youth. The South African government is currently reviewing how youth service allows governmental departments to provide opportunities for young people to contribute to their communities while improving their own skill sets. In addition to meeting with ICP and representatives from YouthBuild and the Academy for Educational Development, the South African delegates visited the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Department for Housing and Urban Development.

Delegates also got the chance to see youth service projects up close. In Washington, they spent time at the YouthBuild Public Charter School,

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Service Journal: Youth Star Cambodia

By Rattanak Azizah, Youth Star Cambodia Volunteer

Three months ago I began a year of service as a volunteer for Youth Star Cambodia. I applied to become a volunteer because I wanted to help poor communities, but I did not know how I could use my university education in daily life.

By working in a visible role, I also wanted to help change perceptions about the role of women in our society. Some people believe that women can only work in their homes. But I think that Cambodian women can do as many kinds of work as men do. Many women work outside the home, and often they support their families.

I work in the Svay Khleang commune in the Krouch Chhmar District of Kampong Cham province. I began my work by mapping my community, so I could meet local people and learn about my new home. My community partners helped me identify strengths and weaknesses, as well as vulnerable children and respected community leaders.

Immediately I became interested in helping children whose parents left the village to find work elsewhere. In my village we have few options for sustainable livelihoods, so people often move to cities or even to other countries to find work. They often leave their children in the care of the eldest children, who may be in their early teens themselves. These children are the most vulnerable children in the village. I spend most of my time helping them with their schoolwork because they are at high risk of dropping out of school

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ICP Staff and the South Africa delegation

ICP's Service Journal appears on a regular basis in order to highlight the voices of young people serving their communities around the world. ICP seeks to actively support both national service programs and community-based service organizations by sharing their experiences with global service policymakers and practitioners. If you are interested in supporting this work or in submitting an article for the Service Journal, please contact info@icicp.org

RESOURCES

UNICEF releases "State of the World's Children 2007" report

This year, UNICEF's State of the World's Children report focuses on the connection between development, child welfare, and gender equity. The report can be downloaded on UNICEF's website at <http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/>

Spanish Language Volunteer Resources

Sirve Quisqueya, a multi sector network in the Dominican Republic, has Spanish language volunteer guides and information on volunteering at the website below.

<http://www.comunicate.org.do/interfaz/contenido.asp?Aq=2&CategoríaNo=328>

Promoting Civic Engagement in Healthcare Management Education: Concepts & Cases

This new book, published by the Association of University Programs in Health Administration, offers practical examples and tips for incorporating service learning into healthcare management education. For more information on the book, please visit

http://www.aupha.org/i4a/ams/amsstore/category.cfm?category_id=1

Service News Headlines

International Volunteer Day Celebrated in Dominican Republic

Sirve Quisqueya, a multi-sector network promoting volunteering in the Dominican Republic, celebrated International Volunteer Day by hosting the "National Meeting on Volunteering and the MDGs" on December 5, 2006. The meeting stressed the promotion of volunteering, and how volunteerism in the Dominican Republic can help achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The National Awards *Sirve Quisqueya*, the presidential awards for service, were also launched at the meeting. More information is available at: <http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/mdgs/mdg-stories/mdgs-general/doc/foro-nacional-sobre-voluntariado.html> (Spanish only)

Katimavik Receives Further Funding

The Canadian government approved funding another program year for Katimavik, Canada's youth service program. This extension will allow for nearly 1,000 youth to engage in service around the country through the fall of 2008. Katimavik volunteers devote nine months to service and serve in three different provinces. More information is available here:

<http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/December2006/20/c9571.html>.

Communities Prepare for MLK Day of Service

Communities around the United States are getting ready for the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service on January 15. This year, for the first time, there will be projects in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. There are nearly 1,500 projects that volunteers can sign up for at <http://www.mlkday.gov/>.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Michigan Campus Compact: The Institute: Service-Learning and Civic Engagement February 8-9, 2007. Schoolcraft College, MN, USA. For more information, please visit <http://www.micampuscompact.org/institute07.asp>

International Conference on Character Development through Service and Experiential Learning March 12-13, 2007; Singapore. For more information please visit <http://www.iccdtsel.nie.edu.sg/>

Inter American Summit on Conflict Resolution Education March 14-17, 2007; Cleveland, Ohio. For more information please visit http://www.educadem.oas.org/english/cpo_eventos.asp

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

The 18th Annual National Service Learning Conference; 28-31 March 2007; Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. For more information please visit <https://programs.reqweb.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 and to register, please visit <http://www.habitat.org/youthprograms/actspeakbuild/>

South Africa Delegation

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which was founded by the Latin American Youth Center. Students at the school split their time between studying for their General Education Development diploma and rehabilitating housing, where they learn construction skills and earn wages. The dual aspects of the program were of interest to the delegation due to the large number of South African youth who lack the education and skills necessary to fully take part in their communities. Delegates also visited a similar YouthBuild program in Philadelphia, where they participated in a panel discussion with young participants.

Before returning to South Africa, the delegation participated in a round table wrap-up session at ICP, facilitated by ICP's Executive Director Susan Stroud. Co-hosts from YouthBuild, AED, and SATIG also joined the session. The major themes for discussion were sustainability across political agendas, centralized and decentralized structures for youth service administration, developing a strong policy environment, the stages of program development and design, the rights vs. responsibilities of young people in relationship to their society, and the importance of both skill development and outputs for the community.

ICP is looking forward to continuing these discussions with the South African delegates in order to provide policy knowledge from both the AmeriCorps experience and other National Youth Service programs around the world. By supporting South Africa in building a strong program and policy framework, ICP hopes to help create a quality model that will provide significant knowledge to benefit other countries within the South African region and around the world.

SOUTH AFRICA NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE CAMPAIGN

The South African National Youth Service Volunteer Campaign was launched on December 5, 2006 with the aim of increasing youth service in three main categories: service as a form of workforce development for unemployed youth, service conducted by students in tertiary education within civil society, and volunteerism among young professionals. The government has set goals for the coming year of registering at least 10,000 unemployed young people per year to serve in a wide variety of government departments, and to increase the number of young professional volunteers by 5,000 per year.

Program Spotlight: India's National Service Scheme

By Ugochukwu Iteogu

During India's earthquakes, the scene is typically one of panic and chaos. People are crying, and parents clutch their children or frantically look for the missing. Rail lines are damaged; electricity and telephone poles are destroyed. Rescuers dig through the rubble of collapsed buildings seeking survivors. Makeshift stretchers are continuously loaded with the bodies of either the wounded or dead. Volunteers such as those from the National Service Scheme (NSS) – India's largest youth service organization – have always been an essential part of the first response and long-term recovery efforts during these crises.

Overview of the NSS

The NSS is the largest youth service organization in India and has a membership of over 2 million youth. The scheme was

established in 1969, with 40,000 students participating from 37 universities. Over the years, the NSS has grown dramatically and has now expanded to over 175 universities. The main aim of the program is to get college youth involved in their communities during their free time, thereby building meaningful links between campuses and communities, colleges and villages, and knowledge and action. The NSS volunteers make a concerted effort to understand the communities in which they work, identifying community needs and involving members of the community in addressing these needs. The service program lasts two years, and participating students are expected to complete 120 hours of community work. As part of their work, participants join a 10-day camp in an adopted slum or village where they focus on a specific theme, which ranges from the environment to health care.

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THE NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME AND THE 2001 GUJARAT EARTHQUAKE

NSS volunteers collected cash donations totaling Rs.1,33,000 (US\$3,009.05), as well as clothes and woolen blankets for the survivors. About 20 truckloads of clothes were sent through the Red Cross Society.

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

Please direct enquiries to info@icicp.org

Program Spotlight: India's NSS

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Successes of the National Service Scheme

- Helping to make Kottayam, a town in the southern state of Kerala, the first town in India with 100% literacy.
- Regenerating 1000 acres of wasteland in India through tree planting drives.
- Desilting a lake in north India by removing 84,000 cubic feet of silt.
- Supporting rescue and rehabilitation efforts during annual cyclones and floods in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Assam.
- Launching a sensitization campaign on HIV/AIDS called Universities Talk AIDS (UTA) in 174 universities across the country. As part of this campaign, more than 7000 NSS Program Officers and 55,000 peer educators have been trained on HIV/AIDS, and 5820 colleges with a student population of 5.6 million have been declared HIV/AIDS-aware. The World Health Organization has deemed UTA "an innovative educational intervention."

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or falling behind. I also provide them with basic health information, and we have discussions about values and social issues. I also work with teachers to develop and strengthen their teaching methods. English courses are very popular among children and youth, especially for those who wish to pursue higher education, so I support teachers in teaching English.

As a result of this focus on supporting at-risk students, many children and youth have made a lot of progress. Many boys and girls who dropped out of school have come back to school. Other students who fell behind in their schoolwork are making good progress with their studies. We have better teamwork in our village, too. Children and youth often join together to clean up our school and other areas in the community. They have improved their personal health habits, and now they boil their drinking water. Their parents and community elders are proud of their children's progress in reading, personal hygiene, and attitudes about values and social responsibility.

Another problem facing my village is human trafficking. Often people -- particularly women -- are cheated or abused when they move away to seek job opportunities. Sometimes traffickers make false promises about good job openings, and take advantage of them. Often people in my area do not know about trafficking, so my volunteer duties include sharing information and tools for halting trafficking. I have learned a lot during my service already, about communities and about myself. Before I did not know how to apply my knowledge and skills, and I was not interested in working with children. Through my volunteer service, I learned that communities are waiting for all of us to help, for example by supporting education. Now I know there are many things I can do to be helpful. I am very interested in helping children develop themselves, through education and other means. I have gained new work skills, and I find it easier to manage myself and my work.

My ideas about women are still very important to me. In my village, I find that women work even more than men do. This means current perceptions about women are not reflected in our society. I see that we all have the capacity to make social contributions. It does not matter if we are women or men, we all have important roles to play. I am determined to take responsibility for helping to change perceptions about women, and to increase opportunities for us all.

ICP's Work in South Asia

ICP has partnered with the U.S. Department of State for two trips to the region, sponsored by the International Speakers Program. As a result of these trips, ICP has proposed a regional conference focused on youth civic engagement, and is currently discussing partnership on this conference with the U.S. Department of State and the Government of India.

In addition to work with the Department of State, ICP organized a study tour for the head of the Pakistani National Youth Service in 2006, and has begun to develop ties with social entrepreneurs in Nepal.

Youth Star Cambodia Volunteers:



ICP News and Happenings

ICP Staff to attend WSF Forum

The 7th edition of the World Social Forum (WSF) is set to be held from January 20-25, 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya. ICP will be represented at the meeting by Emma Lochery, one of its service scholars.

Emma will be organizing a seminar on higher education civic engagement in partnership with student groups from several universities, aiming to learn more about how young people around the world view the connection between higher education and community engagement. Here at ICP, Emma helps coordinate a network that deals with that very question—the Talloires Network, an international network of leaders of higher education institutions committed to civic engagement.

This is the first time the whole World Social Forum has been held in an African country, and the event promises to bring together a diverse group of people representing all sectors of civil society. The social forum movement aims to place social justice, international solidarity, gender equality, peace and defense of the environment on the agenda of the world's peoples: the theme for this event is "People's Struggles, People's Alternatives". It will aim to provide an open meeting place where groups and movements come together to pursue their thinking, debate ideas democratically, formulate proposals, share their experiences freely and network for effective action. We look forward to Emma's report on her experiences next month

ICP Staff Participates in Brookings Forum

The Brookings Institute on December 5, 2006, hosted representatives of public and private sector groups to a leadership forum entitled "Building Bridges through Interna-

tional Service." The conference was one in a series of events to mark the U.N. mandated International Volunteer Day. Participants deliberated on ways to double the number of U.S. volunteers in international service, and how to enhance multilateral capacity and impact over the next five years (2006-2010). Business firms were asked to expand their support and "shared vision" for volunteerism and Congress was urged to increase funding for government volunteer programs, such as the Peace Corps.

ICP staff attended several of the working group sessions, and made recommendations on the way forward for global volunteering. ICP has been involved in this initiative for several years, and looks forward to continuing its involvement as the initiative progresses.

ICP Director participates in UNICEF Expert Group Meeting

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) hosted from December 11-13, 2006, an Expert Group Meeting on Young People in Emergency and Transition Situations. ICP's executive director, Susan Stroud, participated as a member of the Expert Group. The forum took place in New York, and participants came up with ideas for the development of an interagency programming framework for young people in emergency and transition settings. To ensure the success of this initiative, the participants also deliberated on the guiding principles, key areas for response and strategies for program implementation. Also discussed was a plan of action for organizing country-based and regional youth consultations when developing the draft framework.

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.

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