Service Enquiry

Civic Service and Volunteering in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Introduction

This volume of *Service Enquiry* is the second in a series of books that document the nature and extent of volunteering and civic service in different parts of the world. It focuses on volunteering and service in Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries, and makes visible a burgeoning, but often unrecognised, component of civil society activity in the region.

In 13 chapters and the conclusion, 23 authors draw together a range of perspectives on the role of volunteering and service in building democratic societies in the Latin American region. Various examples are provided of ways in which countries transcended military subjugation and economic hardship in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s through solidarity, increased participation, and a passionate belief in the idea that citizenship involves much more than the periodic right to vote. The authors examine the role of public policy in developing the voluntary sector, and offer a range of insights on the potential for partnership between the state, civil society agencies, faith-based organisations and the private sector in strengthening democratic practice, combating poverty and reducing wealth disparities through service and volunteering.

The book is structured in three parts: Part 1 provides an overview of volunteering and civic service in Latin America and the Caribbean, and makes the case for volunteering as a tool for social development and democratisation. Part 2 focuses on the extent to which volunteering and service find expression in the policy and legislative frameworks of various LAC countries. Part 3 explores the emergence of youth service in the LAC region and examines the conditions under which voluntary service fosters youth development and youth participation in society.

Looking across the chapters, a number of distinctive themes emerge: Volunteering and democracy, 'new' volunteering, policy and legislation, and the importance of partnerships.

Volunteering and democracy

The first theme focuses on **volunteering as a force for social justice, redistribution and democracy**. Bernardo Kliksberg argues that voluntary action is an integral part of Latin American life, a force for change that needs to be recognised and valued. Contrary to the view that volunteering is the preserve of privileged communities, Kliksberg indicates that volunteering in Latin American countries takes place among the poorest communities, and that it is often a powerful expression of solidarity, driven by ethics and religious beliefs. In this way, volunteering fosters the notion of a 'broadened citizenship' that extends beyond political rights to economic, social and cultural rights, and functions as a force for democratic action and development.

Eugenio Mauricio Ravinet Muñoz and Andrés Claudio Pennycook Castro write

that while voluntary action does not and should not replace state action, civic participation is essential for deepening social justice and democracy. This view is supported by Cristina Calvo, who identifies a key role for religious organisations in fostering 'participatory social construction'. Calvo argues that in countries in which people are deeply mistrustful of institutions, religious organisations can promote social and political dialogue between civil society and governments to provide a context in which volunteerism can be activated for the common good.

However, María Nieves Tapia looks critically at the role of civic society in relation to the decline of public trust in political institutions, particularly in view of the failure of new democracies to deliver fully on their promises. She traces the rise of civil society organisations from conditions of repression in the 1970s and the 1980s, through to the establishment of new democracies in the 1990s. Noting the extent to which non-governmental organisations took responsibility for social support in a context of weak states, she examines the potential and the risks for alliances between government and civil society organisations in strengthening democracy. According to Tapia, civil society organisations offer unique opportunities for people to gain practical experience of civic participation as a fundamental basis for understanding democracy. She also highlights the potential of civil society organisations for fostering social inclusion and stresses that they provide individuals and communities with hands-on experience of accountability and transparency – qualities that need to find expression in the implementation of public policy within democracies.

This view is further developed by Dacil Acevedo Riquelme and Gustavo Smith, who see volunteering as one means whereby the exclusion and poverty of young people, in particular, can be reduced. They suggest that community-based youth volunteering not only promotes youth participation and local development; it also enhances the economic competitiveness of countries in the region and strengthens environmental sustainability. The Servicio Pais programme in Chile, described by María Alejandra Mora Castillo, is one initiative that seeks to decentralise knowledge and counter the marginalisation of isolated rural communities through the deployment of young professional volunteers. In another chapter, the diverse experiences of service learning projects in Argentina, Brazil and Chile are described by Pablo Elicegui, Daniela Eroles and Priscila Cruz. Crafted between schools and communities, these projects strengthen bonds and social networks at local level, and transform local conditions through leadership and participation. In this way, citizenship is fostered through experiential learning at three significant sites of socialisation: at school, in the family and in the community.

'New' volunteering

The second theme has to do with the emergence of a 'new' form of volunteering that supports social, political and economic transformation in Latin American society.

Tapia points to the significant role that civil society organisations have come

to play in contributing to the spread of democracy in the region. Many of these organisations are trusted entities that involve volunteers and are perceived to give expression to the concerns of communities on the ground. She suggests that the organisations have the potential not only to address daily challenges around basic needs, but also to scale up their activities to deal with structural problems, influence economic models and support the articulation between community concerns and public policies. The challenge she identifies is the need to recognise that civil society organisations represent specific interests and demands, and that the mission of the state is to channel those demands towards the common good.

Ravinet Muñoz and Pennycook Castro describe 'new' volunteerism as active citizen participation between equals, characterised by reciprocity. They see new volunteering as being altruistic in nature, with the potential to promote social cohesion and reduce violence and conflict. This they contrast with 'traditional' volunteerism, which they describe as being paternalistic – "a unilateral charitable act that, although worthy of praise, lacks the social impact that can be associated with the new volunteerism". According to Calvo, the new volunteerism recognises the need to combat and overcome the causes of marginalisation. It also seeks relationships with institutions and promotes participation. She suggests that the new volunteerism is spontaneous, focuses on the public good, and is characterised by solidarity – sharing and giving space to others. In the political sphere it helps bridge the divide between communities, integrates and humanises public services, stimulates the formation of new institutions, and denounces oppression.

Riquelme and Smith argue that, today, young people have become key actors in understanding new forms of volunteerism because their volunteering takes place in the context of their own exclusion and poverty. In conceptual terms, this involves moving from the notion of 'charitable volunteerism', which involves a one-way, top-down relationship between giver and receiver, to 'communitarian volunteerism', which is characterised by a horizontal relationship between those who give and those who receive. Riquelme and Smith also refer to the notion of 'reinsertion volunteerism' through which marginalised people can empower themselves through voluntary action to influence the local environment and contribute to the development of their own communities.

In her discussion of service learning in education institutions and youth organisations, María Rosa Tapia de Rodríguez takes this idea further. She describes how efforts to make schools more responsive to community needs can promote a new 'contract' between schools and communities. This institutional response aims to address social needs at the same time as it meets teaching and learning imperatives. It has the additional benefit of contributing to the personal formation of participants through giving them first-hand experience of responsible civic participation. The 'contract' promotes social networks between schools and community organisations, affirming the importance of education in promoting social justice. Milú Villela adds another dimension to this perspective. She suggests that 'new' volunteerism transforms the person who volunteers as much as it transforms the recipient of the

service, thus promoting mutual growth. By teaching people to value others and to see one's own future as integrally related to the wellbeing of others, volunteering enables people to resolve differences and develop healthier relationships that are beneficial for communities and for countries as a whole.

Policy and legislation

What will it take to consolidate and systematise this new approach to volunteering? Here a third theme emerges, viz. **the role of policy and legislative frameworks in the promotion of volunteering and service**.

Ravinet Muñoz and Pennycook Castro suggest that in general terms, the experience of LAC countries is that legislation can contribute to the growth of volunteerism, particularly organised volunteering. Their assessment is that legislation in the different countries generally aims to foster solidarity among social actors, rather than to regulate volunteering. By creating legal frameworks that identify volunteering institutions and shape the material conditions under which they are able to receive technical and financial support, countries have strengthened organised volunteer agencies as part of civil society. This, in turn, has enabled them to become active in debates on sectoral public policy, thereby facilitating the participation of people at local level in national issues. The authors caution that onerous legal requirements can introduce obstacles that obstruct the growth of volunteering, particularly among youth and student organisations. Provided that restrictive legal requirements are avoided, legislation can do a great deal to entrench volunteering as a recognised and valued social institution.

Edward Metz, Brett Alessi, Susan Stroud, Dacil Acevedo Riquelme and Gustavo Smith surveyed 19 LAC countries to determine the prevalence of national youth service policy in the region. They found that the national youth service policy landscape in Latin America and the Caribbean is diverse, with policies being implemented within countries in different ways (both nationally and locally). At the same time, national youth service policies share common features in that they are created by government agencies and are implemented and sustained with the collaboration of local non-governmental youth-serving organisations. The authors argue that one of the key functions of national youth policy is to recognise young people as change agents, and to provide a framework for young people to become active contributors to the betterment of society. Recommendations for strengthening national youth service policy include increased capacity building and collaboration between public and private entities, so as to ensure youth participation from the policy drafting stage to delivering the programmes under the policy. The authors note the need for increased public and private financing for programmes, and the need for more research on the nature and impact of policy implementation.

Useful insights for a participatory approach to policy-making emerge from the chapter by Grace Hollister, Brett Alessi and Edward Metz who describe three examples in which small grants enabled local youth organisations in Panama, Brazil and Peru to participate actively in the development of youth service policy. Challenges included a

lack of awareness among policy-makers and the general public about youth service and its benefits, the need to recognise and work within existing policy and programmatic frameworks and, where no such frameworks exist, to create the space for a discussion about youth policy. Lessons learnt by the US-based grant-making agency, Innovations in Civic Participation, include the importance of fostering youth participation in the policy-formulation process, securing the involvement of government, conducting a needs analysis, identifying opportunities within existing policy frameworks for the insertion of youth interests, and drawing on technical assistance. One key factor identified is that of creating a favourable political environment coupled with government support for the youth policy-making process.

Beyond legislation: the importance of partnerships

The fourth theme that emerges in this volume is that of **implementing volunteering and service programmes through partnerships**. A number of authors comment on the need for collaboration between civil society, the state, religious organisations and the private sector in order to build democratic societies. They note that the history of repression in LAC countries has made it necessary for the social actors to re-establish levels of trust and co-operation, so as to contribute to the democratic project in a variety of ways, and they point to the potential of volunteering and service as mechanisms for bridging divisions and fostering social cohesion.

In exploring the potential of youth service for social development in the LAC region, Lissa Johnson, Amanda Moore McBride and René Olate point out that, in many cases, inter-organisational networks and public-private partnerships lie at the heart of effective programme implementation. They argue that partnerships build social capital, connect resource-rich institutions such as universities with impoverished areas such as rural communities, and cite programmes such as Opción Colombia, Un Techo Para mi Chile, and the Committee for the Democratisation of Information Technology (CDI) as examples that have been replicated across countries. The authors also discuss how government partnerships with universities and private corporations have provided the impetus for taking volunteerism to scale, resulting in a more extensive range of service opportunities becoming available. However, they indicate that more research is needed to understand the impact of inter-organisational networks and programme partnerships on social capital and civic service.

Michael McCabe and Addys Then Marte share valuable experience gained in the Caribbean about strategies for scaling up youth service through the formation of strategic alliances. They describe the approaches adopted by Sirve Quisqueya, an alliance of groups formed in 2002 to promote civic service by young Dominicans, and outline how the alliance overcame a variety of challenges to sustain its campaign. The chapter also documents a range of other youth service partnerships and programmes in the Caribbean, including the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) and the Caribbean Federation of Youth (CFY), as well as government-led youth policies,

programmes and alliances. It points out that national youth councils in eleven of the Caribbean countries have helped link numerous non-governmental organisations and youth groups to co-ordinate their advocacy for improved youth policies, greater funding support, public awareness, and co-ordination of efforts.

Ana de Gortari Pedroza comments that if social service in Mexico is to follow a new path that effectively involves institutions, students and government, then the current narrow, rigid, fragmented and short-term perspective of social service must be replaced by a long-term vision that relates social service to the most urgent social needs at local, regional and national levels. She argues that the higher education system needs to become more responsive to national challenges and that the design of social service programmes should draw on the combined efforts of the public, social and private sectors, so as to have greatest impact on the problems identified.

Conclusion

This volume thus provides a rich overview of the emerging forms of volunteering and civic service in LAC countries. It is our hope that the book will widen the debate in countries around the world about the role of volunteering and service in social development, and that it will prompt governments and institutions to invest more in research around these critical questions. In this regard, we support the call by the contributors for the development of a greater knowledge base on service and volunteering, and for a greater focus on evidence of its impact in a variety of contexts.

The development and production of this second volume of *Service Enquiry* represents a transatlantic collaboration between a number of partners committed to the promotion of service and volunteering worldwide: Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario (CLAYSS), a non-governmental organisation based in Buenos Aires, Argentina; the Centre for Social Development (CSD) located at Washington University in St Louis, USA; Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP) located in Washington DC, USA; the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) based in Washington DC, USA; and Volunteer and Service Enquiry Southern Africa (VOSESA), a non-governmental organisation based in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Through an editorial working group, the partners conceptualised the content of the book, identified contributors and managed its development. CLAYSS was responsible for commissioning, editing and producing the book. The costs of the project were borne by three partners: the Global Service Institute located at the Centre for Social Development at Washington University and Innovations in Civic Participation, and the Inter-American Development Bank. VOSESA edited the English language version, and served as managing editor for the overall project, sharing its publishing expertise and the lessons learnt from producing the first volume of Service Enquiry.

Our thanks are due to the following individuals who all played an indispensable

role in bringing this publication to life: Alba Gonzáles, Rosalia Montes and Pablo Elicegui from CLAYSS; Lissa Johnson and Amanda Moore McBride from the Centre for Social Development at Washington University in St Louis, USA; Susan Stroud and Brett Alessi from Innovations in Civic Participation, USA; Gabriel Mops, Elena Suárez and Marta Estarellas from the Inter-American Development Bank; Dacil Acevedo Riquelme, a Global Service Institute consultant; and Philanie Jooste from VOSESA.

Our hope is that by developing a better understanding of volunteering and service in Latin America and the Caribbean, we will contribute to building voluntary service as a force for change worldwide.

Helene Perold and María Nieves Tapia

Editors

March 2007

Acronyms

BONGO	Business Organised Non-governmental Organisation
CDACS	Centre for Democracy and Civil Society
CDI	Committee for the Democratisation of Information Technology
CEBOFIL	Centro Boliviano de Filantropia
CFY	Caribbean Federation of Youth
CLAYSS	Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario
CONAJU	National Youth Commission in Peru
CONSED	National Council of Education State Secretaries
CSD	Center for Social Development
CSO	Civil society organisation
CYP	Commonwealth Youth Programme
DR	Dominican Republic
Eclac	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FUNDASUPO	Fundación Para la Superacióde la Pobreza
G-HARP	Guyana HIV/AIDS Reduction and Prevention Project
GRINGO	Government Run/Initiated Organisation
GSI	Global Service Institute
GYSD	Global Youth Service Day
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IAVE	International Association for Volunteer Effort
ICP	Innovations in Civic Participation
IES	Instituciones de Educación Superior (higher education institutions)
IYP	International Youth Parliament
IYV	International Year of the Volunteer

LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LDB	Bases of National Education
LGV	General Law on Volunteering
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEC	Ministry of Education
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NACS	North American Community Service Project
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OIJ	Ibero-American Youth Organisation/Organizacion Iberoamericana de Juventud
PNUD	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Servol	Service Volunteered for All
TIG	Taking it Global
UBA	University of Buenos Aires
UN	United Nations
UNDIME	National Union of Municipal Education Directors
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VOSESA	Volunteer and Service Enquiry Southern Africa
YES	Youth Employment Summit
YGAN	Youth Global Action Network

PART 1

Volunteerism and Service in Latin America and the Caribbean

Bernardo Kliksberg is a Doctor of Economy and Marketing, as well as an international authority on management. He has advised over 30 countries on high-level management issues, and was a special consultant to the UN, IDB, OAS, UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO and other high-profile international organisations. Dr Kliksberg is Honorary and Emeritus Professor at several universities, including Universidad de Buenos Aires (Argentina), Universidad de Cuyo (Argentina), Universidad Católica del Perú (Perú) and Universidad Nacional del Uruguay (Uruguay). He is also the author of some 40 books and papers, which include the best-sellers *Más ética, más desarrollo* (2004) and *Hacia una economía con rostro humano; El Pensamiento Organizativo; El Capital Social; Dimensión olvidada del desarrollo; Toward an Intelligent State; Mitos y Falacias Sobre Desenvolvimiento Social; and Social Management: Some Strategic Issues.*

Volunteerism in Latin America:

Seven theses for discussion

BERNARDO KLIKSBERG

SUMMARY

Poverty in Latin America is caused by serious social problems. Governability throughout the continent is being constantly destabilised and trust is being destroyed. The severe inequality of the region, which is producing a hopeless generation of youth, requires a global solution. Although governments need to take responsibility, it is necessary for social actors to co-operate with government to guarantee political, economic and social citizenship in the region. Latin American volunteerism, with its vigour, its creativeness and its originality, should be able to contribute to such efforts in a significant way.

The author has used seven theses to discuss the value of volunteerism in Latin America. He maintains that volunteerism is a great producer of goods, social services and social capital, and is highly effective in the field of

community development. Such efforts are also important in building citizenship and greater participation. He claims that the state should institute laws and offer systematic education to encourage volunteerism, and concludes that increased volunteerism could trigger remarkable results and consequences for the region, as it is part of the foundation of ethics and spiritual convictions of the Latin American people.

It is time to discard myths

Volunteerism is an enigma to many Latin Americans and their perception of it is influenced by contradictory forces. On the one hand, the orthodox manner of analysing economic realities, widely regarded as the only possible approach, has exerted a strong influence since the 1980s and 1990s. In terms of this approach, volunteerism seems like a marginal activity that has little impact on the real world. Conventional economists do not understand how a sector that moves totally outside the market can have any impact, since its production units cannot be evaluated in terms of maximising profits or even through cost/benefit analysis.

Such a sector continually refers to ethical values, is impelled by moral incentives, and places itself outside the usual paradigms of orthodox economics. It is driven by incentives other than those that usually motivate producers of goods. According to conventional notions of the market, volunteering is too marginal to make an impact and will be inefficient, almost by definition.

There are other, different sectors with social concerns, but as their outlook devalues everything other than radical change, they often perceive volunteerism as a charitable activity that is unlikely to have real impact and that makes no contribution to the transformations required. While not reprehensible, it is seen largely as a waste of time.

However, reality is moving in the opposite direction and contradicts these perceptions. Some years ago, an eminent social scientist from Brazil, Betinho, the director of one of the main research centres in his country, fell seriously ill with AIDS at a time when no effective medicines were yet available. He decided to dedicate the rest of his life to creating a huge volunteer initiative to fight hunger. Sixty million Brazilians turned out in response to his call to form the largest movement of its kind in the history of Brazil.

In Argentina, between 2000 and 2002, there was an upsurge of poverty, triggered by the orthodox economic policies of the government of the 1990s. Millions were excluded from the economy. Towards the end of 2002, 58 per cent of the population and 70 per cent of young people were living below the poverty line and large sectors of the middle class had become the 'new poor', losing their small and medium industries – their traditional sources of work. They were without any hope at all.

Volunteerism, in various forms, came into its own. Between 1998 and 2002, the number of volunteers trebled to the point where it included a third of the population. Among them was Caritas, an organisation that looked after three million people with a base of 150 000 volunteers. The Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina, AMIA (Mutual Jewish Argentinian Association, AMIA) reached thousands of newly poor families with a social network supported by several thousand volunteers. La Red Social (The Social Network) and other organisations vastly expanded their membership. The barter economy, a phenomenon based on volunteerism that emerged among the new poor, provided immediate relief in the worst moments.

The same kinds of examples can be cited in relation to most countries in the region. They give rise to a number of questions, including: Is volunteerism really marginal, inefficient and a waste of time? How can we explain its huge appeal,

particularly among young people, and the credibility it enjoys among Latin American citizens who are sceptical when it comes to traditional leadership, political parties, business leaders and other traditional insitutions?

Is it not time to seriously review the conventional way of looking at volunteerism and to take a realistic view of it? This will allow us to explore its potential, and mobilise the latent energy and massive reach of such movements that have manifested themselves with vigour.

This is vital, especially in Latin America, with its serious social problems and a level of poverty that, in 2005 – in spite of excellent economic growth – was at 41 per cent (higher than in 1980, at 40 per cent). This region presents the worst inequality on the planet – the richest 10 per cent of the population has 48 per cent of the income, and the poorest 10 per cent only 1,6 per cent. This massively inequitable situation is the central cause of poverty, making it impossible to reduce it in any effective way and creating all sorts of perverse and vicious cycles.

This paper espouses the formation of a renewed vision of Latin American volunteerism and presents several unconventional theses on the subject. In short, it contributes to a debate that has been postponed for too long.

First thesis: Volunteerism is a great producer of goods and social services

Latin American economic orthodoxy, which prides itself on the continual use of mathematical instruments, seems not to have had the time to measure the statistical weight of volunteerism in the Gross Domestic Product. Johns Hopkins University in the USA has undertaken a wide-ranging project of comparative studies between civil society and volunteerism in 35 countries (Salamon, Sokolowski, Wojciech and List, 2003). Its results are eloquent. The countries included in the study were the following:

Developed countries		Developing countries		Transition countries
Australia	Italy	Argentina	Pakistan	Czech Republic
Austria	Japan	Brazil	Peru	Hungary
Belgium	Holland	Colombia	Philippines	Poland
Finland	Norway	Egypt	South Africa	Romania
France	Spain	Kenya	South Korea	Slovak Republic
Germany	Sweden	Mexico	Tanzania	
Ireland	United States	Morocco	Uganda	
Israel	United Kingdom			

The study measured the contribution of NGO activities to the economy of these countries between 1995 and 1998.

The NGOs, supported by a vast volunteer force of 190 million people – which means 20 per cent of the adult population of the investigated countries – generate 5 per cent of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually. The sum total of what the NGOs of these 35 countries produce would make up the seventh-largest economy in the world, surpassed only by the GDP of the USA, Japan, China, Germany, England and France. The amount would be higher than that of Italy, Russia, Spain and Canada.

This large sector of the economy also employs a far greater workforce than other sectors. It is ten times larger than both the textile industry and public services, over five times larger than the food industry, and 20 per cent larger than the transport industry.

In addition to their economic significance, NGOs and volunteers are frequently concentrated in the poorest communities. Their rapid reaction makes it possible to save lives in an emergency, and they are able to generate work qualifications, and prevent illnesses that are difficult to treat once they are contracted. As Johns Hopkins University states, they are known for "identifying and tackling needs not being dealt with, innovating, rendering services of exceptional quality, and serving those with the greatest need" (Salamon et al., 2003).

UNICEF estimates that, in the year 2000, 10 million volunteers vaccinated 550 million children around the world. The product that they generated can be estimated as 10,000 million dollars.

According to studies by the Global Service Institute at the Center for Social Development of Washington University in St Louis (Global Service Institute, 2004), there is intense and growing activity in Latin American civil society supported by volunteerism. It is estimated that there are a million active organisations and associations in the region. They work mainly in the fields of community development, education and training, civic participation, health, basic needs, environment, human rights, peace processes and emergency services. They cover a continuum that ranges from fighting poverty to building citizenship.

According to Johns Hopkins calculations, the contribution of civil organisations supported by volunteerism goes beyond 2 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product in countries like Argentina and Brazil.

Is it possible that these contributions are less in Latin American countries where, in many cases, the average growth of GDP in the last 25 years has hardly exceeded 3 per cent? The contribution of civil society is only a fraction of what volunteer organisations could generate if they were promoted, supported, stimulated and trained. At present they are not 'in favour', but make their contribution in spite of the current views that devalue them.

The United Nations General Assembly (United Nations, 2002) correctly pointed out, in a resolution referring to volunteerism:

> *Volunteerism is an important component of any strategy aimed at, inter alia, such areas as poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, disaster prevention and management, social integration and, in particular, overcoming social exclusion and discrimination.*

This observation is particularly relevant to Latin America, which suffers from serious problems of poverty and inequality.

Second thesis: Volunteerism is social capital in action

It is widely agreed that one of the driving forces of development is the social capital of societies. Social capital comprises four basic dimensions:

- Trust that exists among the members of a society and towards their political, economic and social leaders;
- Associativity, which is their ability to bring about all forms of concerted efforts and to build the social fabric;
- Civicism, which is the degree to which their members participate and take responsibility for that which is of collective interest; and
- The ethical values that predominate in a society. Numerous investigations[1] have demonstrated the existence of strong econometric correlations between social capital and long-term economic growth, social capital and accountability, state efficiency and the smooth running of the judiciary; as well as between social capital and the prevention of criminality. Among the most recent studies, the Harvard School of Public Health (1997) proved the correlation between social capital and hope in life.

When there is a considerable degree of social capital, it manifests itself in an active and articulate society, pressure for socially responsible public policies, social responsibility in business management, citizen participation, and, of course, volunteerism.

Volunteerism arises from positive ethical values; from the resonance of a basic ethical norm common to the deepest creeds in human beings. We must become responsible for one another, which implies generating associativity and developing civic maturity. The supporting pillars of voluntary organisations are the trust between its members and the trust placed in them by society.

Albert Hirschman (1984) pointed out that there is a great difference between social capital and other forms of capital such as infrastructure, finance, machines and natural resources. All of these are consumed by use. The more social capital is used, the more it grows, as he explains in the following statement:

> *Love or civi[ci]sm are not limited or fixed resources, as can be other factors in production ... (T)he availability of those resources grows rather than decreases with their use.*

Indeed, this is what happens with volunteerism. The more experience one has of volunteer work, the more commitment one wants to give to it. Volunteer experience is also a clear and almost irreplaceable strengthener of positive ethical values and civicism. In an astute piece of work, Thompson and Toro (2000) mention the

studies of Schverish and Hodgkinson (1995) that show how, in the United States, when children and young people participate in volunteer activities or have parents who do so, the possibilities of their becoming socially responsible adults increase considerably. A number of other investigations have come to similar conclusions (Aguirre International, 1999; Griffiths, 1998). The same results were found in Brazil as a consequence of the Programa Universidade Solidaria (Sampaio, Vargas and Mattoso, 2001). Investigations into the service-learning programmes set up in primary and secondary schools in Argentina demonstrate their positive effects. A pioneer of these initiatives, María Nieves Tapia, points out:

> *Service-learning, at primary, secondary and university levels, provides both the approach of 'learning by doing' and a way of dealing with community problems. In Argentina, service-learning has been integrated within the primary and secondary schools' curricula and has reached 13 per cent of schools in the country. The initial investigation suggests that service-learning can reduce the rate of year repetition and of leaving school before legal age, although it obviously acknowledges that other factors contribute to these effects (2003).*

Volunteerism is the trigger of virtuous circles in ethical values, civic education and associative behaviours. It is a clear builder of social capital. The growth of social capital will create, in its turn, a more favourable climate for the stimulation and development of volunteerism. This has been repeatedly observed in Latin America in numerous successful experiences of volunteer work.

Third thesis: It is a fallacy that volunteerism opposes the state

The widespread fallacy that volunteerism opposes the state is presented in different versions. For example, it is maintained that the state alone must take responsibility for the social welfare of the population, and active volunteerism within the population is thus a sign of a weak state. Another view is that volunteerism cannot by itself change the structural causes that generate poverty, and that its role is therefore merely palliative.

This line of reasoning is disproved by the fact that countries at the forefront of volunteer work internationally, for example, Sweden, Holland and Norway, have strong, stable states. Furthermore, even if volunteer work does not solve fundamental problems, it is clear that it saves lives daily. There is no way of claiming that each one of those lives is not of the utmost importance. The ancient wisdom of the Talmud – an open interpretation of the Bible thousands of years old – testifies to this, pointing out that: "Whoever saves a single life, it is as if he/she had saved the entire world".

In order to tackle the persistent poverty that characterises Latin America and 'kills' and 'infects' millions daily, the combined action of all social actors is needed. In a democratic society, the state is mainly responsible for guaranteeing all citizens their legitimate rights to nourishment, health, education, housing and work. That,

however, does not exempt other agencies from playing a part. Volunteerism, which is civil society in action, can complement and enrich social policies. Establishing strategic alliances between both parties and trying to include private sector companies and other actors is the method used by the world's best organised societies. Public policy can contribute with long-term projects, finance and institutional continuity. Volunteerism can complement these with its direct contact with the community, its organisational flexibility and its ability to reach any area of its territory rapidly. Mutual co-ordination is indispensable, and it is therefore necessary to overcome any prevailing culture of false opposition and mutual prejudice.

Fourth thesis: Volunteerism is driven by a powerful force: ethical commitment

Opportunities to develop volunteerism abound because its driving force is in the very nature of human beings. This force is the deep sense within people that active solidarity, transcendence and taking responsibility for others is more than an obligation; it is a privilege.

Thompson and Toro (2000) state that "political and religious action today are perhaps the most important driving forces for the development of social volunteerism in Latin America". Both involve a basic ethical commitment to others.

Surveys in Peru indicate that 47 per cent of the young people who do volunteer work see it as part of their religious beliefs (Portocarrero, Loveday and Millán, 2001). On the other hand, political motivation, in the noblest and widest sense of helping build a better society, is a powerful driving force for young people in the whole region.

In a region like Latin America, which has always been characterised by its abundance of ideals, the fire of volunteerism can be set alight on a huge scale because of the generally propitious atmosphere. It requires tapping into something that is inherent in human beings and that is destined to bring them multiple benefits, from personal development to better health.

Biblical wisdom points out that "Whoever helps someone else is actually helping himself". By helping others, the volunteer benefits himself. Following different paths, modern science has reached similar conclusions. Through research, Rojas Marcos (2001), head of New York City Health Services, found that those who do voluntary work are in a better state of general health than those who do not. The spiritual, psychological and affective satisfactions afforded by such activity make a strong contribution to physical wellbeing. Recent studies at the Herzog Memorial Hospital and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Brinn, 2005) found that "people who show prosocial behaviour are more successful in life. Volunteers have a more positive attitude towards life". They also found that volunteer behaviour produces dopamine in the brain – dopamine is a neurotransmitter that brings about a sensation of internal happiness. This sensation acts as an incentive to repeat the same kind of behaviour.

There must be a reason why oriental wisdom – coinciding with Biblical views – says: "The fragrance always remains in the hand that gives the rose".

Fifth thesis: A new form of volunteerism is growing, building citizenship and participation

The societies of the region have demanded a break with the traditional view of the role of the citizen, in order to move on and build a more comprehensive type of citizenship.

The 'traditional' citizen has only his political rights acknowledged. This is a narrow interpretation of citizenship. The real citizen, on the other hand, has economic, social, cultural and other kinds of rights. For example, in 1989, the United Nations General Assembly approved a resolution establishing the right of all persons to full participation in development. If this is not realised, then citizenship is merely symbolic, and in the context of the severe poverty of Latin America, does not even allow one to exercise one's political rights. Poor citizens are an almost non-existent voice in the great debates that determine the public agenda.

Volunteerism in Latin America has been on the front line in the struggle for a broadened type of citizenship. Numerous civil society organisations have been formed, which have made this one of their central tasks. What has also come strongly to the fore in volunteerism, is the need to replace the traditional model of relationships, based on providing help, with a restructured one in which volunteers and the assisted community build a relationship of equals, and in which a key objective is to strengthen the development of citizenship. As Thompson and Toro correctly put it, we are moving from 'traditional volunteerism to transforming volunteerism'.

In this respect, experiences in different contexts are very encouraging. An example is Villa El Salvador in Peru, which involves 350,000 poor people. Through their voluntary work, they have created a whole municipality, building streets, schools, health centres and road administration, all on a self-management basis, thereby dramatically improving their basic living conditions. At the same time, they have generated enormous self-esteem, both individually and collectively. They have become self-made, active and respected citizens.

Volunteerism in the Villa was crucial. The whole project would have been impossible without the huge number of hours worked on a voluntary basis. Villa El Salvador has won the 'Príncipe de Asturias' prize, the UNESCO prize, the United Nations 'Messenger of Peace City' prize and many others.

Volunteerism, organised this time by the state itself, was also at the base of a notable example of the management of a public budget by citizens – the participatory municipal budget of Porto Alegre. This was an initiative which was later replicated by 80 municipalities in Brazil and other Latin American cities. Broadening the notion of citizenship to include the performance of voluntary tasks was crucial to the achievement of excellence in the city of Rosario, Argentina. In 2005, the UN awarded

Rosario the title of 'Best Managed City' on the continent. The call by the town council for residents to participate drew an enthusiastic response and opened new possibilities for collective action. The joint work of the town council and a transformed citizenry resulted in substantial progress in education, health, development of small and medium industries, and other areas.

Sixth thesis: The achievements of volunteerism in Latin America have been 'in spite of ...'

In countries where the culture of volunteerism is highly developed, volunteerism is carefully nurtured within schools, constantly highlighted by the media, lived by the leadership, and supported through tax exemptions and government policies. It is also supported by legislation in all kinds of ways and is highly valued by the public. As a result, young people feel stimulated and motivated to participate in volunteer activities.

Very different conditions have tended to prevail in Latin America, as volunteerism is just beginning to emerge as public policy in some countries in this region. Legislation is very weak and its focus is generally on regulation rather than on the encouragement of personal initiative. The media, too, has failed to pay due attention to volunteerism. As a result, there have been few systematic attempts to educate the population about volunteerism. Since the public is usually immersed in the myths created by economic orthodoxy, volunteerism is generally considered to be a minor role-player, as was pointed out earlier.

Progress has, therefore, not been because of, but rather in spite of, these adverse factors. A great deal of progress has been made as a result of the strength of individuals and groups that are ethically committed. The support of external organisations that have prioritised their involvement in this field has been essential, such as that of the Kellogg Foundation, which has supported very innovative programmes. Above all, credit must go to the great potential for service and moral values of the Latin American people. The continent's most successful projects have been recognised the world over. An example is Faça Parte in Brazil, which is dedicated to promoting voluntary teaching in schools, and has achieved highly significant results. Another example is the regenerating experience of service-learning undertaken in primary and secondary schools in Argentina.

Seventh thesis: Volunteerism has not yet been fully articulated in Latin America

The social problems that create so much misery and poverty in such a potentially rich continent are also the cause of continual political destabilisation, the undermining of confidence, and the cause of much discouragement among young people. These problems have their roots in the serious inequalities of the region, and solving them

requires a collective strategy. As was mentioned earlier, it is the task of public policy to assume the main responsibilities in this regard, guaranteeing economic and social citizenship, as well as basic political participation.

However, all social actors must take responsibility, co-operate and co-ordinate their efforts with public policies. Latin American volunteerism, with its vigour, its creative ability and its idealism can make a significant contribution. In order to facilitate this process, it is necessary to implement public policies that support volunteerism, elevate its prestige, promote it, provide systematic education about it, and include it in the overall public agenda.

Initiatives of this sort can produce very important results for the region, not only because of the direct socio-economic contributions they can generate, but also because of the moral message conveyed by young people and adults who are motivated by the desire to help others through silent and low-profile activity, and the excitement generated when progress is made.

Is it utopian to believe in volunteerism? Not at all. This belief lies at the root of the ethical and spiritual convictions of Latin Americans. Aymaras distinguish between 'well-being', meaning the possession of material goods, and 'living well', which means feeling happy with yourself and valued by others because you make a difference. Increasingly, Latin Americans are seeking the Aymara ideal of living well, and volunteerism is a very good way of reaching it.

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Notes

[1] The author deals with this subject in detail in his book *Más ética, más desarrollo*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Temas. Fifth edition (2005).

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Volunteerism and Democracy:

A Latin American view

MARÍA NIEVES TAPIA

SUMMARY

This chapter sketches a few ideas about and reflections on the different patterns of volunteerism and how they impact on the construction and consolidation processes of democracy. It explores the extent to which the strengthening of civil society organisations and the participation in volunteerism activities and social enterprises contribute to stronger and more participatory and equitable democratic systems in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Even though these reflections focus on the Latin American experience, we believe this experience has several points in common with other emerging democracies (and even with the oldest democracies), and is therefore of interest beyond regional boundaries.

The first section offers a brief historical outline, which contextualises the emergence of terms like popular organisations and movements, volunteerism, intermediate

associations, NGOs, the third sector, and others. It also explores the implications of definitions 'by negation'; the concepts of NGOs and non-profit organisations are compared, as well as the most inclusive and most restrictive definitions of civil society.

The second part analyses the emergence of civil society in the context of the democratisation processes that began in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1980s, particularly in relation to the crisis of confidence in the formal political institutions, and the crisis of representation.

In the third and last section, we take as a starting point a critical analysis of civil society organisations' contribution to weak states, and highlight the benefits that volunteerism and civic service initiatives can bring to the consolidation of democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Introduction

In this chapter, we present some ideas about and reflections on the different patterns of volunteerism and their impact on the construction and consolidation processes of democracy. We also analyse the extent to which the strengthening of civic organisations and participation in volunteer activities and social projects contribute to the development of more participatory and equitable democratic systems in Latin America and the Caribbean.[1]

Even though these reflections focus on the Latin American experience, we believe that this experience has enough in common with other 'emerging democracies', and even with situations characteristic of the oldest democratic states, to be of interest beyond regional boundaries.

The first section provides a brief historical outline which contextualises terms such as 'popular organisations and movements', 'volunteerism', 'intermediate associations', NGOs, the 'third sector' and others. We also examine the implications of defining organisations in negative terms, such as 'non'-governmental organisations and 'non'-profit organisations, alongside more inclusive as well as restrictive definitions of civil society.

In the second section, we look at the emergence of civil society in the context of the democratisation processes that began in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1980s, particularly in relation to the crisis of confidence in the formal political institutions, and the crisis of representation.

In the third and last section, we take as a starting point a critical analysis of the contribution of civil organisations in the context of weak states, and point out some areas for investigation with regard to the benefits that the multiplicity of initiatives in volunteerism and civic service can bring to the consolidation of democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Volunteerism, popular movements, NGOs, the third sector and civil organisations: the 'names of the rose' and a debate still open

What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.
William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet

Expressions that were unknown 50 years ago, such as 'third sector' or 'social capital', as well as abbreviations such as NGO and CSO, are today widely known in Latin America and in the rest of the world. In the past few decades, terms to designate very similar activities and types of organisations have multiplied. These include 'volunteerism', 'non-governmental organisations', 'community organisations', 'civil organisations', 'active citizenship spheres', 'community-based organisations', 'popular movements', and so on (Giorgetti, 2001).

Every one of these terms emerged within complex historical contexts, and their implications are so diverse that the idea of the 'name of the rose' is highly applicable in this field. As the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) points out:

> *Volunteering means different things to different people. A recent study (Cnaan et al., 1998) found widespread differences between countries in public perceptions of what constitutes a voluntary activity. In some countries, giving blood was seen as volunteering, in others, being involved in a political party or trade union was counted. For some people the defining characteristic of volunteering was the absence of financial reward; for others, lack of coercion was the main identifier. Volunteering takes on different forms and meanings in different settings. It is strongly influenced by the history, politics, religion and culture of a region. What may be seen as volunteering in one country may be dismissed as low paid or labour-intensive work (or even forced labour) in another. And yet, despite the wide variety of understandings, it is possible to identify some core characteristics of what constitutes a voluntary activity.*[2]

Without expecting to resolve the debates surrounding terminology and definitions, I would like to point out some of the implications of these debates in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Volunteerism and *polis*: a historical outlook

Performing a task in service of one's own community, or of people and groups in need, is without a doubt one of the most basic expressions of the social dimension of human life.

Among all ancient peoples, tribes and clans generated strong networks for mutual support. Social assistance developed thousands of years ago around Buddhist temples in Asia, as well as around the most ancient synagogues and mosques. In the first century, the 'Supper of the Lord' for widows and orphans in the early Christian community of Jerusalem was organised by 'volunteers' and supported by 'donors' who offered their goods to the Apostles (Acts 4:32-34, 6:1-8). The *ayllu* of the Aymara people, like other forms of social organisation typical of the original Andean peoples, are at the root of the Latin American associative culture.

Even 'politics' – meaning contributions to the public life in the *polis* – was born in ancient Greece as an activity that was voluntary and without material reward: it was only remunerated occasionally, so that the poorest citizens could abandon their fields in order to participate in the assemblies at the *agora* (Forrest, 1966).

Throughout history, different ways of contributing voluntarily towards the common good have been linked with political life in various forms. Probably one of the earliest examples of the link between social charity and political activity was the free distribution of wheat provided by patrician Roman families for their 'clients'; an activity that gave rise to the term 'clientelism', which is regrettably so familiar in the Latin American political vocabulary.

In the early 19th century, at the inception of most of the modern American states, the boundaries between social and political organisations were extremely fine; the patriotic lodges and clubs, the religious associations, and the *tertulias* organised by the patrician women of colonial society, were undoubtedly civil groups. However, they were also politically active, and made decisive contributions to the achievement of independence for their various nations.

Revolutionary organisations would take it upon themselves to represent 'the people' against the structures of the European colonial government, not only on the basis of Enlightenment ideas, which were known almost exclusively among the educated elite, but also because of a long tradition rooted in the communal lives of the original American peoples. Such practices also refer back to the *Cabildos*, the Spanish municipal institution. In America, this served as the cradle of national independence.

From 1810, many of the early Latin American politicians were volunteers who invested their fortunes and, in some cases, paid with their lives for having taken part in local assemblies of the *Cabildos* in Caracas, Santiago de Chile, Cochabamba and many other places. Latin American armies often originated through the recruitment of volunteers, usually badly paid and with little previous training, following the North American and French models of citizen armies. In other cases it was the *montoneras* and *puebladas*, made up of and led by the most destitute rural people, such as the Venezuelan *laneros*, the *gauchos* from Rio de la Plata or the Chilean *rotos*, who were the determining factor in the wars of independence and the subsequent struggles for the organisation of the states. The dynamics of popular movements, closely bound to strong local leaders (*caudillos*), is deeply rooted in the political and social Latin American culture, and has persisted in different forms (Halperin Donghi, 1977).

The second half of the 19th century witnessed the proliferation of different forms of representative government. Party politics gradually became established as the formal channel for participation in the process of electing representatives. The development of state machineries gradually separated the institutional culture from that of political parties, and public bodies from private organisations. Social policies became distanced from the traditional activities of the church in Latin America, as well as from secular charities, generating its own volunteerism network: parents' associations around schools, hospital volunteerism, volunteer firemen and other forms of volunteerism in public organisations.

In the 20th century, models of both strongly authoritarian states and welfare states spread in Latin America. They could operate simultaneously or alternatively in the same country. In this type of political context, it was common to call the organisations linked to volunteer activities 'intermediate associations', stressing their middle-of-the-road nature, which allowed them to mediate between individuals and state structures.

Volunteerism gradually became identified with altruistic activities performed by groups or individuals, and aimed at assisting populations in circumstances of poverty or social vulnerability. Falcón calls the associations devoted to this kind of task 'formal volunteerism', to differentiate them from the 'new social movements' which were emerging in the course of the century – suffragism, feminism, pacifism, ecological

and human rights movements, and others. He refers to all these as 'marginalisation social volunteerism' (OIJ, 2002).

During most of the 20th century, the policies of welfare states and those of the socialist systems contributed to the establishment of very clear boundaries between social policies and volunteerism. The market logic, on the other hand, gradually confined activities marked by gratuity to the area of 'free time' (García Delgado, 2000).

It is not surprising that, during most of the century, volunteer organisations were defined with negatives as *non*-governmental organisations (NGOs), or as *non*-profit organisations.

The 'democratising cycle' of the 1980s and the pre-eminence of neo-liberal policies in the 1990s, as well as the influence of international organisations, contributed to spreading the concept of 'the third sector' and civil society organisations (CSOs) in Latin America. These have gradually replaced previous formulations.

In the two following sections, we will consider in some detail the points in common and the conceptual differences between definitions by negation and various other definitions of civil society.

Definitions by negation: NGOs and non-profit organisations

As we have pointed out, it became common practice in the second half of the 20th century to define volunteer organisations by negation or exclusion (*non*-governmental organisations, *non*-profit organisations), thus emphasising their identity as marginal, subsidiary or complementary to the state and the market.

In this respect, the most recent categorisation, 'third sector organisations', in some way reiterates and groups together both definitions by negation. It does this by establishing that the 'third sector' includes all activities which are not managed by either the state or the market.

Because of the breadth of this type of definition, examples are extremely imprecise and have given rise to different usages and interpretations. The most obvious example is that, although political parties are not governmental organisations, they are not considered to be NGOs either, probably because their role is directly linked to the state administration. It is even more difficult to categorise trade unions according to the three sectors' scheme. With few exceptions, unions are not part of state organisations either, although they can be closely related to political parties or even be part of such an organisation,[3] which in many cases determines their exclusion from the NGO category. It could also be argued that workers and their organisations are a fundamental element of the market, and therefore shouldn't be considered as belonging to the 'third sector'. However, some definitions do include them.

Definitions by negation also imply, at the practical level, a certain simplification of grey areas, and of the necessary intersections of the three 'sectors'. In real life, the boundaries between 'market' and the 'third sector' are not always clear, and they give rise to a number of questions, such as: Is a private organisation financed mainly by the state still 'non-governmental'? Can an organisation fall within 'volunteerism' when most of its leaders and members receive monetary compensation or salaries?

In fact, there are numerous grey areas between the three 'sectors': many 'non-profit' organisations carry out economic activities in order to support themselves. They also generate interactions with their employees, suppliers and clients, which are governed by the laws of the market. It is not unusual for foundations associated with firms to operate according to corporate marketing strategies, which are not always in accordance with social needs.

On the other hand, quite a few 'non-governmental' organisations in Latin America are closely linked to party political and government structures.[4] In fact, there is sometimes very little to choose between the legitimate and desirable co-ordination between civil society and state, and dependence on state policies and outright clientelism.

In the Anglo-Saxon world, these grey areas have given rise to acronyms which identify the NGOs situated in the transition spaces between sectors: GRINGO (Government Run/Initiated Organisation) and BONGO (Business Organised Non-Governmental Organisation) (Nun-Aboy Carlés, 2002). These acronyms are rarely used in Latin America, where instead the acronym ONG has been almost universally replaced by OSC – *organizacione de la sociedad civil* (civil society organisation).

Civil society: comprehensive and restrictive definitions, and pending debates

Even though in the Anglo-Saxon world the designations NGO and non-profit are still current, over the past few years in Latin America such organisations prefer to define themselves by affirmation, as civil society organisations (CSOs).

The term 'civil society' is frequently used as a synonym for 'non-governmental/non-profit/third sector' organisations. This is the case of the definition elaborated by the Centre for Democracy and Civil Society (CDACS) of Georgetown University. It adds more specific elements to the traditional 'definition by negation', including those related to cultures, values and social norms:

> *Civil society encompasses those parts of society that are neither government nor business, including associations, non-governmental organisations, non-profit organisations, advocacy groups, citizen groups, social movements, as well as the cultures, norms and social values that enable these social phenomena.*[5]

In the extensive literature on this theme that has developed over the past few years, we could say that two kinds of definitions of civil society can be found, which are almost contradictory. We will describe them as 'comprehensive' and 'restrictive'. In the first case, all kinds of organisations that have no direct links to the state or the market are considered 'of civil society'. In the second case, the term is used in a more restricted sense, and only those social organisations that comply with specific requirements are considered CSOs.

Let us consider the example of a comprehensive definition of civil society, supported by the United Nations:

It is the associative relationship that citizens (apart from their families, friends and places of work) enter into voluntarily in order to promote their interests, ideas, ideals and ideologies. It does not include the associative activity for profit (the private sector) or to govern (the state or public sector). Included among the civil society members in the United Nations are:

- **Popular organisations:** officially established organisations that are mainly (though not always) made up of affiliated members, and represent the interests of specific population groups. Among the most important ones in the United Nations system, it is worth mentioning the organisations that represent women, children or young people, farmers, the jobless, indigenous peoples, the elderly and the disabled.

- **Professional organisations:** organisations of affiliated members, which represent the interests of people with the same profession or source of employment. The most important ones within the United Nations system include unions and their main international federations; professional associations representing health, education and law workers, among other professional areas; the science and technology community; farmers' associations/unions; and producers' co-operatives (although some of them are similar to business associations and fit better in the private sector).

- **Confessional organisations:** religious organisations, generally made up of affiliated members who dedicate themselves to worship or proselytism, or are subservient to such causes. The most important ones within the United Nations system are the international confessional associations, the inter-confessional organisations and the development organisations linked to particular persuasions.

- **Academic world:** communities of specialists, researchers, intellectuals and other academicians. Many of them (particularly study groups and specialised university centres) are interested in concrete United Nations activities; some limit themselves to their study, but others have an ideological or promotion vocation and try to have an influence on them, especially study groups that can receive funds from business corporations or other interested parties.

- **Welfare non-governmental organisations:** organisations that aim at serving the public or the world in general through the provision of specific services or the protection of their interests. They are, in the main, organisations of affiliated members who share the same interests; they are usually considered as organisations of a philanthropic or public service nature, since the community that benefits from their programmes far exceeds the limits of their members. Among other examples, we should mention the organisations dedicated to the environment, development, human rights, reproductive rights, disarmament and the fight against corruption; the volunteer non-governmental organisations; the consumer associations and co-operatives, etc. (the main international non-governmental organisations working for development comprise the only category that stands out as not having generally a base of affiliated members); and international networks of similar non-governmental organisations.

- **Social movements and activist networks:** popular associations with little structure, made up of persons who share common settings or experiences and decide to collaborate with each other to correct specific inequities. Among other examples, it is worth mentioning the landless farmers' movement, the anti-globalisation movement, the movement for the 'Tobin tax', the feminist movement, etc. In this category, a partial coincidence can be observed with the popular organisations and the non-governmental organisations.[6]

As can be seen, the UN defines civil society organisations more by enumeration than by conceptual criteria. This exhaustive enumeration has the advantage of getting around some of the imprecisions of definitions by negation, by explicitly including unions, religious organisations, popular organisations, social movements and welfare non-governmental organisations.

In short, this and other comprehensive definitions underline the common nature of volunteerism in the extremely varied range of organisations it includes under the CSO designation, and leave a wide grey area open between non-governmental associations and political participation.

However, including in the same analysis charitable women and anti-global young people, highly structured organisations and community-based groups, the sphere that is delimited is of challenging complexity. In fact, the analytic categories used to study 'volunteer welfare organisations' cannot always be applied to the field of 'social movements' and 'popular organisations'. These two designations refer, in the Latin American case, to social conglomerations, to forms of impact on society and the state, and to institutional cultures which are very different – and even opposite – to those of the classic NGOs.

In contrast, the restrictive CSO definitions mark out a relatively homogeneous field, according to clearly drawn criteria.

For example, in 2000, an investigation programme of GADIS, financed by PNUD and BID, defined civil society organisations according to nine fundamental characteristics (PNUD-BID, 2000, pp. 28-29). The first five ('private law entities', 'non-governmental', 'non-profit', 'of voluntary commitment', 'pursuing socially useful and legally lawful aims') have undoubtedly much in common with most of the definitions in use today. The other four establish restrictive criteria that explicitly exclude several kinds of organisations included in the more comprehensive definitions. According to these criteria, CSO organisations are:

- Non-compulsory regarding the payment of dues: this criterion would exclude unions with obligatory affiliation, and some neighbourhood and district associations, which in the more comprehensive definition could be considered as CSOs.

- Non-partisan, ideologically independent from political parties: this criterion excludes most of – if not all – Latin American 'popular organisations'. To mention a few examples, the indigenist movement, which is the operative basis of Bolivia's President Evo Morales, the Sin Tierra (landless) movement, supporting Brazil's President Lula, or the *piqueteros* ('picketers') of Argentina, can hardly be considered independent.

- Self-governed (independent and autonomous, governed by its members or board of directors, in accordance with its statutes, without mingling with other organisations, including the churches, political parties or the government): following this criterion, this excludes the vast array of organisations that are directly or indirectly linked to the Catholic Church or other Christian churches. In Latin America, this field includes thousands of base organisations of women and young people, and a vast spectrum of support organisations in the social field. Applying this definition in a wide sense, all organisations that have emerged from the Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and other religious denominations would remain excluded from civil society.

Obviously, this type of restrictive definition includes in the CSO category only those associations which are more formalised, and among them those that are defined as apolitical, non-religious, and 'independent and autonomous'. In some way, it reduces the field of civil society to organisations that differentiate themselves more strictly from the political terrain, even if it does not specify the need for the same autonomy with reference to the market.

Although these definitions can be very useful when seeking to clearly mark out the area of an enquiry, they are more complex when considered from the viewpoint of the organisations' everyday reality. In Latin America, it would be difficult to find CSO networks not including organisations of religious origin, as it would also require great effort to distinguish, on the ground, 'private law' organisations having completed the complicated procedures required to obtain legal status, from those that operate informally, sometimes for decades. On the other hand, in real life, those organisations that profess the greatest independence in their statutes often have more or less explicit links with ideological currents, party political or business spheres, which makes it difficult to establish boundaries as strictly as one might expect.

In practice, the concept of civil society organisations still leaves many open questions:

> *To what extent must the CSO possess a formalised institutional structure or not in order to be considered as such? If they must possess it, where can the 'new social movements', which do not have it, be placed? Or the neighbourhood associations, or the protest groups, or the gangs which are so characteristic of the periphery areas? We are facing here the not-less arduous issue of the internal limits of civil society's sphere. Which cartographic code is it convenient to use in our map to give similar or different colours to private schools, hospitals, consumer protection committees, foundations, religious communities, district clubs, corporative centres of different sorts, co-operatives, or homeless movements?* **(Nun-Aboy Carlés, 2002, p. 6)**

Looking at the historical terms analysed in previous sections, we could say that terminologies originating from different historical and ideological contexts co-exist today. While comprehensive definitions of civil society encompass all those formulations, restrictive definitions can be associated with the most recent

developments – especially those of the 1990s – and with the emergence of civil organisations that have fewer ties to politics than the new social movements and the popular organisations.

Academic thinking on this subject is probably still too recent, and positions are too widely differentiated to be able to find consensus. Meanwhile, subjective perceptions and the universes of meaning established by different institutional cultures will continue to generate a very diverse and complex panorama, in which each organisation and analyst will choose to place themselves at specific points on a map that is still being drawn.

Is civil society 'the people'? The emergence of civil society in the democratisation processes

The emergence of civil society in Latin America

Both inclusive and restrictive definitions run the risk of ignoring the fact that, as Warren indicates, in reality "the areas of civil society and of associations are not co-extensive" (Warren, 2001, p.58). In other words, the area of civil society is actually wider than that of the CSOs, since it would include the vast field of individual volunteer initiatives, the spontaneous and less formalised collective actions, and also the complex field of inter-institutional co-ordination between the CSOs and the organisations linked to political interests, as well as to the institutions representing the state.

The most comprehensive concept of civil society tends to emphasise the idea of society's participation, bringing together some of the most central conceptual debates of political science, as Arroyo puts it:

> *Although the concept of civil society is difficult to delimit and define with absolute certainty, it has been present in the nucleus of political theory development when it has been a matter of differentiating the public sphere from the private sphere, and tensions between state and society. In any case, the concept has evolved since John Locke, who included in it the state; passing through Adam Smith, who basically associated it to the market, considering Hegel's contributions, who conceived of it as the social sphere situated between the family and the state; and coming up to Marx, who understood that "civil society includes every material exchange between individuals, when the productive forces have reached a specific development stage". Even for Antonio Gramsci, two realities existed that encompassed economic relations, political society and civil society, the latter being constituted by the institutions that bring individuals together and aim at producing a consensus: the school, the mass media, the religious institutions, etc. That is, civil society was positioned between the prince and the merchant, between the state and the market.* **(Arroyo, 2002, p.2)**

García Delgado states that, from a historical viewpoint, the emergence of the idea of civil society:

> *... comes as a replacement for the strength that the ideas of people and class had in the previous model, as well as that of historical subject and the primacy of state principle ... we have been witnessing, in recent years – in parallel with the advancement of the market – the recognition of civil society, not as a people in the previous organic sense, but [rather] as a diversity of actors and as a complex and plural reality.* **(García Delgado, 2000, p.226-27)**

Placing the discussion on civil society in its historical context prompts the realisation that the emergence of the prominence of civil society in Latin America – as in other parts of the world – has been closely related to the collapse or reformulation of the welfare state, to the establishment of neo-liberal models of the minimum state, to situations of extreme state weakness in the face of the proliferation of social demands, or to extreme socio-economic crisis, such as that in Latin America in recent years (García Delgado, 2000; Nun-Aboy Carlés, 2002). There are several explanations for the renewed interest in civil society:

> *The first one is linked to the generalised democratic establishment in the last 20 years, with the so-called 'third wave' of democratisation, which is done in civil society's name and spreads throughout the world (Huntington, 1994). The democratisation processes carried out in Latin America in the 1980s operated in the name of civil society and movements such as human rights, which contributed to the constitution of a new solidarity area in the face of state terrorism.*
>
> *The second one refers us to an interest which is stressed by the crisis of socialism in state-controlled societies, and by the fact that in the West, in more pluralist and complex societies, the new social movements also operate in the name of civil society.*
>
> *The third one [has to do with] the constitution of a new civil society within the process of growing complexity in post-industrial societies (Touraine, 1993) ... In the framework of the crisis of the welfare state, but showing at the same time that the self-regulated market is unable to respond to it with its 'invisible hand', the emergence of civil society is distinct from the state and from the market, trying to respond to the said crisis.* **(Scannone, 1998)**
>
> *The fourth one has to do with the need to reinforce civil society ... driven by international organisations ... in which a change of emphasis (towards) 'institution building' can be perceived ... In the second-generation state reform, international organisations have veered from an orthodox neo-liberal perspective towards a neo-institutional one in which importance is given to justice reform, health, the promotion of 'social capital', as well as a decline in corruption, as a condition for the good performance of the markets.*
> **(García Delgado, 2000, p.224)**

We would like to emphasise that the emergence of civil society in the present Latin American context has to do with the role performed by the social organisations within the context of dictatorships and authoritarian governments that destroyed the social and political networks through the systematic repression of political parties and unions, and that drastically reduced freedom of speech and assembly.

Violence on the part of the state is a constant theme in Latin American history, as is complicity between civil and military leaders in supporting authoritarian regimes and governments elected by fraudulent means. When the republican representation channels were closed down or became non-functional, Latin American society generated alternative forms of participation besides an ancestral anomy and distrust of political power. From the agrarian leagues of Stroessner's Paraguay to the organisations in defence of human rights during the 1970s dictatorships in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, civil organisations were, in many instances, one of the few – and most dangerous – areas for political and social expression. It is curious that, precisely because of their political connections, many of those organisations cannot be included by the definitions of civil society organisation in a strict sense.

One last factor which, we believe, has a bearing on the emergence of civil society is the universal spread of new communication and information technologies. Global communication means that, in spite of the limitations imposed on them by market rules and the policies of their countries of origin, these technologies have played a role in sensitising the global public. Numerous organisations struggling for human rights and against poverty in the southern hemisphere have received support – often crucial – from the North. This has not only been financial, but has also increased their visibility and the possibility of their influencing policies.

In the same way, information and communication technologies have opened up new possibilities, impossible to predict, for social organisations to have an impact. The recent *revolución de los pingüinos* (penguin revolution) by Chilean high school students, showed the extent to which a generation traditionally accused of being apathetic is capable of organising itself and getting involved in a massive initiative without counting on political structures or financial resources. In this instance, many thousands of adolescents generated a powerful educational reform movement, relying only on their blogs, e-mail and text messages.[7] La Red Solidaria (The Solidarity Net), one of the best-known Argentinean civil society organisations, is able to function without physical premises as it operates on the basis of an internet site and a volunteer network linked up via telephones and cellphones.

This complexity helps to explain the almost unanimous current of opinion in favour of civil society that can be found today throughout the length and breadth of the Latin American political spectrum, although with different arguments and preferences. Businessmen and bankers consider some CSOs as bulwarks of transparency against state corruption, while militants of progressivism identify others as an expression of 'popular mobilisation'. Practically all point to the strengthening of civil society in Latin America as a positive outcome.

Disenchantment after euphoria: trust in democracy, distrust of politics

It is not by chance that this unanimous focus on the strengths of civil society arises within the context of disenchantment with the results of democracy, the loss of prestige of political parties, and the distrust of state institutions, which is common today in Latin America and in other parts of the world.

> *... in the same way as 'popular' became gradually rather incomprehensible because of the multiplication of portrayals, civil society is used today to legitimise the most diverse expressions of groups, non-governmental organisations, private companies and even individuals. Despite the varied interests and strategies that inspire these sectors, all of them agree on blaming the state for social misfortunes, and assume that the situation would improve if it relinquished initiatives and power to civil society.* ***(Canclini, 1994, cit. in García Delgado, 2000, p. 225)***

The great expectations awakened in Latin America by the democratic cycle of the 1980s gave way to equally high levels of disappointment. Striking similarities between the Latin American process and other processes of democratisation in Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia, are highlighted by the words of the former president of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel:

> *All revolutions turn from euphoria to disillusion. In a revolutionary atmosphere of solidarity and self-sacrifice, people tend to think that, when their victory is complete, paradise on Earth is inevitable. Of course, paradise never comes and – naturally – disappointment follows.*[8]

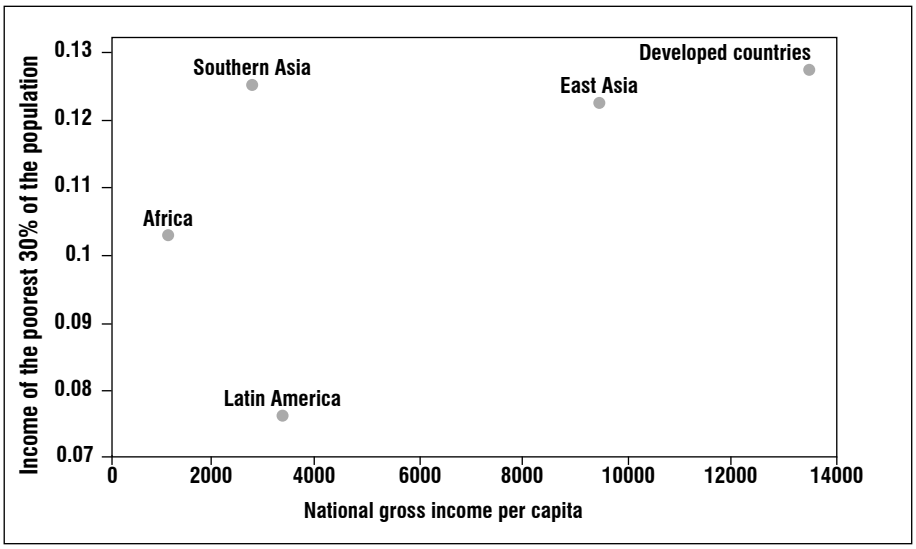
Latin American democracies, like other recent democracies, have come a long way in the last 20 years, but they have not yet been able to guarantee levels of social equity to justify, in the least, the expectations aroused after the fall of authoritarian governments.

On the contrary, after the reforms of neo-liberal stamp implemented during the 1990s, most of the countries in the region have seen the gap between the richest and the poorest becoming wider.

> *... What we have seen, since the Washington Consensus and the structural reforms, was rather 'the illusion of development'. Where we thought that the GDP driven by the self-regulated market was going to 'spill over' and integrate the poor, we came to realise in the end that there could be high growth rates that would, however, keep a negative relation to employment and income concentration. This is how, by the middle of the 1990s, we had annual growth rates of 6 per cent, and unemployment rates of 18 per cent.*
> **(García Delgado, 2005, p. 85)**

It is commonplace to declare that Latin America is not the poorest region on the planet, but it is the most unequal one.[9]

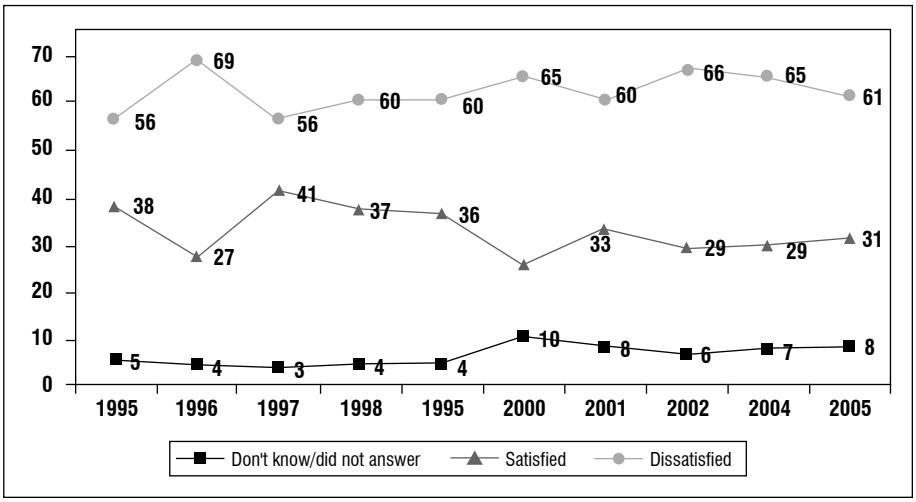
Figure 1 Latin America, the most inequitable continent: income of the poorest 30 per cent in different regions of the world (total income percentage)[10]



During the past five years, waves of discontent and political impatience have manifested themselves in social protest and street demonstrations, and have either weakened the elected leaders in Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Venezuela and Argentina, or forced them to resign.

In 1996, 69 per cent of the population expressed dissatisfaction with the results of democracy. In 2005, only 31 per cent considered themselves 'somewhat satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the fruits of democracy, as can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Satisfaction with democracy in Latin America, 1995-2005[11]



The slogan '(politicians) all go away' that unified the massive Argentine mobilisations that toppled President De La Rua in 2001, was simply an expression, somewhat extreme, of the general attitude in the region. In 2002, Uruguay, where only one fourth of the population professed to trust political parties, was the Latin American country with the highest confidence indicators, while Bolivia, Brazil and Ecuador, with 6 per cent each, were the countries with the lowest levels of confidence in their leaders (CIMA-Gallup, 2002).

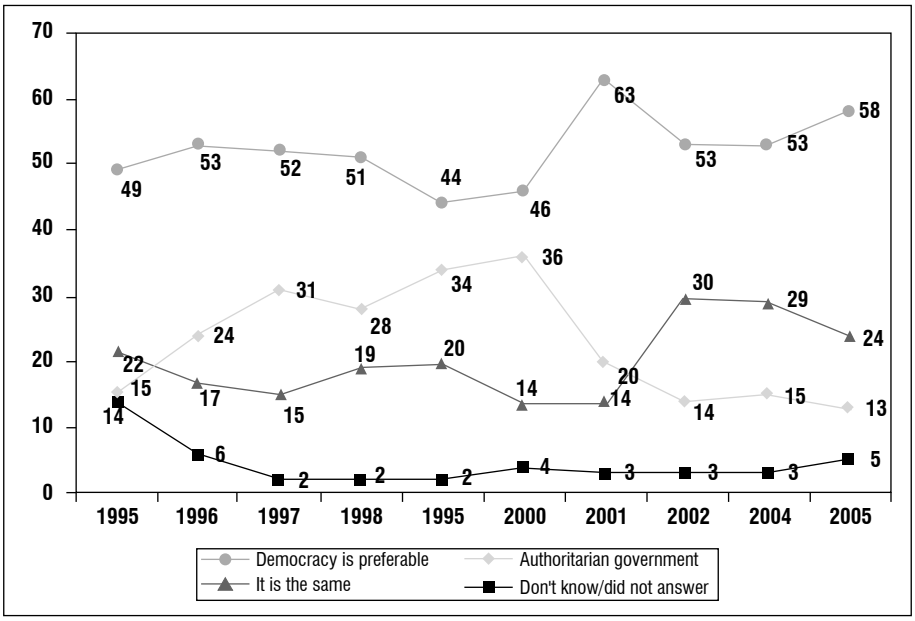
These high levels of distrust explain the proliferation of candidates at all points of the political spectrum coming from 'outside' traditional politics; from the former Mexican head of state and businessman, Vicente Fox, and the present Bolivian president and indigenous leader, Evo Morales, to the former goalkeeper of Paraguay's football team, and possible presidential candidate, José Luis Chilavert.[12]

It is not only party politics that generates distrust: organisations linked to the market are also going through a crisis of credibility in the region. In Mexico, a recent survey shows that businessmen, along with parliamentarians, the police, unions and political parties, share the lowest positions with regard to citizen confidence – several points below the rate of approval obtained by universities and the Catholic Church.[13] In Chile, employers' organisations obtain the same level of confidence as unions (22 per cent), far behind the 61 per cent obtained by radio, and the 57 per cent of the Catholic Church.[14] Only 18 per cent of Ecuadorians and about 8 per cent of Argentineans trust banks (GALLUP-CIMA, 2002)).[15] The reasons for these trends are obvious to those who have followed the recent history of both countries.

Distrust of politicians and business does not necessarily mean a lack of commitment to the principle of democracy. In 2005, 70 per cent of Latin American

citizens agreed with Churchill that "democracy may have its problems, but it is better than any other form of government" (Latinbarómetro, 1995). As the following graph shows, even if a minority supports authoritarian systems and almost one-quarter of the population thinks that any system is the same, almost 60 per cent of Latin Americans declare that they prefer a democratic system.

Figure 3 Agreement with the democratic system in Latin America, 1995-2005[16]



Unlike governments and businesses, civic organisations are perceived to be taking care of the areas left vacant by the state, and providing opportunities for marginalised groups to express their concerns and have their interests promoted. In some cases, they also contribute to overcoming the institutional crisis, as in the case of the various instances of *Mesas de diálogo* (dialogue tables) that took place in the past few years.[17]

The present Latin American context could, therefore, be described as the sum of disenchanted citizens and their representatives, a recent and still fragile confidence in the democratic system, high levels of dissatisfaction with its outcomes so far, as well as social demands and initiatives that are analysed through the organisations of an emerging civil society, which arouses renewed interest and high levels of confidence.[18]

Is this situation good news for the progress of democracy? For some, the answer is a categorical 'Yes'. For others, that optimism still needs to be justified.

Civil society, participation in solidarity and the strengthening of participatory democracies

Between the glorification and the scrutiny of CSOs

The connection between the emergence of civil society and the strengthening of participatory democracies in Latin America is a topic that has brought about numerous reflections and opinions in recent years (FOCAL, 2006; Del Piero, 1998; Grzybowski, 2002; PNUD, 2004; Strasser, 2002). However, there is still very little systematic research in this field, and the dynamism of national contexts renders obsolete even the sharpest analysis and the most precise statistics.

In recent years, international opinions have multiplied, emphasising the positive role that civil society could play in strengthening democracy:

> *... civil society associations appear to be the authentic agents of democracy in contemporary world (Michael Sandel); or as the nuclei of community identities and values (Amitai Etzioni); or as generator of confidence, of norms, and networks that constitute the 'social capital' indispensable for a democratic and efficient modernisation (Robert Putnam); or as strategic meeting points that stimulate critical reflection of their members on their position in the national and international power structures (Tessa Morris-Suzuki).* **(Nun-Aboy Carlés, 2002, p.6)**

Some authors are in no doubt that the strengthening of civil society will lead to a spontaneous or inevitable democratisation process:

> *[CSOs are] the reflection of a growing and steadily more undeniable recognition of fundamental rights that will end up spreading to all citizens.* **(Hirshman, 1985, in PNUD-Bid, 2000, p.26)**

Others emphasise the complementary role that civil society plays in respect of formal institutions and traditional actors in politics, and the need for the latter to regain 'its central contents':

> *Citizens, and civil society organisations perform a central role in democratic construction, in government administration control, in articulating demands and intensifying pluralism, which every democracy promotes and needs. They are relevant actors of citizens' democracy. Their role is complementary to that of democracy's traditional political actors. Notwithstanding the difficulties and obstacles that the acceptance of civil society as an ambit of participation and strengthening of democracy usually entails, its importance in the democratisation of Latin America must be clearly recognised. In this respect, politics must not only regain its central contents so that the move to citizens' democracy may be made viable, but it must also consider carefully its unfinished task, taking on the demands of a society that [has] organised itself to demand, control and make propositions.*

> *In Latin America, the spaces taken over by civil society have proven crucial in opening political paths that appeared to be closed and out of bounds for democratic construction. In this respect, civil society broadens the public sphere through participation, the articulation of identities and demands, and citizen organisation.* **(PNUD, 2004, pp.185-186)**

However, some authors question these optimistic views — what Nun and Aboy Carlés call the 'glorification of civil society'— and maintain that there would be:

> *... a growing consensus in literature concerning the fact that there is no obvious reason a priori to establish a direct relation between the associations and democracy (see Rosenblum, 1998:26; Gutman, 1998:18; Tamir, 1998: 215; Cohen, 1999:221; Ehrenberg, 1999:241; Warren, 2001:10; etc.) (...) Lash and Urry, for example, warn that civil society is a sphere in which we can find both progressive movements and reactionary neo-tribalisms. In a similar way, John Ehrenberg (1998:241) states: "In itself, civil society may serve the cause of freedom as well as reinforce inequalities". What does it depend on? Which is the wheat and which the straw? Can some keys be set to enable the separation?"* **(Nun-Aboy Carlés, 2002, p. 7)**

In the same sense, Bombarolo questions whether it is possible to demonstrate greater or different altruism among people who participate in the 'third sector' organisations than those who participate in the other two:

> *... there is nothing to indicate that organisations usually included in the so-called third sector possess morals or ethics notably different from that of the other supposed sectors (state and market). Neither the organisations nor their members are necessarily more supportive, kind, altruistic, efficient, effective, professional, agile, respectful, democratic, fair ... or any of the contrary, than the state or commercial organisations and officials/employees.* **(Bombarolo, 2001)**

Perhaps these statements appear challenging – and even shocking – to those used to regarding the boundaries between civil society and political class as the same ones that separate solidarity from corruption or apathy from ambition.

A realistic view would prompt the acknowledgement that there are good intentions and low ambitions in social organisations as well as in public bodies, that 'not all that shines is gold', and that in civil society as well as in the state, there are those who seek the common good and those who pursue particular interests. Many years of journeying both sides of the border enable the author of this article to observe that in both the humble premises of base organisations and the most important government offices, one meets those who are more interested in ordering people about and appearing important than serving; as well as those who sacrifice their health, and even their lives, for the good of others.

Beyond the goodness or corruption of people who pass through social organisations and public bodies, it is necessary to stress that civil organisations – by

definition – are born out of specific interests and demands, and that the role of the state is to channel those particular demands to serve the common good.

Does civil society do politics? Formal citizenship and participatory democracies in Latin America

The variety and complexity in the field of CSOs requires the avoidance of generalisations when analysing their role in strengthening democratic systems or not, keeping in mind, in Strasser's words, that:

> *... praising NGOs, as naturally virtuous, and criticising political parties, as inevitably corrupt, impedes a constructive vision of both.* [19]

The loss of prestige of party politics and the representation crisis referred to earlier have led many citizens, and also many social organisations, to define politics – as does Mafalda, the famous child in Quino's comic strips – as 'the bad word with a p'.[20]

Nevertheless, this instinctive rejection of party politics should not make us forget that politics, in the restricted sense of party affiliation, official duties and government administration, does not define the domain of politics exhaustively. It does not take into account the broad sense in which it includes the quest for the common good and the construction of the *polis*. When Aristotle maintained that the human being is a 'political animal' (literally 'made to live in the *polis*'), he was emphasising the fact that participation in matters that are beyond the family and immediate social sphere are essential aspects of human life.

From this perspective, both ordinary people and civil organisations 'do politics', be it actively or by omission. Those who take part in a march and those who ignore it do politics, as do those who collaborate with the government and those who keep away from it. Putting a coin in a collection, setting up a community dining room, organising a food bank or demanding the granting of subsidies are other forms of 'political positioning', as they imply different ways of dealing with reality, and different ways of contributing to the common good and of relating to the state. Even the most 'apolitical' and 'autonomous' CSOs – in the sense of having no political or religious affiliation – take stances relating to their everyday reality and how it intersects with the activities of the state. Thus, they, too, are strongly 'political'.

Authors like Elba Luna are optimistic about the shift from the social field to that of politics in a strict sense, and the role of the CSO as 'political leadership schools':

> *... social organisations that are organisations basically for the construction and the exercise of citizens' duties and rights, are truly leadership schools, in a broad sense and also in a strict sense, because the number of social organisation leaders who become politicians is countless. Although there are no data on how that passage and political learning of social organisations comes about, there is evidence that many political leaders began their careers as social leaders. This is a very rich field in which dialogue between politics and society can be intensified.* **(PNUD, 2001, p. 29)**

While personally sharing the perception that the social field is, on many occasions, a seedbed of political vocations, I would point out that generalisations in this field are still very difficult to support with empirical studies, and that civil society is not a homogeneous sphere.

Generalisations usually ignore the fact that the CSOs make up a wide spectrum with countless shades, ranging from the most clientelist organisations, which barely conceal their dependence on public funds and the leaders of the moment, to those that consider the state intrinsically corrupt and inefficient, and see themselves as called to occupy the public positions, claiming 'neutrality', which is in itself a political position.

Much study is still required to determine the positioning of Latin American civil society organisations in the face of political issues, the relationship with the state and public policies. Bearing in mind the complexity of these themes and the scarcity of research on them at a regional level, we will limit ourselves to highlighting two of the many questions that undoubtedly require more in-depth discussion than we can provide here, but that deserve further investigation and analysis.

- **Formal citizenship, participatory citizenship and the question of representation.** In a traditional representative democracy, 'the people' do not deliberate or govern except through representatives elected by suffrage from among those citizens proposed by recognised political parties. Exercising formal citizenship may not be everything, but after decades of being denied it, many Latin Americans still value it highly. At the same time, many social movements and organisations that are independent of party structures have slowly acquired gravitational force in the political systems of the continent.

  The question of the legitimacy of 'social representation', exercised by CSOs vis á vis the 'political representation' of authorities elected by the people through a vote, is not a minor issue. Who decides whether or not the leader of a community centre really expresses the will of the district's residents? Does founding a CSO automatically turn a person into a mandated representative in a democratically elected system? Does mobilising a large enough number of people to cut bridges and streets legitimise all one's demands?

  The answers to these questions are neither straightforward nor unanimous. Some government departments are establishing objective criteria for CSO legitimisation whenever they challenge political power, and some social networks are drawing up membership criteria to legitimise its members, but this is still an embryonic process.

  The relationship between the mechanisms of institutional representation of democracy and the mechanisms of social representation opened by civil society sets new horizons and new challenges, and also raises numerous questions about the future. Will the new social movements turn into political movements, integrated with the formal representative channels? Will they nurture a democracy that will be more participatory and more socially inclusive? Will they compete to occupy the areas now occupied by parties and unions? Will they cause political instability? Will they turn into new sources of clientelism?

- **Weak states and a strong civil society?** In the face of the retreat or crisis of the state, and especially since the 1990s, numerous civil organisations have undertaken tasks that are under the exclusive authority of government policies in other regions of the world. In some cases, civil organisations are able to reach out where the state cannot. But, in other cases, the handing over of responsibility overwhelms the organisations that, by volunteer work alone, try to deal with tasks for which they are not always prepared.

  Faced with social 'emergencies' that turn into structural situations, the scene poses challenges, both from the side of public policies and from that of the CSO, and puts under discussion the very model of the state. On a continent in which states are generally weak (PNUD, 2004), those who consider civil society intrinsically more efficient and transparent than the state, want the state to permanently delegate and hand over resources and responsibilities to civil society and the private sector, keeping for itself the exclusive role of exercising control.

  On the other hand, viewing the state as an active guarantor of the population's basic rights, the efforts would be aimed at strengthening public policies rather than loading responsibilities on the shoulders of CSOs. This model does not necessarily imply a return to the traditional model of a welfare state. There could be progress in the co-ordination of social initiatives and public resources, focusing on consistent and converging social policies. In this scenario, the organisations would have a subsidiary role, but still one of active collaboration and even of co-management, and even of critical control of the state's administration, as well as of explicit demand for the latter to assume the responsibilities that are incumbent on it.

Some contributions of civil society to the strengthening of democracy in Latin America

Having pointed out the need to qualify statements that are too generalised, and statements that are excessively optimistic regarding the CSOs' role, we would like to focus on some possible paths of enquiry concerning the contribution of civil society to the strengthening of democracy in the region.

- **Competence training for citizen participation and integration into the 21st century world of work**

  Experts agree that, in order to train active and committed citizens, it is not enough to impart knowledge on constitutional norms, human rights and ethical principles. Democracy is not based exclusively on theories and norms. It is a practice that, as any other, requires being put into play so that it can be fully mastered (Puig-Batlle-Bosch-Palos, 2006).

  In this respect, it has been sufficiently proven that performing participatory and solidarity activities contributes to the development of basic competencies for the exercise of citizenship, in children, adolescents and young people (Torney-Purta, 2003; Tapia, 2006).

Likewise, a number of studies have shown that the competencies necessary to work in a team, communicate effectively, assume responsibilities and develop personal initiative and organisational and management skills are reinforced by participation in volunteerism and service-learning activities carried out by students (Melchior, 2000; Shumer, 1998; Weiler et al., 1998; Conrad and Hedin, 1989; NYLC, 2004).

These competences are essential, not only for citizen participation, but also for work development. In a world context in which jobs are moving away from Fordist mechanicism and becoming more dynamic, employability is not guaranteed, and a growing number of workers must generate and run their own productive enterprises. In this respect, the practice of volunteerism can be considered as an unspecific preparation to enter the world of work, and as such, a social-inclusion tool (Tapia, 2006).

Until now, what has been studied in particular is the impact of solidarity activities such as volunteerism and service-learning on citizenship-competence training among children, adolescents and young people. Much remains to be investigated concerning the impact that civil society participation has on developing these competencies in adults.

- **Social audits, co-managed programmes and the fight against corruption in the state**

  In recent years, numerous Latin American CSOs have worked towards greater transparency in political life. Volunteer organisations have acted as overseers to ensure transparency in elections that lack credibility. They have publicised the details of candidates' incomes and careers, thus helping voters to make informed decisions about who to elect as their representatives. Various examples of social audits on state programmes and activities have been carried out in order to prevent or detect acts of corruption. In other cases, civil society organisations take part, together with government departments, in designing and running social programmes.[21]

  Initiatives to promote transparency in public administration have been taking place the length and breadth of Latin America. Processes for social auditing and co-management have also been implemented. These innovations contribute significantly to the development of fuller democracies. Nevertheless, it is probably necessary for them to acquire greater tradition and public visibility before their impact throughout the region can be studied in depth.

- **The contribution of civil society to sustainable development**

  As Justin Davis Smith states,

  ... volunteerism makes an important financial contribution to society. It is estimated that, in the few countries in which volunteerism was studied empirically, the contribution was between about 8 and 14 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. Given the impact that many laws have on the willingness and capacity that people have to voluntarily contribute their time – such as the duration of the working week,

the age to finish studies and to retire, and measures that affect women's participation in the workforce – there are definitely economic reasons for the government to have to consider measures that would further the promotion of a favourable environment for volunteerism in all sectors and by all citizens. **(Davis Smith, 1999)**

In some countries there are sufficiently consensual indicators to measure the economic impact of volunteerism, and these indicators can generate reliable estimates. In Latin America, however, this field is not yet well developed, even though the topic is regarded with a growing sense of urgency.

One of the themes studied in this field is the impact of strong bonds of family and solidarity, typical of Latin American society, through the flow of *remesas*,[22] and their weight in the economy of many countries in the region, particularly in Central America and the Caribbean (Kliksberg, 2004).

While it is difficult to calculate the volume of the *remesas* coming from abroad, given the informality of some of the networks, it is even more difficult to register the internal circulation of goods through the solidarity networks of civil society. How many people in Latin America are fed daily by the soup kitchens run by parishes or community organisations? How can the huge mass of resources mobilised daily by Latin American solidarity be measured?

It is equally difficult to measure the economic impact of the work done by thousands of volunteers at local, national and regional level. In some developed countries there are consensual indicators to assess a volunteer's work, but in Latin America estimates are still quite few and far between.

Even if international organisations and large donors were to compile evidence on the economic impact of the projects carried out by civil society in the region, it would be necessary, surely, to systematise scattered information and intensify investigations in this field.

- **Social innovation and scale perspective**

  Throughout the past few decades, innovations arising from social initiative and CSO creativity have gradually permeated social practices and even public policies.

  For instance, the initiatives to eradicate poor housing in the 1960s and 1970s gradually generated national networks of *autoconstrucción*[23] (self-building) co-operatives, which now count upon the support of solid regional networks of professionals and social entrepreneurs who are specialists in the field. Technologies and construction practices that were developed in the social field are at present the object of study at the region's faculties of architecture and are also applied in official housing projects.

  Something similar has happened with the transfer of knowledge and technology created in popular education projects, to the formal education system. Few figures

say so much about the weight of social experience in the development of Latin American thinking as the Brazilian educationalist and militant Paulo Freire.

These processes contribute to underlining the importance of what has been called the 'scale perspective' (Croce, 2004). Many CSOs which are successful in bringing about innovations and results on the local scale, are unable to spread them further. 'Pilot projects' that never make it beyond the trial stage are all too common in the social field, and too many CSOs exhaust their energies moving from one 'pilot' to another. The social and other emergencies that arise, demand that civil society overcomes these constraints and develops suitable tools that make an impact on a greater scale, both in magnitude and depth, at national and regional levels. By definition, no CSO can operate on the same scale as the state; therefore many CSOs need to consider the relationship that exists between the question of the scale and that of impact on public policies (Croce, 2004, p. 5). This refers us again to the question mentioned earlier, about the link between civil society and public policies.

The study and dissemination of experiences in which it was possible to overcome the challenge of scale and make an impact on public policies, would certainly contribute to this process.

Conclusion: civil society and democracy

In order to strengthen Latin American democracies, it is undoubtedly necessary to overcome the crisis of representation, and this will not be possible without profound changes in party political culture. It is also essential to establish mature dialogue, multi-institutional links and strategic alliances between formal political institutions and civil society organisations that express the most participatory citizens.

> *In short, it is a matter of filling society with politics and, consequently, filling politics with society.* ***(PNUD, 2004)***

But no institutional alternative will warrant the solidity of our democracies unless greater levels of justice and social equality are reached.

> *The development of democracy is deeply bound to the search for greater social equality, the effective struggle against poverty and the expansion of citizens' rights.* ***(PNUD, 2004)***

Every day, Latin American civil society continues to play a vital role in the struggle against poverty. For that struggle to succeed, it must set itself medium and long-term objectives that go beyond the narrow limits of daily survival to address issues of scale, economic models and the relationship with public policies.

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Notes

1 The examples and data included refer mainly to Latin America.

2 UNV Volunteering and Social Development. Background paper for discussion at expert group meeting. New York, 29-30 November 1999.

3 As in the case of peronista unions in Argentina, and unions linked with Lula's MTP.

4 To mention two examples: the Instituto Pueblo Continente is considered an unofficial spokesperson of Aprismo in Peru (http://www.pueblocontinente.com/presentacion.htm); in the 1990s Argentina, the Fundación Mediterránea, a non-profit civil association created in the city of Cordoba, became the operational base of Menem's and De La Rua's Minister of Economy, Domingo Cavallo, and other economists in those governments.

5 Civil society encompasses those parts of society that are neither government nor business, including associations, non-governmental organisations, non-profit organisations, advocacy groups, citizen groups, social movements, as well as the cultures, norms and social values that enable these social phenomena http://cdacs.georgetown.edu/.

6 http://www.un.org/spanish/civil_society/sociedadcivil.html.

7 http://www.emol.com/especiales/pagina_protesta_estudiantes/index.htm. Cf. Clarín, 31 May 2006.

8 Clarín and The New York Times, 2006. Translation: Elisa Carnelli. Clarín, 11 May 2006.

9 Cf. David de Ferranti, Guillermo Perry, Francisco H.G. Ferreira y Michael Walton. Desigualdad en América Latina y el Caribe: ¿ruptura con la historia? Estudios del Banco Mundial sobre América Latina y el Caribe, 2003, y el Informe sobre desigualdad en América Latina, CEPAL, 2004.

10 Kliksberg, Bernardo. Desafíos Éticos de América Latina. Ponencia en el Seminario 'El capital social de América Latina y el Caribe en acción: Empresariado juvenil y voluntariado' Lima, Perú. 25-26 March 2004, p.9.

11 Lagos, Marta. Midiendo el Progreso de las sociedades. Datos de Barómetros de opinión en línea. Latinbarómetro, 12 de octubre, 2006. www.oecd.org/dataoecd/59/21/37564427.ppt, 25.

12 Similar phenomena have taken place in the recent democracies of Eastern European countries, where candidates have ranged from rock stars, like the Czech Karel Gott, to ice hockey stars (http://www.radio.cz/es/articulo/37252); and even in long-running democracies (present Governor of California and Hollywood star, Arnold Schwarzenegger).

[13] Consulta Mitofsky. Índice de confianza en instituciones. México, D.F., August 2006. http://www.consulta.com.mx/interiores/99_pdfs/12_mexicanos_pdf/mxc_NA20060820_ConfianzaInstituciones.pdf.

[14] CERC, Informe de prensa Encuesta Nacional, Santiago de Chile, agosto 2005. http://www.cerc.cl/Encuestas/05AGOS.pdf.

[15] It may be of interest to mention that Latin Americans who reside in the US retain their low levels of confidence in political institutions (only 17 per cent trusts political parties), but their confidence in banks improves 73 per cent) according to a survery carried out by Newlink Research in September 2006.

[16] Lagos, Marta. Midiendo el Progreso de las sociedades. Datos de Barómetros de opinión en línea. Latinbarómetro, 12 de octubre, 2006. www.oecd.org/dataoecd/59/21/37564427.ppt, 24.

[17] See article by Cristina Calvo in this same volume.

[18] This Latin American profile is not very original, perhaps, because very similar traits could be found among recent democracies of Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia, and maybe also in some of the oldest democracies in the world.

[19] Carlos Strasser. El doble rostro de la sociedad civil. Clarín, Monday, 7 October 2002, http://www.clarin.com/diario/2002/10/07/o-01901.htm.

[20] Translator's note: this refers to a play on words between politics and a Spanish expletive beginning with the letter p.

[21] As is the case of the educational inclusion programme of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Argentina, http://www.me.gov.ar/todosaestudiar.

[22] Funds sent by migrants in developed countries to their families in their country of origin.

[23] They are called *autoconstrucción* (self-building) because the beneficiaries of popular housing themselves contribute to their construction as individuals or as a group.

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The Role of Religious Organisations in Promoting Service and Volunteerism in Latin America

CRISTINA CALVO

SUMMARY

In many parts of the world, society is divided according to ethnical, ideological, economic, political and cultural factors.

Governability and social exclusion problems are often so complex, particularly in Latin America, that possible solutions simply cannot be reduced to formulas. A participatory social construction is vital when seeking solutions, and in this context, religious organisations have been remarkably effective in building peace and promoting reconciliation and service to those most in need.

In this region, there is also widespread distrust of most institutions, with the exception of churches. During the transition from situations of conflict to periods of peace

and democratic stability, religious organisations have provided the necessary framework of legitimacy and trust in countries like Brazil, Peru and Bolivia, which have led the way in promoting dialogue and building consensus.

Religious communities have also demonstrated their capacity to work together to promote peace. No form of co-operation has greater potential for improving conditions for the greatest number of people worldwide, than the co-operation of religious communities across the world. Out of some six billion people worldwide, five billion identify themselves as members of religious communities.

In Latin America, religion has played a notable role on two levels: firstly, in terms of the promotion of social and political dialogue between civil society and governments, and secondly, through the activation of volunteerism schools for the service of the common good.

Introduction

In many parts of the world, society is divided by combinations of ethnic, ideological, economic, political or cultural difference. This is particularly true of Latin America, where problems of governability and social exclusion are extremely complex. There are no simple solutions, and any attempt to remedy such problems must include the construction of a participatory social approach.

In this context, religious organisations have taken the lead, demonstrating a remarkable ability to promote reconciliation and service among those most in need. The region manifests a widespread lack of trust in institutions, with the exception of trust in the churches. According to the *Latinobarómetro* of 2004, 71 per cent of those interviewed said that they trusted church institutions. Countries like Brazil, Peru and Bolivia took the lead in initiating dialogue and building consensus, with religious organisations providing the necessary framework of legitimacy during the transition from situations of conflict to periods of peace and democratic stability.

Religious communities have demonstrated their capacity to work together to promote peace. No form of co-operation has better potential for improving conditions for the greatest number of people than the co-operation of religions. Of the world's population of six billion people, five billion identify themselves as members of religious communities.

In Latin America, religious groups have played a notable role in two ways: on the one hand, they have promoted social and political dialogue between civil society and governments; on the other, they have stimulated the rise of various types of volunteerism in service of the common good. In this way, social capital has been used to help forge a sense of fraternity among groups that conform to different cultural identities, with the objective of increasing equity in development and providing equality of access to opportunities.

The message of Latin America

We start with Argentina, a country which, until a few decades ago, had one of the highest standards of living in the world. Because of its natural and human resources, and its geographical position, it seemed destined for uninterrupted progress. Yet, how do we account for the disconcerting fact that, in December 2002, Argentina plunged into a systemic crisis?

Two and a half centuries ago, Antonio Genovesi, the world's first professor of economics, considered the case of Naples. Well populated and favourably positioned on commercial routes, and with numerous other advantages, why was it not a developed 'nation' like those in Northern Europe? His conclusion was that Naples suffered from the lack of a specific resource: 'love for the common good'. Genovesi wrote:

> *The first and biggest support of civilised societies is love for the common good, that in the same way can preserve and construct societies. Societies in which private good reigns and prevails, in which their members are not interested in the common good, not only cannot achieve affluence and power, but even if they are able to achieve them, they are incapable of maintaining this position.*

I believe that, in most Latin American countries, problems can be explained in the same terms. In other words, they can be attributed to a scarcity of the non-material resource that conforms to Genovesi's notion of 'love for the common good'.[1]

What are the messages that Latin America conveys so strongly? The first is the need to agree on the definition of the civil society that should be at the centre of a development strategy. In reality, the civil society, which is so widely discussed today, often in a rhetorical manner, still runs the risk of being identified, in a reductive manner, with the existence of a set of associations or non-governmental organisations required to balance the interference of the state with the hegemonic force of the market.

However, civil society cannot be a mere premise for the correct functioning of the state or the efficient functioning of the market. Its field of action is in the public sphere, but a different public sphere from that of state politics. In fact, there are two elements which, from the democratic perspective, constitute civil society: the social principle and universal orientation. If the first element was the only one actioned, civil society would not go beyond the private sphere. The social principle is essentially a principle of self-organisation, which is not strong enough to bring about respect for universal criteria. It must be remembered that sociality, which is the tendency to live together, is not typical of human beings alone — it is also characteristic of animals. Therefore, what gives civil society its public non-state validity is the second element, that of the universal.

The second message that reaches us is that high and persistent levels of economic inequality, together with the socio-economic characteristics typical of developing countries, critically block the establishment, development and sustainability of political institutions that are participatory and accountable to citizens. The crassness of the notion that there is 'one best way' has been proven. According to this premise, the only assessment of value the market can make is that of efficiency, which assesses the means in relation to the end, with a view to realising to the maximum the interests of those who participate in the market game.

The results are there for all to see: never before has there been such an explosion of social inequality, both horizontal (among social groups) and vertical (among individuals), as there has been in the past 20 years — at the same time as wealth has increased at an unprecedented rate throughout the world. This is the great paradox of the present development model: extraordinary economic growth (that is, sustained increases in wealth) and civil society progress (that is, broadening of personal freedoms) that do not go hand in hand.

The role of religions in bringing about peace and governability

During the past few years, religions have carried out an unprecedented amount of co-operative action. This has led them to develop a public dialogue on issues that are of common interest. Working together is an opportunity for religions to creatively

and faithfully re-express their own traditions in a shared language, the language of co-operation, which is essential for resolving conflicts.

Just as no contemporary state can act in isolation in responding to the global challenges of the present, no religion can deal with the critical problems of multiculturalism on its own. Religious communities count on their unique assets of social, moral and spiritual significance in transforming conflict.

Firstly, mosques, churches, temples and other religious venues are located in towns, districts, neighbourhoods and cities. Such organisations regularly and frequently call all those who are dedicated to education, health, humanitarianism or communication, to assemblies of worship and meditation. This important panorama of institutions is a network of communication and action. The scale of religious infrastructure varies from country to country, but in the majority of developing countries it is, undoubtedly, the most developed, interconnected and locally active social infrastructure, stretching from the smallest village to the capital city and beyond.

Secondly, religious communities have moral tools with which they can muster the great strength of their spiritual disciplines. Religious leaders are the only leaders in a position to use their moral stature and influence to foster mutual understanding within their communities.

Fundamentally, most moral systems based on religious traditions require that their members judge others according to the standards by which they would like to be judged. In almost all religions, the so-called 'golden rule' is applied: "Do not do to others what you do not want done to you. Do to others as you would have them do to you". This rule leads to compliance with the commandment of love and its practice can be divided into four fundamental characteristics: First, love everyone: love is fraternal and universal, and does not exclude anyone on the basis of ethnicity, gender, race, nationality, religion, etc. Second, take the initiative in breaking barriers and overcoming obstacles. Third, make yourself one with the other person: this requires taking a step towards her or him, looking for them where they are and, in the condition in which you find them, assuming her or his problems and joys. Fourth, love the enemy: this is particularly characteristic of Christianity. The message of the Gospel proposes overcoming and doing away with the notion of enemy. It involves a change in mentality in order to produce a state of human co-existence that excludes the use of force, war or exploitation, or the abuse of power in solving problems.

Spiritual systems can provide believers with enormous courage and strength in the midst of tragedy and human perversity. They can provide the strength to deal with what is unbearable, give reason for hope when everything appears desperate, and present the possibility of forgiving the unforgivable. Spirituality is frequently the only means of achieving reconciliation between people, and between and within communities.

Religious communities were not originally intended to serve as agents for conflict resolution or transformation. However, employing them in this way can be profoundly creative, in the sense that our religious traditions are morally concerned about violent conflict.

Experiences of social dialogue in Latin America

Dialogue is nothing but the construction of new openings for societal representation to widen the circle of decision-makers. To engage in dialogue implies sharing purposes and aspirations in an atmosphere of respect, and to be capable of creating the necessary conditions for self-examination that opens the way to mutual understanding and shared commitment to action.

Over the past few years, a number of Latin American countries have carried out, or are carrying out, various processes of national dialogue with the representatives of political parties, the private sector, the unions and institutions of civil society, with considerable contributions from the different religions. In some cases, these dialogues have been linked, directly or indirectly, to the definition of long-term development strategies or policies, for example, in Mexico, El Salvador, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Peru and Paraguay. In other cases, the dialogue has been related to agreements in a particular sector, such as education in Honduras or poverty in Paraguay, or has been motivated by the need to overcome a political block and manage critical events (Argentina, Costa Rica, Mexico, Dominican Republic and Peru). It has also been a factor in peace negotiations in El Salvador and Colombia.[2]

In the cases of Argentina (2002), Peru (2002) and Bolivia (1984), democratic dialogues were convened by the Catholic Church, which was able to do so because of its credibility and capacity to provide a context of legitimacy in which all social sectors could sit and negotiate.

In Peru, in March 2002, the president called for the political forces, the churches and civil society to begin a dialogue with the aim of achieving a national consensus that would serve as the basis for a transition to and consolidation of democracy, the affirmation of national identity, and the design of a shared vision for the country's future.

In November 1984, the Bolivian Bishops' Conference offered to organise a dialogue between all the political forces represented in Congress, la Confederacion de Empresarios de Bolivia (the Bolivian Businesses Confederation) and Central Obrera (Labour Head Office), to overcome the crisis that the country was experiencing. President Hernan Siles Zuazo (HSZ) accepted the offer and the 'Dialogue for democracy' was launched. The church established as a requirement that, without any of the parties to the dialogue having to renounce their ideology, it was essential to be generous and reach practical agreements that would allow viable solutions to emerge that could save the country. The meetings began on 14 November 1984 and concluded exactly one week later, on 21 November 1984, with the adoption of a couple of political agreements, each of which was recorded in the appropriate public document.

In essence, the result of the dialogue was getting the go-ahead for general elections and countrywide municipal elections. The responsibility for setting up a new government to solve the problem of hyper-inflation and its social consequences would then be transferred to the popular vote.

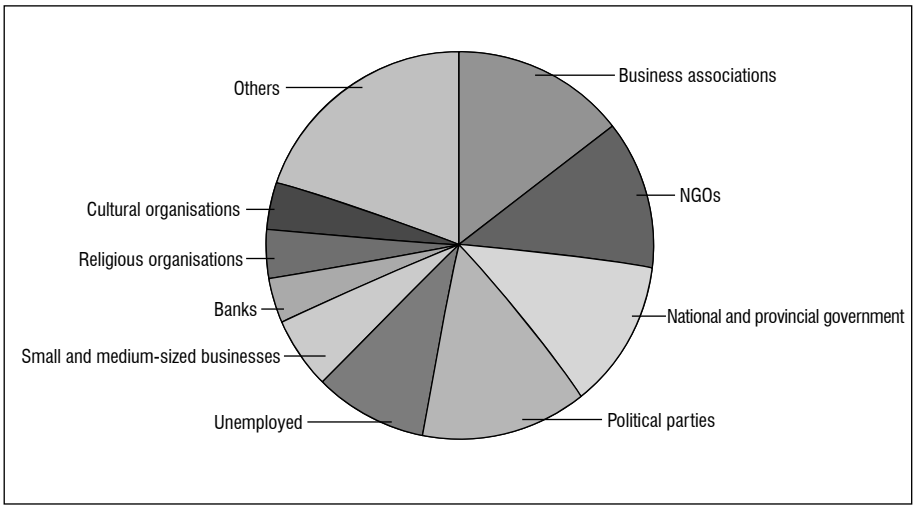
The credibility and mobilising power of the Catholic Church enabled it to promote, organise and lead the dialogue to its final outcome, not just through facilitation, but through formal, proactive mediation. Its credibility derived from the commitment

of a good part of the Bolivian ecclesiastical hierarchy, and numerous priests, to the democratic resistance struggle against the dictatorships that characterised the long cycle of military governments, and culminated in the despicable, drug-trafficking dictatorship of Luis Garcia Meza.

At the 'Argentinian Dialogue Table', the first phase was the most relevant. During this phase, dialogue was an instrument for the containment and channelling of the conflict created by the severe political, economic and financial crisis that threatened to devastate the existing political system.

Approximately 2 000 participants and more than 500 institutions came together for this dialogue process. In the initial phase called Dialogue with Actors, around 650 leaders and some 300 entities participated, of which 16 per cent were business associations, 12 per cent were NGOs, 12 per cent were representatives of the national and provincial governments, 12 per cent were political parties, 10 per cent were organisations that had emerged during the crisis process, like the so-called *piqueteros* (picket members) or *trueque* (barter) clubs, 6 per cent were organisations of small or medium-sized businesses, 4 per cent were bank associations, 4 per cent were religious organisations, and 2 per cent were universities and cultural organisations.

Graph 1 Participating entities in the Argentinian Dialogue Table



During the second stage, civil society assumed the co-ordination and leadership of the Argentinian Dialogue. After the formation of the Extended Argentinian Dialogue Table in October 2002, they pursued more ambitious objectives, following an agreed agenda on governability that supported the holding of new elections in May 2003. In December 2002, just before the anniversary of the crisis of the political system, a Day for Peace was held. In April 2003, meetings were organised with presidential candidates.

The churches shaped the ethical basis of the dialogue, giving it an ecumenical perspective and pointing to the possibility of consensus, given that the agenda encompassed secular issues on which all creeds could agree.[3]

Volunteerism and religious communities

The phenomenon of volunteerism, which has been the object of much interest in the last few years, is a normal activity in religious communities. In the case of Christianity, for instance, the original congregations that dedicated themselves to serving and feeding the poor, were spontaneous volunteer groups.

In the 1960s, a new kind of volunteerism began to grow, which fragmented into a mosaic of associations in the 1970s and 1980s. There are profound differences between traditional volunteerism and new volunteerism: the traditional kind generally reproduces the same model and is aimed at welfare intervention, while the new volunteerism recognises the need to combat and overcome the causes of marginalisation. Traditional volunteerism virtually ignored public institutions, while the new volunteerism tends to develop relationships with such institutions and promotes participation in them. The new volunteerism originated mainly among young people committed to the 1968 protest movements, who then regrouped into associations that provided the oxygen of idealism to a society suffocated by excessive acquisition and consumption.

Some forms of volunteerism are organised by groups, while others are practised by individuals and families. The following are some of the characteristics of volunteerism:

- Spontaneity: volunteerism acts out of free choice, not out of obligation or binding norms.
- The motive for the service is general interest in a specific field.
- Being cost-free: the provision of services is not linked to any wages or relationship with labour. However, it cannot be reduced to the 'free' giving of time and effort. The fact that it is cost-free is a necessary condition for volunteering, but it is not sufficient to define volunteering. Instead, gratuitousness, the value of 'giving without expecting to receive', is an ideal intrinsic to the volunteer.
- Continuity: occasional action is not considered a volunteering activity, even when it includes the three preceding elements.

- Solidarity: this means taking responsibility for the other person – not just showing compassion, but taking the other person's burden upon oneself. It also implies continuity of the service until a solution is found to the problem.

- Welcoming reception: giving of space to the other person. This demonstrates a preferential love for the poor, not only in respect of social responsibility towards them, but also in relation to the creation of a bond with the poor.

- Sharing: taking responsibility so that the poor may have what they need and, at the same time, valuing the gifts that everyone is capable of offering to old people, children, the poor and the sick.

The religious spirit adds the value of transcendence to the volunteer, and this reinforces the moral tools with which volunteers can strengthen their spiritual practices.

Defined in this way, volunteerism includes the following functions:

- Anticipating the role of the state: the first function is a prophetic one, in the sense that civil society, with its ethical internal forces, offers the state its experience so that the state will recognise the value of private initiative through, for instance, a law safeguarding the universal role of citizens.

- Integrating public services: volunteerism does not substitute for the state, but performs two actions in relation to it: on the one hand, it demands that public services be provided and, on the other, when services are in place, it helps enrich the provision of those services using its own means.

- Humanising services: by offering their services freely, volunteers are motivated by ideals.

- Stimulating institutions must comply with the aims they were created for, and ensure that social justice is practised.

- Denouncing oppression: this function manifests itself when all methods of non-violence, dialogue and understanding have been exhausted. The denunciation is made through the media so that human rights are re-established.[4]

The Caritas experience

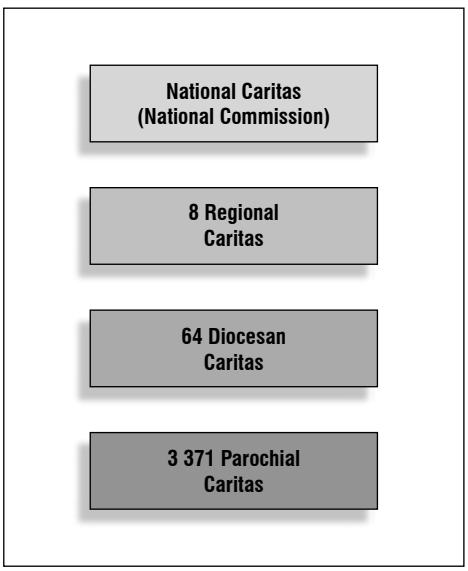
Considering the magnitude of the problem, the actions of Caritas in Argentina and the rest of Latin America are a mere drop in the ocean. At present, Caritas Argentina is the civil society organisation that has the greatest qualitative and quantitative impact in the field of social development: it accomplishes its specific objectives effectively and, at the same time, it assumes, with an open spirit, the role of articulating with other institutions that promote social issues.

Caritas Argentina forms part of Caritas Internationalis, a confederation of 162 Catholic organisations that provide assistance, development and social service for the excluded. It is active in seven regions:

- Africa
- North America
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Asia
- Europe
- Oceania
- The Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

Caritas Argentina operates in Latin America and the Caribbean. This region is subdivided into four zones: Central America, Caribbean, Bolivia and the Southern Cone. The last zone is made up of five countries, one of which is Argentina. To carry out its mission, Caritas Argentina operates at various levels of intervention, according to the need. There are 1 968 parishes and 1 403 chapels and mission centres throughout the country.

Graph 2 Organisational structure of Caritas Argentina



Caritas Argentina's activities are carried out by some 33 000 volunteer agents, of which only 9 per cent are paid staff. The contribution of volunteerism in Caritas is fundamental to the global efficiency of the organisation, and it is worth pointing out that the volunteers are drawn mainly from the same communities that the organisation serves. In this way, Caritas is closely involved in the construction of social capital.

Table 1 Caritas agents in Argentina[5]

	Number	Percentage
Total agents	33 422	100
Hired agents	3 080	9
Voluntary agents	30 342	91

Table 2 Caritas volunteers, according to their hours of service

	Number	Percentage
Work less than 20 hours weekly	24 273	78
Work more than 20 hours weekly	6 069	22

Caritas Argentina makes up a strongly cohesive support network. At the same time, it invests in its internal operations only between 5 and 8 per cent of the economic value of all the goods and services it distributes, which means that its economic efficiency is of the order of 93 per cent.

Other significant measures of Caritas Argentina's reach are the 600 000 people who receive daily assistance with food, and the 3 million who receive other types of assistance annually.

Caritas Argentina's activities can be described as follows:

- It provides humanitarian help to the population in emergencies;
- It offers programmes for human development;
- It conducts training and programmes to strengthen institutions; and
- It articulates its action with other groups in civil society to defend the rights of marginalised groups before the state.

These actions can be classified in terms of food, clothing, health, education, employment, services by population sectors, special-needs services, professional services, activities relating to citizenship, specific training within Caritas, and housing.

- **Food**
  - Distribution of food and cleaning products (in the majority of Caritas parishes);
  - Dining rooms and/or picnic areas;
  - Community/shared kitchens;
  - Glass of milk;
  - 'Charity night' – a shared supper once a week for residents of a street.

- **Clothing**
  - Distribution of clothes - 'the little wardrobe' (in the majority of Caritas parishes);
  - Community sewing box (community production of clothing);
  - Garage sales.

- **Health**
  - Pharmacy – provision of medicines, medicine bank (in the majority of Caritas parishes);
  - First-aid kits;
  - Assistance for newborns – provision of diapers (nappies), formula;
  - Transport expenses for obtaining specialised medical assistance;
  - Loan of orthopaedic equipment.

- **Education**
  - Tutoring, education centres, C.C.A.I. (Centros Comunitarios de Atencion Integral – Integral Care Community Centres) (in the majority of Caritas parishes);
  - Nursery schools, crèches;
  - Libraries;
  - Education grants and the handing over of school equipment;
  - Recreation and artistic workshops.

- **Employment, or training and strategies to find or create employment**
  - Workshops for learning trades: sewing, knitting, painting, hairdressing, etc. (in the majority of Caritas parishes);
  - Small enterprises and projects for the benefit of schools and communities: vegetable gardens, production of jam, candle-making, production of pasta, bakeries or bread ovens, textile workshops, printing, etc.) (in the majority of Caritas parishes);
  - Workshops for training in professional skills: computing, hotel service, child-care, etc.;
  - Job banks.

- **Services by population sectors**
  - Child-care centres, children's homes;
  - Adolescent support, youth centres;
  - The elderly.

- **Services for special needs**
  - Work with the disabled;
  - Work with the destitute and homeless;
  - Visits to hospitals and health centres;
  - Visits to families in need.

- **Professional services (provided free of charge)**
  - Legal;
  - Psychological;
  - Medical.

- **Services relating to citizenship**
  - Participation in consultative councils;
  - Monitoring of the REMEDIAR programme.

- **Caritas-specific training**
  - Liturgical and biblical study, formation of groups for daily devotions;
  - Training workshops for Caritas' own mission.

- **Housing**

  Although it is not a permanent arrangement, Caritas utilises every opportunity for joint action with the Argentinian government in the field of housing. In this way, the organisation is particularly involved in correcting historic injustices.[7] The objective of this collaboration is to ensure that the poorest, most destitute families have adequate housing.

  This sector of society consists mainly of people who are not 'classified', that is, they do not meet the conditions that the state departments set as requirements for inclusion in a housing plan. Their exclusion can be ascribed to a number of factors, such as not having a job and therefore being ineligible for state subsidies; not owning land (people are settled as passive occupiers because they are unable to carry out the bureaucratic procedures necessary to be given occupancy); a lack of building skills such as bricklaying; and not always accessing the support of available community organisations.

  For this reason, the operational capacity of the Caritas organisation includes, among its main activities:

- Monitoring the housing and habitat deficit on a national level;
- Identifying the most suitable strategies for different regions, forming alliances with dioceses that have implemented housing plans, with the aim of producing viable alternatives;
- Forming relationships with the state authority to provide realistic solutions for the poorest and most destitute, and monitoring their consequent fulfilment; and
- Arranging for the intervention of professional and technical specialists to drive the process.

Example of an education programme: The Family Scholarships Programme

Dioceses participating: Santiago del Estero, Catamarca and Santo Tome (Corrientes)

General objectives: Granting study scholarships to students from poor families, and training parents so that they can support their children's schooling and actively participate in their communities.

Specific objectives:

- To provide equal educational opportunities for all members of a family;
- To obtain the commitment of parents to their role as educators;
- To reduce the rate of failure and school drop-out by scholarship students;
- To improve the study conditions of such students;
- To improve school performance and attendance of these students; and
- To generate valuable initiatives to the benefit of other families in the community.

Activities:

- The scholarship funds are handed over monthly to a responsible adult in each family, who commits him or herself to adjust expenses to previously established guidelines and present the corresponding monthly rendering of accounts.
- The families commit themselves to participating in a training and development programme, so that they can accompany and stimulate their children in their education.
- The families are assisted in the presentation of monthly rendering of accounts; buying what is needed for their children's studies and stimulates learning and can be of use in their own homes and shared with other families in the community.
- The parents and children do their own self-evaluation and the CD carries out the monitoring by means of a 'family record'.

Testimonies:[8]

"Today my children go to school happy, enthusiastic, and their smiles have returned ... before, I used to feel ashamed, embarrassed and angry for not having a better income to be able to give my children a more dignified childhood ... This help has allowed us to save a small amount from my odd jobs, and now, after ten years, we have been able to buy a fridge and do some repairs to the house. We are growing as a united family."

"We were able to spend Father's Day together as a family. We were very happy and spent a day at the circus together ... with lots of laughter and smiles ... my wife and I looked at each other and looked at the children and how happy they were ... watching the show." (Ramon Lopez)

"Thanks to the grant we receive, we can buy clothes and shoes to go to university properly dressed, and equipment that we needed, and go to our classes by bus ... From our status as students, we commit ourselves to helping children in the community with their schoolwork, but without neglecting our own studies." (Enzo and Florencia Campos)

"I have two children, the oldest is in his first year of secondary school and the second is in the fourth grade. Before the scholarship, it was very difficult for us as we live in a place far away from the capital. We had to make a great sacrifice so that the oldest could go to school in the city centre, to give him a future ... now, with the scholarship, he can take the bus … and he needs lots of things because of what is required of him in school. He has had the opportunity of travelling to Las Termas with his teacher and classmates ..."

"I'm helping at a Caritas soup kitchen ... With the things that I've bought with the grant for my son in grade 4, I have been able to take didactic games, for example, and share them with the children who go to the picnic area. The children are also enthusiastic because I've been able to buy a didactic map of Argentina. The children put it together and learn the provinces..." (Francisca Gamieta)

"I'm a mother of four children ... Thank God, this year everyone has been included in the scholarship. They have got everything they need and they feel a bit more dignified ... they go to school in the right condition, with shoes and dressed as they should, because before, I couldn't even buy them sneakers. They can share all the things they have with their friends. They also share books, not only in school but also with the children of our neighbourhood, because they come to the house and we help them with their homework … My children are able to dream again, they have new hopes, they want to carry on studying, they have so many hopes, which we had lost, with my husband and I being without work, everything was collapsing. Now they're well and we feel spiritually encouraged. With the money they give us to share with the family, we, the six of us, have been able to go out; we went to the cinema ...' (Selva, Flia. Lobo)

Example of a work forum

Place: Diocese of Yguazu

Objective: Sharing different alternatives to the problem of unemployment.

Participants: Regional Work Team of the NEA region, of Caritas Bahia Blanca, Corrientes, Resistencia, Posadas, Cordoba, Mendoza, La Rioja, San Isidro, Yguazu, Goya, San Roque and Caritas National.

Activity: Various productive projects were presented, involving self-subsistence and small sales, neighbourhood community work, and experiences of co-operation with private and public institutions.

Two important guidelines emerge from this experience: on the one hand, the importance of associative work, particularly in helping people make the transition from an individual way of thinking and acting, to finding points of agreement and strengths in the group with which one shares a project; on the other hand, the contribution of associativism with a view to achieving local development, to exercising solidarity, creating networks and achieving commercial success — together.

Testimonies:

Regarding the carpenters' co-operative of El Dorado (created in 2001): "This co-operative was founded by 15 members a few years ago and today we are working as a group. The participation of every associate strengthens the organisation, because each member is an owner. We are not going to achieve anything on our own, everything can be achieved by being united", says the co-operative's president, Huellas de Esperanza, August 2005.

"I started to do a soldering course and on finishing it they called me to attend a 'Productive Workshop', where the blacksmith's trade is learnt. At first I was an assistant, then I learnt more and they started giving me jobs as a solderer. When an instructor left due to personal problems, they gave me the opportunity to take his place, which is why I am teaching what I learnt to children who began like me, as a way of giving back what people have given to me." (Pedro, from the Fatima Formation Centre, Huellas de Esperanza, June 2005)

Having explained the organisational structure of Caritas Argentina and its intervention strategies, we present the not-so-visible aspects that help to define the methods and motives for its actions, with the aim of distinguishing them from those of other civil organisations and understanding their singularity.

- Decentralisation. The organisation respects local idiosyncrasies and encourages the promotion of culture and locally acquired social capital to confront problems that, in general, vary greatly from one region to another.

- Transparency. This is highly valued, and necessitates the increasing use of control systems. However, compared to the controls often used by other organisations, the most important element that ensures its transparency is mutual trust based on common values, the stability and permanency of its agents, and the cellular organisation that characterises it.

- Efficiency and effectiveness: Caritas Argentina is highly efficient when measured according to the cost differentials between 'distributed goods' over 'input of goods'. However, this does not exhaust the concept of effectiveness, because when it is understood from a perspective of the centre being a person and not an abstract system, even if the latter is necessary for its subsistence.

- Who are the poor? We do not have a future as an organised society unless we find a way of including in this process, with dignity, the 40 per cent of Argentina's population who are poor, or the 40 per cent average in the whole of Latin America who are poor. On the other hand, poverty means much more than the absence of money or material goods. It is a situation that reflects or anticipates problems around health, education, nutrition, housing, violence and participation in political processes.

- Where is true wealth? Those of us who have daily contact with the reality of poverty notice the human wealth and values that flourish from the hearts of the most humble. The observation of the reigning culture in European capitals allowed Mother Teresa to affirm that her poor in India were much richer than many of the inhabitants of first world towns, who hide their existential poverty beneath a blanket of luxury. Obviously, this does not mean trying to sing the praises of misery – the intention is simply to point out that man, faced with the most urgent needs, tunes up his perception of what is really important in life and achieves a capacity of understanding difficult to reach from a position of self-sufficiency. For this reason, in Caritas Argentina, we say that in helping the poor there is not one who gives and another who receives; both receive and are enriched. At different levels, both aspects are necessary.

- The formation of volunteerism: Religious communities organise Formation Schools so that the role and function of the volunteer can develop harmoniously and contribute to the good of the society in which he or she operates. Through formation, it is possible to give quality to the voluntary action and guarantee its continuity, while at the same time feeding the hope that volunteerism becomes a sign that rises above the mediocrity of these times. Formation helps link 'doing' with 'knowing', in the conviction that willingness is no substitute for capacity, and it is not enough to *want* to do something; it is also necessary to *know how* to do it. Formation is not limited to the input of knowledge, but contributes to the formation of conscience. Its aim is to enlighten the mind, but also to inspire the heart and cultivate availability.

- The value of daily actions with hope. We realise that our work is only a drop in the ocean – a drop that could turn into a whole ocean, thanks to the Christian hope that sustains us. In the words of Monsignor Oscar A. Romero, martyred in San Salvador in 1980:

  We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realising that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own. Amen.

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Notes

1 Stefano Zamagni: *II Ponte*. Rivista di Politica Economica. Anno LVIII n.1 2002.

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5 Information taken from the doctoral thesis of Lia Zervino. University of Belgrano. December 2005.

7 The campaign Reconstruir con Esperanza was born in 1998 as a consequence of the inundations caused by the "El Niño" current which affected the Littoral and north-east of the Republic. The area faced up to the construction of new housing problems as well as rehabilitation of damaged ones. The total funds agreed were supplied by the government, not in the pre-fixed instalments, but over the two consecutive years. Nevertheless, the programme was followed through in eleven dioceses (Posadas, Formosa, Corrientes, Goya, Santo Tome, San Roque, Resistencia, Rafaela, Santa Fe, Parana and Gualeguaychu) and counted on the collaboration of other institutions, as well as the CD: Incupo, OSPRERA and Canoa. In this way they carried out 97 projects that included 1,300 houses, providing homes for more than 7,000 people. (Memorial Triennial, Caritas Argentina 2000-2002).

8 Archive material from the education area.

PART 2

Volunteerism, Service and Social Politics

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Policy Scan:
An exploratory study of national youth service policy in 19 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean

EDWARD METZ, BRETT ALESSI, SUSAN STROUD, DACIL ACEVEDO RIQUELME AND GUSTAVO SMITH

SUMMARY

This chapter presents findings from an exploratory study of government policies that involve youth in community service in 19 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The research, which was carried out in 2004, provides descriptive information and explores the context within which national youth service policies can emerge and thrive. While it is assumed that well-designed national youth-service policies provide a framework for engaging youth in pro-social activities that benefit themselves and their communities, relatively little research is available on the subject. Findings indicate that 13 out of 19 countries in the study have a national youth-service policy, and that the policies vary in

forms and configuration. Facilitators and obstacles of these policies are discussed. The paper concludes by providing recommendations to policy makers.

Introduction

A principal challenge for policy makers addressing youth issues is to design legislation that supports the widespread implementation of sustainable evidence-based programmes, in order to reduce problem behaviours and build on youths' assets (Catalano, Berglund and Ryan, 1998). Such policies not only deliver services to young people, but also provide opportunities for young people to become agents in their own development. In the last two decades, youth-focused governmental initiatives have emerged around the world in the form of national youth policies (Angel, 2003). These policies, which are often implemented in co-ordination with non-governmental youth organisations, define the roles and responsibilities of youth to society and society to youth. These policies address youths' needs through the creation of structures that protect youth and encourage youths' involvement as participatory and active citizens (Angel, 2003).

In the Latin American and Caribbean region, where 40 per cent of the population is under 30 years of age (Inter-American Development Bank, 2005), national and local policy makers are under increasing pressure to educate youth as responsible citizens who are capable of overcoming harsh systemic plights such as poverty, drug abuse and violence, and HIV and AIDS. One movement that holds promise for positive youth development is participation in community service. Encompassing a continuum of activities (Tang, McBride and Sherraden, 2003), service provides opportunities for productive participation while also challenging portrayals of youth as 'victims of poverty' or 'problems' in society. Through exposure to and in working to remedy community needs, youth servers develop practical skills and a sense of civic identity in which they envision the kinds of people they want to become and the kind of society they want to create (Youniss and Yates, 1997). Further, because service forges collaboration between individuals, community organisations and governments, some scholars theorise that youth service is an emerging social institution and should be viewed as an important national strategy for social, economic and democratic development (Sherraden, 2001).

The premise behind national governmental policies that promote community service participation is that when provided with an opportunity for meaningful involvement in society through service, youth take advantage. Research indicates that many Latin American and Caribbean youth are active community service participants. Common forms of youth service in the region include building sustainable housing, raising awareness of HIV and AIDS, improving literacy rates through tutoring programmes, protecting national parks, cleaning up urban slums, and assisting with home-based care for seniors (Johnson, Benitez, McBride and Olate, 2004).

While it is assumed that well-designed policies are an effective strategy for designing and implementing youth service programmes, research has yet to identify the major forms and features of policies that exist. The present exploratory research study, conducted in 2004, surveyed experts in the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) to provide an inventory of national youth service policy in 19 countries in the region. The paper first describes the features of national youth service policies in

the LAC region. The paper then describes respondents' perspectives on factors that facilitate policy creation and obstacles that hinder policy effectiveness. The paper concludes by providing respondents' recommendations for improving policies in the region. Findings from this study uncover the factors that relate to the development and sustainability of national youth service policy, and provide a foundation for future in-depth research on the impact of such policies on communities, young people and society at large.

Methodology

Key terms are defined as follows. *Youth* refers to persons between the ages of 15 and 30, although respondents in certain countries noted slight variations from this age-range. *Service* refers to a period of intensive and substantial engagement and contribution to the local, national or world community, recognised and valued by society, with minimal or no monetary compensation to the participant (Sherraden, 2001). In the present study, the term service is used interchangeably with several forms of community service, including service-learning (e.g. service linked to an academic curriculum), volunteerism (e.g. service freely given), social service (e.g. service to address a community need such as poverty), civic service (e.g. service as a responsibility of citizenship), conscientious-objector service (e.g. community service as an alternative to military service), among others. *Policy* is defined as a government-based legislation, law, regulation, decree or strategy that has been approved and implemented, or put into action. Policies are legislated by government bodies or ministries within the government, such as a ministry of education or a youth office. In the case of a national youth service policy, the service activity is explicitly defined in the text of the policy document, and the policy is implemented in the form of a programme.

Two questionnaires were utilised in this research; one for respondents to describe a national youth service policy where it exists, and one for respondents to describe any movements towards a policy in countries where there is no national youth service policy. The questionnaires consisted primarily of open-ended qualitative questions focusing on features of national youth service policies and on factors that facilitated or hindered the policy. The authors coded responses into categories to identify main themes. Because no standardised procedures were utilised to collect the data (e.g. a

specified number of respondents per country), percentages of coded responses were not utilised. As such, the purpose of the coded responses was to uncover themes in describing the field of national youth service policy in LAC and to inform future research on the topic.

The authors requested participation from individuals with substantive knowledge of government-instituted youth policies and community service. The goal was not to have a representative sample of respondents from each country, but instead was to gather multiple responses to verify the accuracy of the responses. The authors sought respondents from multiple and distinct domains to showcase differing viewpoints, such as individuals in the institution that may have created the policy (e.g. government official), the institution that may have implemented the policy (e.g. a non-profit or non-governmental organisation administrator), and individuals who may have evaluated the policy (e.g. researchers). While the study was seeking factual information regarding the nature and configurations of national youth service policies, respondents were asked about personal viewpoints and beliefs based on their knowledge and experience in the field.

From February through September 2004, the authors emailed 232 requests to individuals in 23 countries. Fifty-five (24 per cent total) questionnaires were returned from individuals in 19 countries. Forty-eight out of the 55 questionnaires (87 per cent of those returned) were utilised in this report. Questionnaires were excluded in cases where the information could not be validated or the respondents' answers lacked clarity. Table 1 lists the number of responses per country and the respondent's professional background. Thirty responses (63 per cent) that were utilised for the study came from individuals who work in private organisations in civil society (e.g. NGOs). Fourteen responses (30 per cent) came from individuals who work in a government position. Four responses (7 per cent) were from individuals with other professional backgrounds, including a psychologist, consultant, reporter and writer. While it was a goal to receive three or four questionnaires from each country to ensure a wide range of perspectives from members in different professional sectors, only the responses in Argentina, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Bolivia represent multiple perspectives. Findings from the other countries are biased toward the perspectives of individuals in the private sector. Despite requests for participation, there were no responses from individuals in Belize, Guatemala, Jamaica and Surinam. Participant and institutional names are withheld to protect confidentiality.

Table 1 Number of questionnaire respondents per country and number of responses by professional position

Country	Total number of respondents	NGO	Government	Other**
Anguilla	1	0	1	0
Argentina*	6	4	2	0
Barbados*	1	0	1	0
Bolivia*	4	3	1	0
Brazil*	2	2	0	0
Chile*	3	1	0	2
Columbia*	2	2	0	0
Costa Rica*	1	0	1	0
Dominican Republic*	2	2	0	0
Ecuador	2	2	0	0
El Salvador	2	0	2	0
Honduras*	2	2	0	0
Mexico*	1	0	0	1
Nicaragua*	1	0	1	0
Panama*	5	2	2	1
Paraguay	3	2	1	0
Peru	4	3	1	0
Uruguay	4	3	1	0
Venezuela*	2	2	0	0
TOTALS	**48**	**30**	**14**	**4**

Notes:
** Denotes a country in which a respondent indicated that there is a national youth service policy.*
***'Other' refers to consultants, psychologists or reporters.*

Findings

Following the criteria noted above, the authors determined that 13 of the 19 countries in the present study have a national youth service policy. These countries include Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Nicaragua and Venezuela. Three countries have two

separate national youth service policies, including the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and Nicaragua. In several countries with a national youth service policy, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Panama and Nicaragua, respondents described separate movements toward another national youth service policy. Respondents in six countries, including Anguilla, Ecuador, El Salvador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, indicated that there was no national youth service policy and discussed movements toward a national youth service policy.[1] Table 2 describes the name, legislation and purpose of each national youth service policy listed by respondents. The following section highlights features of national youth service policy, and describes themes that emerged from the research.

Table 2 Summary of national youth service policies in Latin America and the Caribbean

Country	Name, year and description of legislation	Purpose and main characteristics
Argentina	Presidential Award 'Escuelas Solidarias' 2000: Presidential Decree 377, which is regulated each year by the Ministry of Education.	To reward and further support primary and secondary school-based programmes that show promise for effective practices in implementing service learning programmes.
Barbados	'Barbados Youth Service' 1995: Legislated by the Youth Affairs Division	To create and finance a national service programme that annually supports 250 16- to 26-year-olds. Youth voluntarily participate in the year-long programme, but receive a small stipend and complete job training modules, service and often become employed by the organisations they serve through.
Bolivia	Youth organisation fortification programme 1996: Supreme Decree 25287 of Law 1674 of Decentralisation, in the Department of Social Development and the Generational Gender and Family Unit of the Social Management Service.	To design and finance programmes that promote participation among all youth, and to strengthen organisations' capacity to create youth programmes through the 'Departmental Network of Youth Organisations'
Brazil	Civilian Volunteer Service Policy (Serviço Civil Voluntário). 1996: Federal Government. Created as part of the National Programme on Human Rights, implemented in every state in Brazil in 2001	To provide youth aged 18 to 21 the opportunity to perform community service as an alternative to military service, as well as to enhance the citizenship skills of youth as a strategy to protect human rights in Brazil.
Chile	Fortalicemientos de Alianzas entre Sociedad Civil y Estado 2000: By the Chilean Government.	To provide opportunities for youth ages 15 to 24 (and seniors age 60 to 90) to perform civic service through public and private organisations locally or nationally, with the goal of increasing the participants' level of civic engagement.
Colombia	The General Law of Education Year Unknown: Law 115 Article 97	Requires 10th and 11th grade high school students to participate in service-learning to improve their communities as a provision for graduation.

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Country	Name, year and description of legislation	Purpose and main characteristics
Costa Rica	Youth National Voluntary Service Programme (YNVSP). 1966: Youth Movement Office, and constituted in 2002 as Law 8261, or the National Council for Young Persons Public Policy.	To promote opportunities for youth participation in national development, including opportunities for 12- to 35-year-olds to become involved in national and local service projects.
Costa Rica	Student Community Service (Servicio Comunal Estudianti) 1997: Ministry of Public Education	Requires students to perform community service as a pre-requisite for graduation.
Dominican Republic	General Youth Law 2000: Law 49 through the State's Youth Office embeds community service activities in the general youth policy.	To provide opportunities for 15- to 35-year-olds to become involved in pro-social activities through service.
Dominican Republic	Students' Social Service Requirement 1988: Ministry of Education Ordinance 4-89.	Requires high school students to complete 60-hours of service as a provision for graduation.
Honduras	The Law that Organises the National Universities of Honduras 1980s: Ministry of Education, Education Office in State Affairs by the Law that organises the National Universities of Honduras	Requires high school and college students to perform community service as a provision for graduation in order to build solidarity among youth and increase collaboration in community development.
Mexico	Servicio Social 1945: Constitution of Mexico. Presently 70 universities have their own legislation regarding Social Service.	Requires university students who have completed 70 per cent of their course work to perform 480 hours of community service as a prerequisite for graduation.
Nicaragua	National Policy for the Complete Development of Youth 2001: Government of the Republic of Nicaragua	Includes a framework for institutions to provide opportunities for youth to perform service within the general youth policy in Nicaragua.
Nicaragua	No name provided Year Unknown: Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports	Requires high school students to perform service through the ecological brigade.
Panama	Students Social Service 1995: Law 34 of the Ministry of Education and Resolution 1003 in 1998	To supplement students' education with service experience, the policy requires public and private high school students to perform 80 hours of service.
Venezuela	Service Requirement Law 1980: Article 27 of the Regulation of the Law of Education	To supplement the curriculum by involving students in civil society and exposing them to societal ills, the policy requires public and private high school students to perform community service as a provision for graduation.

Features of national youth service policy

Study respondents were prompted to describe each national youth service policy in detail, including the part of government within which the policy was created, the design and implementation of the policy, and the general characteristics of the policy. This section synthesises the main features of national youth service policy as described by questionnaire respondents.

Similar configurations

Although no two national youth service policies are identical, several policies share similar configurations. Eight countries in the present study, including the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Honduras, Mexico, Costa Rica, Colombia, Nicaragua and Panama, have a national education-based policy that requires students to perform a specified number of service hours as a prerequisite for graduation.[2] Three countries, including Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and Nicaragua,[3] embed service as a component within a general youth policy to promote and support service programmes. Bolivia has a policy that increases co-ordination among organisations to promote service programme development. Barbados and Chile have a policy that designs and supports national youth service programmes. Brazil has a policy that provides community service as an alternative to military service, and Argentina has a policy that provides financial awards for effective service-learning programmes.

Legislated by a government body

Each national youth service policy was legislated by the national government, often through an education department (e.g. required service policies) or youth ministry (e.g. youth policies that embed service). National youth service policies were created either as their own legislation or as a component of another legislation.

Each national youth service policy includes legal regulations that establish the rights and responsibilities for youth servers and the organisations through which youth serve. For example, the general youth policy in the Dominican Republic contains articles that outline the rights and roles of young people, and guidelines for municipal, regional and national youth councils to develop plans to promote youth participation in communities through service. In Mexico, the universities that have service requirements create their own legal framework for social service. In Panama, student service is defined through articles in the policy that identify specific priorities, such as service to rural communities or to urban marginal communities, among others.

Defines the target population

Each national youth service policy defines a target population, either focusing on inclusiveness by providing opportunities for all youth (regardless of age, background, economic background) or by targeting a specific population of youth servers (e.g.

students, unemployed youth). For example, the youth policies that embed service tend to be inclusive to all young people, whereas the required service policies target only high school or university students.

Defines the policy objectives

Each national youth service policy defines the objectives for programme participants and for the service recipient. For example, the broad purpose of required service policies is to enhance student learning and civic engagement while addressing community needs, whereas the youth policies that embed service were formed to provide a mechanism for fulfilling youths' participation in pro-social activities. Other policies, such as the one in Barbados, were created to provide youth job-training and employment opportunities, and to enhance citizenship. In Brazil, the policy provides youth with an opportunity to perform community service as an alternative to military service. In Bolivia, the policy seeks to strengthen organisations capacity to create programmes that provide opportunities for youth to serve. Each national youth service policy also defines objectives for addressing community needs, such as poverty, the environment, as a response to natural disasters, and for increasing democratic practice among the organisations that implement programmes.

Funding

The presence or absence of funding is another feature of each national youth service policy. In Mexico, Bolivia, Barbados and Costa Rica, the government provides annual funding for programme implementation for basic costs including salaries, training or supplies. In Barbados, private sector, non-governmental organisations and international agencies provide additional support for specific activities and programmes. In several countries with an education-based service requirement policy, funding is scarce. For example, in Honduras and Venezuela, where there is no annual governmental budget, students often do their own fundraising to finance service activities. Likewise, in the Dominican Republic, the education-based service requirement receives no government support, and furthermore, the service component of the general youth policy does not receive any special funds beyond the normal funding of the youth policy.

Local implementation

The implementation of each national youth service policy occurs locally in conjunction with schools and non-governmental organisations who often set the guidelines and deliver service programmes. For example, policies that require service are nationally approved, but implemented by public and private high schools or universities. Other polices are implemented through newly created or already existing programmes. The policies in Barbados and Chile, for example, are orchestrated through a central office but delivered by local community organisations.

Duration

Several national youth service policies provide guidelines for the duration of service, which varies from policy to policy. In the Dominican Republic, secondary high school students are required to perform 60 hours of service per year. In Honduras, the policy calls for 100 hours of service per year. In Mexico, university students must complete 480 hours of service in a six-month period. In Venezuela, students are generally required to complete 40 to 60 hours of service in a three-month period. In Barbados and Brazil, the term for service is generally a year. In Bolivia, youth decide on the duration of the service in co-ordination with the organisations through which they serve.

Forms of service

The forms of the service through which youth participate vary from policy to policy. Among the countries with an education-based policy that requires service, such as in Venezuela, a legal framework clearly states that the student server must be involved in a voluntary activity that benefits the facility or the community. In Mexico, students are required to perform social service for a community need, such as poverty. In Nicaragua, students must perform service related to ecological purposes, whereas students in Honduras, Panama and the Dominican Republic can perform any type of service to complete the requirement. There are few restrictions on the forms of service through the other national youth service policy configurations, provided the service addresses a community need.

Professional development and support

Some national youth service policies incorporate training, professional development and support to those implementing the service programmes, and to the servers themselves. For example, in Mexico, professors receive training to implement programmes. Some policies provide support to servers. In Mexico and Chile, servers sometimes receive monetary support or stipends to cover living expenses. In Bolivia, under the Youth Fortification Programme, organisations receive training on different strategies for co-ordinating efforts related to promoting youth service. In the Dominican Republic, teachers do not receive any formal support under the requirement policy, and their involvement in delivering the programme is considered part of the normal workload.

Incentives

Incentives are another common feature built into national youth service policies. In countries with a service requirement policy, the incentive is for students to achieve a specified number of hours to graduate. In Venezuela, some students receive recognition awards for exemplary service work. In Argentina, Presidential Awards provide government recognition and financial resources to schools that implement

high quality service-learning programmes. In Barbados, servers receive a small stipend and often find employment through the organisation in which they served. In Costa Rica, servers receive basic provisions, and exemplary service performances are eligible for a Youth Award. In Chile, youth servers often receive symbolic awards and distinctions.

Awareness campaigns

Many national youth service policies incorporate awareness campaigns to inform youth of service opportunities and to facilitate organisations in co-ordinating activities. In Barbados, a central placement office promotes opportunities and advertises positions that need staffing, and radio and television advertisements are utilised to recruit servers and publicise success stories from the programme. In Bolivia, the Youth Fortification Programme uses a database to contact organisations regarding youth service opportunities. In Costa Rica, service programmes are publicised through radio announcements, newspapers and email. The youth policy in the Dominican Republic promotes service opportunities through the Internet. In Mexico, programme administrators are building an information database system to identify and promote social service opportunities at the national level.

Perspectives on national youth service policies

In each country with a national youth service policy, questionnaire respondents provided their perspectives on policy effectiveness, facilitating and hindering factors to policy creation, and recommendations for improving the policy in the future.

Effectiveness

Despite there being no empirical research on the impact of any of the national youth service policies on youth servers or on society itself, respondents provided anecdotal perspectives as to whether each policy had achieved the objectives as set forth at the time of legislation. In the countries with an education-based service requirement policy, many respondents discussed that these policies have been and will continue to be effective because such policies involve thousands of students in service each year. However, many respondents, such as those in the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Honduras and Mexico, noted that the quality of the service under these requirement policies depends entirely on the school that implements the policy and on the individual students who serve, as programmes vary from school to school and students perform the different types of service with varying degrees of motivation.

In countries with a general youth policy that embeds service, including Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua, the respondents indicated that despite

great potential for providing opportunities for youth to participate, the implementation of these policies has been slowed by financial limitations and a lack of co-ordination among the key players. In Barbados, the respondent noted that the Barbados Youth Service programme has mostly achieved its goal of involving youth in service to gain employment skills. However, the respondent also noted that the programme under the policy has been stunted because it reaches a limited number of youth each year. Similarly, in Chile, the respondent noted that the policy has been successful, but could be expanded to include more youth throughout the country. In Brazil, the respondent noted that the Civilian Volunteer Service has been effective at providing opportunities to youth from less advantaged backgrounds to serve, but has been hindered by recent budget cuts.

Facilitators of national youth service policy creation

Respondents described many factors that facilitated policy creation. The bulk of these responses focused on the positive role of government officials, non-governmental representatives, and youth servers in driving the movement prior to policy creation. For example, respondents discussed that youth ministers and youth councils have been instituted in recent years (Angel, 2003). According to the respondents in Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic, an outcome of the increased focus on youth was the creation of general policies to address the total development of youth (Angel, 2003). In these cases, youth service programmes were included within these policies as an action plan to fulfil the goal of providing a pro-social activity through which youth could be involved. Other respondents in countries with an education-based service requirement policy, noted that policy creation was often driven by a particular governmental official's beliefs that service can be an effective applied learning strategy to supplement the academic curriculum, and a way for students to repay society for their public education.

Respondents often listed non-governmental civic organisations, such as the Red Cross and Boy Scouts, and religious organisations, such as youth groups in the Catholic Church, as crucial in leading the national youth service policy movement. Such organisations have historically provided an avenue for youth to serve, as noted by respondents in Mexico, Panama, Argentina and Costa Rica. More recently, these organisations promoted interest in and understanding of youth service through workshops and conferences. These organisations have been catalysts for broader campaigns and events such as Global Youth Service Day and the International Year of the Volunteer.

Many respondents also noted young people themselves as a force behind national youth service policy creation. Youths' involvement in service in Latin America and the Caribbean, which has been well documented in recent years (Tapia, 2004), put service on the agenda of policy makers by giving credence to the notion that a youth would take advantage if given structured opportunities for service.

Obstacles that hinder national youth service policy implementation

Respondents described many obstacles that hinder the full implementation of national youth service policy. In Costa Rica, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Barbados and Nicaragua, respondents suggested that the lack of financial resources has curtailed programme infrastructural necessities, such as training and professional development for administrators and servers themselves, supplies for performing service, facilities where service takes place, and travel between service sites and youths' homes.

Respondents described a lack of co-ordination between policy makers on the national level and the individuals who implement programmes locally. For example, in the Dominican Republic, the respondent indicated that the service component of the youth policy remains incomplete due to a lack of organisation in the government and differences of opinion regarding how to implement key policy components locally. Similarly, in Barbados, the respondent noted that political wrangling between the two government parties has interfered with local delivery of the Barbados Youth Service programme.

Although thousands of students serve through these policies, respondents noted obstacles that hinder national education-based service requirement policies. In the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Honduras, for example, respondents described the inherent nature of required service as an obstacle that prevents successful programme implementation. Despite all students serving under requirement policies, some students resent these mandates because of the belief that service should be performed voluntarily, or autonomously. Furthermore, respondents noted that required service activities are often misrepresented because schools must report that all students completed the needed hours. In such cases, respondents noted that some students inevitably engage in service types that are less meaningful (e.g. collecting garbage or painting walls), solely to complete the needed hours.

Recommendations and conclusion

While there is considerable momentum around youth service, more can be done to promote national youth service policy creation, implementation and sustainability. Respondents were asked to provide recommendations to advance and improve policies that involve youth in service. Several themes resonated among the respondents' recommendations for improving national youth service policies. One theme was for policy makers to improve the design of implementation strategies to ensure the sustainability of programmes over time.

Recommendations toward this end included increased capacity building and collaboration between public and private entities, from the policy draft stage to delivering the programmes under the policy. For example, the respondents in several countries noted that local organisations could have been more intricately involved in the design of the programmes under the policy. These responses emphasised the need for a unified participative approach with a common vision with the greatest number actors. Similarly, many respondents noted a need for a more inclusive

approach to delivering national youth service policy to provide opportunities for all youth, regardless of educational or socio-economic status.

Respondents in all countries noted the need for increased public and private financing for infrastructural programme needs, including professional development, supplies and facilities, staffing and co-ordination among those creating and those implementing the policy. For example, in the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica, the respondents suggested the general youth policies that embed service need a national network or database through which activities could be co-ordinated locally and in conjunction with the national regulations. In the Dominican Republic and Honduras when discussing the required service policy, respondents noted that teachers often receive little or no training on effective methods for engaging students in innovative practices such as service-learning. Similarly, respondents in Venezuela and Mexico discussed the need for workshops at the national and local level, and improved technology to enhance collaboration. The respondent in Honduras also recommended that those who deliver the education-based service requirement should more fully articulate the policy's purpose to students, to ensure that students have a more complete understanding of the policy – that is, as a responsibility of active citizenship.

Respondents in each country recommended an increase in the quantity and quality of research on national youth service policy. Such research is necessary in order for policy creators and programme implementers to demonstrate to private and public funders how policy is necessary to support programmes that benefit society and youth participants alike. The respondents discussed a need for research to assess policy implementation and to determine the impact of the policies. Respondents noted that such research is a challenge, however, because of the implementation of disparate programmes across a country. For example, in the Dominican Republic and other countries with a service requirement policy, while local school administrators must adhere to the guideline for students to serve a particular number of hours of service, schools are otherwise free to design their programmes as they choose. Such leeway in implementation poses great difficulty for researchers interested in determining the overall effect of a policy. In this regard, the analysis of certain features is a potential first step in assessing the landscape of disparate programmes implemented under the same policy.

Respondents discussed the need for impact analysis to determine the effectiveness of policies and programmes relating to youth outcomes (e.g. employment, civic engagement, etc.), and community level outcomes (e.g. needs such as the environment, emergency response, poverty, etc.). For example, although all students perform service through school-based requirements, research has not demonstrated the efficacy of such policies across programmes. In this case, respondents noted that there is a need for common set of metrics and benchmarks that can be used in evaluations, and for research designs that can measure programmes across disparate sections of a country with different levels of delivery. Research is also needed to be able to design policies to address specific needs of communities. In Mexico, for example, the respondent emphasised the need for increased linkages between the requirement policy and local communities, so that the service requirement can better address the needs of those in marginalised areas.

Research is also needed to identify the economic costs of implementation (e.g. the amount of funding needed to sustain programmes), and how such costs influence the creation and sustainability of national youth service policy. Finally, respondents noted that research needs to be done into the role of cultural, political, social and demographic factors in determining the impact of national youth service policy (not touched upon in this paper), each of which is fundamental to understanding how policies and community service have different meanings across countries; the role of service and its status cannot be the same in every country as the status of democracy varies greatly across countries (Johnson et al., 2004).

The past two decades have witnessed an increase in literature devoted to youth service programmes, much of which focuses on curriculum and programmatic features that enhance the effectiveness of youth service programmes (Centre for Social Development, 2004; Metz and Youniss, 2005; Youniss and Yates, 1997). This paper describes the status and configurations of national policies that support youth service involvement in Latin America and the Caribbean. The research, performed in 2004, revealed that 13 of the 19 countries in the study have a governmental policy that involves youth, indicating a strong state and societal interest for engaging youth in pro-social activities that address pressing community priorities. The research also revealed that in several countries with a national youth service policy, there are movements underway toward the creation of another, separate policy.

Findings from this study illustrate that the national youth service policy landscape in Latin America and the Caribbean is diverse, as policies are implemented and operated distinctively, nationally across and locally within countries. At the same time, national youth service policies share common features in that they are created by government agencies and are implemented and sustained with the collaboration of local non-governmental youth-serving organisations. This research demonstrates that such policies create a framework for national or local programmes, define the target population, and define the objectives of the service. Ultimately, national youth service policies are created to provide opportunities for young people to become involved in and to make a contribution to society as active and responsible citizens.

Due to the non-representative sample of respondents and the exploratory nature of this research, the authors recognise that this study may have omitted existing national youth service policies. Further, this paper does not address findings in relation to the cultural, political and social context of the particular countries in Latin America and the Caribbean in the study. At the same time, by uncovering some of the configurations of national youth service policy and addressing specific factors that hinder and facilitate such policies, this assessment provides a stepping-stone for further research and inquiry.

Lasting change best occurs when all stakeholders (e.g. communities, mass media, civil society, public sector, private sector, etc.) view youth not as 'clients' or a set of deficits that need to be addressed, but rather as essential agents in addressing important community needs. Around the world, young people are mobilising for civil

rights, organising for environmental justice, advocating for school reform, serving on agency boards, raising consciousness through the arts, responding to natural disasters, and providing neighbourhood-based services. These efforts challenge portrayals of youth as a problem in society, as well as the typical focus of professionals on the needs and deficiencies of youth. National youth service policies, in their best form, provide an important framework for young people to become viable and active contributors to the maintenance and betterment of society.

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Notes

[1] Respondents described the movement toward national youth service policy as such: In Anguilla, a respondent who is a former member of the national youth council indicated that in the near future, there is likely to be provision for service to be included in the country's general youth policy. In Argentina, there were varying opinions on whether a national youth service policy would be created. A government official stated that no clear legislation currently exists. However, other respondents in the private sector stated that the increasing number of youth servers and the increasing number of private and public organisations that promote service enhance the likelihood that a national youth service policy will someday be created. In Bolivia, the respondents stated another national youth service policy will probably be created through the efforts of youth-serving organisations such as the Bolivian Red Cross. In Ecuador, both respondents stated that it is unlikely that a national youth service policy would be created in the near future, as youth issues have not been the focus of policy makers. In El Salvador, the respondents stated that service may soon be included as a component of the general youth policy. In Panama, all five of the respondents stated that a national youth service policy will be created as there is strong interest and support for youth volunteerism, and the benefits of youth service (for the server, recipient, organisations and society) are becoming more well-known. In Paraguay, respondents provided a similar assessment by stating that the National Council of Volunteers (CONOVA) will continue advocating for the creation of such a policy. In Peru, the respondents shared the belief that a national youth service policy would one day be a reality, with the national youth council (CONAJU) playing a central role. Respondents in several countries described stalled attempts to legislate a national youth service policy. In Columbia and Peru, national youth service policies have been approved in the past, however service programmes have yet to be implemented under these laws. In Ecuador, a draft law to provide service as an alternative to military service was not approved by the government. In El Salvador, a 2002 proposal for a voluntary service law was presented to the Legislative Assembly but not approved. Respondents in several countries described recently approved national service policies. The governments in Argentina and Peru recently passed 'laws of volunteerism' for all citizens to engage in service activities. While young people can participate, these laws do not focus specifically on youth nor do they provide opportunities specifically for youth, and are therefore outside of the scope of this inquiry. The respondent in Nicaragua also indicated that policy makers are presently working to approve the 'Law of Voluntary Service'. This law would provide opportunities for all citizens, including youth, to perform service.

[2] Little information was provided on the requirement policies in Colombia, Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

[3] The respondents in Anguilla and El Salvador indicated that draft provisions exist for the inclusion of service activities within these countries' general youth policies.

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Legislation for the Development of Volunteerism in Latin America and the Caribbean

EUGENIO MAURICIO RAVINET MUÑOZ AND ANDRÉS CLAUDIO PENNYCOOK CASTRO

SUMMARY

The chapter begins by discussing the social transformations of our time, indicating how these have influenced the nature of volunteering, its essential profile and its relation to the policy-making process. The chapter then analyses, in general, legislative advances in the region, making brief mention of the basic notions of an ideal model. It later makes a critical comparison of the various elements of the present regional and national legislation, pointing out the peculiarities of each of the existing laws. Finally, it explores future challenges in the field of volunteering.

Introduction

The political, social and cultural transformation that our countries have experienced since late in the last century have resulted in radical modifications in the concepts of society, democracy and civic participation. Tasks that were once the exclusive domain of the state are now shared with organised civil society (Dohme, 2001). Society itself has become an actor in the processes that transform it. It no longer plays a passive role with the population being the object of the state's activity; instead, it has moved on and now plays a more prominent role, contributing to the design and process of public policy formation. In this way, the active and direct participation of citizens emerges as an act of solidarity, complementing the action of public organs.

Volunteerism can be seen as the essence of non-governmental organisations, in particular, and of civil society, in general, since it is practised by societies aiming for a greater degree of democracy in social relations.

When viewed in this way, volunteerism is perceived as the direct interaction between citizens on a horizontal level, representing a relationship devoid of paternalism and patronage, and characterised by reciprocity, which is different from material compensation. This type of 'new' volunteerism, which can be distinguished from the classical or traditional type,[1] maintains its altruistic essence in spite of emphasising its bilateral character. The relationship between the volunteer and the recipient represents an ideal opportunity for the acquisition of knowledge and experience, as well as the creation of social networks. In practice, volunteers tend to be people who, alongside their work or academic activities, participate in initiatives that are offered to them by solidarity organisations, depending on their abilities and interests. This generates an extensive network that enhances the professionalism of the service through specialisation. In many cases, such organisations are characterised by their promotion of social, cultural or national-ethnic demands of neglected minorities, exerting pressure to introduce public policies that advance the interests of these group.[2]

In those communities in which participation is fragmented or segmented, the phenomenon of structural violence tends to occur. This enables certain groups to form systemic barriers that block other individuals or groups from realising their own interests. On the other hand, in cases where civil society is organised, it becomes a way of unblocking communicative action through which the consensual construction of society becomes possible. Borrowing from the terminology of Habermas, volunteerism enables its participants to construct a lifeworld (*lebenswelt*) with greater democracy and solidarity, and in which the construction of consensual ideas and communicative action as the preferred form of interaction are predominant (Horster, 2001).[3] Traditional volunteerism, which is undertaken purely on the basis of altruism, lacks the quality mentioned previously, since service that springs from dependency is essentially vertical and unconditional. In this model, the assisted person is the object of the benefit and does not participate or co-operate to organise any kind of action. There is no social interaction between the actors, in the sense of them both being equally relevant to the engagement. Instead, the intervention is a unilateral, charitable act that, although worthy of praise, lacks the social impact associated with 'new' volunteerism.

Naturally, voluntary action does not replace, and nor *should* it replace, state action. However, there are various arguments that make it desirable to increase the number of citizens ready to become involved in voluntary action. Perhaps one of the most important reasons is its positive impact, especially in terms of deepening commitment to the values of democracy and social justice. In other words, volunteerism reveals a society that commits itself to its own destiny. States that have become aware of the social and economic contribution of volunteerism[4] tend to introduce volunteerism in their public policies and legislative agendas as a way of regulating its scope and stimulating its growth. On the other hand, the importance of this type of enterprise requires not only promotion by the state, but also the involvement of the private business sector. This is brought about through the injection of funds and by encouraging the organised participation of groups of workers in co-operative projects.

On the urgency to legislate

Latin American and Caribbean societies have proved themselves productive in the proliferation of volunteerism initiatives; however, the governments in this region have only just begun to include such initiatives in their legislative agendas. The process started in the 1990s and is ongoing.

For this reason, the motivation to participate in volunteerism is not always matched by a legal framework that defines the rights and obligations of the parties, or by an efficient system of recognition for the work accomplished. The state, therefore, needs to establish adequate rules that differentiate volunteerism from other types of civil, commercial or labour activities, while providing it with sufficient institutionalisation. At the same time, it should not hamper or constrain the volunteers' work with excessive regulation.

The absence of laws on volunteering does not stop organised citizens from carrying out volunteer initiatives, but in many cases, compliance between these activities and common law is problematic. While volunteerism makes a strong social impact, it can manifest a precarious relationship with the law.

However, the enactment of laws relating to volunteerism would not automatically guarantee its development. It is necessary to point out that a legal framework for volunteering should not involve taxes, establish requirements or result in an excessive bureaucracy that would constrain the initiative of those interested in carrying out voluntary service. The same can be said of the obligation to carry out certain acts and contracts, which in the voluntary relationship tend to be characterised by a greater degree of informality. The success of voluntary initiatives depends partly on adequate systems through which they can be promoted, including funding that can be granted upon the presentation of project proposals, subject to objective criteria that guarantee the allocation of resources to a plurality of initiatives.

Overall, the question of whether or not national legislation in the region has contributed to the creation of a favourable environment for the development of volunteerism must be answered in the affirmative, since the countries that have

legislated on the matter have seen the growth of volunteerism, both quantitatively and qualitatively. However, a word of caution is necessary, since the same question can be misleading: we must not forget the situations these countries found themselves in before these norms were enacted. Even before the validation of these laws, Argentina, Brazil and Colombia reported high levels of participation in non-profit organisations. In the case of Argentina, this sector constituted around 3,2 per cent of its GNP, in Brazil 1,5 per cent, and in Colombia 1 per cent (Salamon et al., 2001). In these cases, a moderately promising situation existed for the development of third sector activities in general, and of volunteerism in particular, with a high percentage of the population actively participating as volunteers. These are cases of policies stimulated 'from below', meaning that incorporation into the political agenda has not come from state bureaucracy nor from political parties, but from broad sectors of the population. In other words, they are cases in which legislators have been more open to innovation, and in which public opinion has had a stronger influence on the management and design of public policies. While keeping in mind the previously stated word of caution, we can now focus on a brief study of the regional situation with regard to legislation and volunteering.

Features of current national legislation

The enactment of laws governing volunteerism assumes a strategic decision on the part of the legislator. In this respect, there are three central elements that structure national legislation in the region:

a. The **organisational form**, through which voluntary action is provided;

b. The **type of volunteerism** assimilated by the legal norms; and

c. The **public promotion measures**.

a. **Organisational form:** The first option generally chosen by the national legislations of the region favours organised volunteerism, which is considered to be more stable than the sporadic and isolated variety. Although the latter is acknowledged as having good intentions, it is not very efficient.

   Although social organisation constitutes one of the pillars upon which the laws of the region build up the model of volunteerism, the legislation tends to be silent on what else constitutes this model. In general, it is defined by its altruistic nature and its aims of common good and social interest.

   So, for instance, Argentinian law prescribes that this model will be applicable to those who provide volunteer initiatives of general interest, whatever their legal form may be (Art.2). This includes welfare activities such as social services; co-operation on civic, educational, cultural, scientific, sport and health development; protection of the environment or any other activity of similar nature (Art.5).

   Colombian law differentiates between volunteering organisations and entities that undertake voluntary action. The former includes those organisations with a

legal persona that aim to develop volunteer programmes, projects and activities, while the latter includes entities that do not have these aims, but nevertheless carry out voluntary activities (Art.3 nos 3-4). This legislation considers activities of general interest to be co-operative efforts involving welfare and social services, as well as those relating to civic involvement; leisure and religion; educational, cultural, scientific, sport and health development; protection of the environment and the economy; research; and other activities that are consistent with the aims of voluntary action (Art. 4).

The Nicaraguan Bill, in turn, sets out in various articles the legal form of the organisations, pointing out that they will have a legal persona, will be non-profit organisations, and will undertake participatory programmes that pursue aims or objectives that promote the common good and public interest.

Brazilian law, using similar terms, adds that the above-mentioned institutions can be either public or private.

None of the legislation establishes special norms that simplify the acquisition of legal standing for the interested parties. This suggests that there is an assumption that such matters tend to be regulated by the general norms. Both the Argentinian law and the Nicaraguan Bill have provided the parties with a catalogue of rights and obligations, while the Colombian law establishes a list of principles governing the voluntary relationship.

Lastly, some legal bodies expressly regulate the civil responsibility of the organisation for the actions of its volunteers in respect of third parties; while others invoke general civic norms and procedures for this purpose.

b. **Type of volunteerism:** Although there is no generally accepted definition of volunteerism, there is basic consensus with regard to the fundamental elements that constitute the notion of volunteering.

Many expressions are used by legislators in the region to highlight the altruistic nature of volunteerism, such as: "with no profit motive in mind" (Art.1 Argentinian law); "altruistic" (Art.3, Nicaraguan Bill); "not paid" (Art.1, Brazilian law *"actividade nao remunerada"*); and "without remuneration" (Art.3 Colombian Law). Nevertheless, they are unanimous in their premise that the notion of volunteering is incompatible with any form of remuneration. For this reason, some legislation adds that the volunteer has a duty and an obligation to abstain from and reject any form of material compensation. An example of this is Art.7(e) of Argentinian law. A similar norm can be found in Art.7 (d) of the Nicaraguan Bill.

Another element, which is as important as the previous one, is the 'free' nature of volunteerism. This is equivalent to saying that its vocation is the result of the volunteer exercising his or her own will, which is alien to the imposition of legal or any other form of pressure. If volunteerism became a requirement for access to a public service, it would, in practice, become an official public position. It would not be feasible to make this institution compatible with voluntarily arriving to

fulfil a legal obligation that the individual must theoretically comply with. This is the case of volunteers who undergo compulsory military service (OIJ, 2002).[5]

c. **Promotion measures:** When the state wishes to intervene in a particular type of human conduct, it does so by regulating this conduct. Depending on ethical and social considerations, it can either foster the conduct or tax it, with the aim of influencing the cost-benefit analysis associated with the said action. As we have pointed out, volunteerism is widely sanctioned; so besides regulating it, the aim is not to alter the solidarity and altruism of the institution, but rather to establish measures that promote it.

   There are few laws in the region that relate specifically to financial mechanisms designed to support the direct promotion of volunteering programmes. Colombian legislation, which is one of the most comprehensive in this field, establishes the right of volunteering organisations to receive financial, material and technical support from public resources (Art.8). The Nicaraguan Bill limits itself to making an abstract appeal to public institutions to promote the establishment of volunteerism (Art.10). Other laws are inclined to take a different approach, which does not prevent volunteerism activity from receiving incentives in accordance with other administrative regulations such as those regarding the promotion of social programmes. In this regard, it would be desirable to have regulations that call directly for the establishment of open and transparent lines of financial support, ideally in accordance with public tender processes. Another approach would be providing tax exemption for donations given to volunteerism organisations.

   A second method of promoting volunteerism, which most of the laws of the region have opted for, is related to mechanisms for the promotion and social recognition of voluntary labour, such as campaigns to recognise and popularise volunteerism, training programmes for volunteers, etc. This approach is adopted in both Argentinian law (Art.12) and the Nicaraguan Bill (Art.8), while Colombian law establishes a more complex set of regulations that emphasise the right of volunteering organisations to receive state assistance, both technically and materially (Art. 8-10).

   An alternative adopted by Argentinian law is the recognition of voluntary work as a criterion for nomination to public office (Art. 14).

Conclusions and challenges

In considering the legal framework that can develop around the regulation of volunteerism, one needs to take account of the extent to which social volunteering organisations are able to deal with the required formalities in terms of their constitution and functioning. The laws of the region have established special rules for the formation of these types of organisations, demanding that they are legally constituted.

Without going into a detailed study of the applicable legislation, it should be pointed out that it would be desirable to opt for simple constitutional models for social organisations, through a system of registration and accreditation. This would provide public administrators with assured access to the necessary information for the co-operation and control of social organisations, while making it easy for organisers to formalise their requests. In this way, the organisers of voluntary projects would become involved in the informational and promotional systems set up by the different states.

On the other hand, invoking rights or obligations that involve excessive costs for social organisations – such as the obligation to take out insurance for every volunteer – may result in their failure to comply with the law, which in turn will lead to the deterioration of the institution. In such cases, states should be particularly careful when drawing on comparative law that responds to situations in other countries; instead, they should balance models used elsewhere with the conditions that characterise the social reality in their own countries.

In general, the imposition of excessive legal demands is an obstacle to the growth of formal volunteerism. This is because the excessive costs involved can discourage people from forming organisations, or force them to act informally, avoiding legal responsibility and placing themselves outside the formal systems of volunteerism information and promotion. Organisations that deserve special mention in this regard are the population and youth organisations, as well as university volunteers, which, for different reasons, tend to lack the material and human resources necessary to comply with unrealistic legal obligations. Since their social impact is widely recognised, they should be strongly supported. The present state of volunteerism development in the region is related to the significant increase in the incorporation of social groups that were traditionally recipients of social assistance, or that abstained from participating in this kind of initiative because of limited financial resources. These groups now organise themselves, trying to find the necessary support through public, private, national or international institutions to undertake their volunteerism projects. This implies that there is a greater level of democratic awareness and commitment on the part of our societies – a development that should be legally supported. It is for this reason that restrictive legal requirements should be avoided, as they get in the way of a natural phenomenon that deserves to be backed up by the legal sphere.

A challenge for the legal bodies of the region is the regulation and promotion of so-called corporate or business volunteerism, through which the employees of a company or group of businesses carry out voluntary activities under corporate auspices. This kind of initiative enjoys special financial autonomy, being firmly supported by the employer who, in turn, builds a positive public image. The social gains of this kind of volunteerism are considerable, since it affects the company, the social group to which its action is channelled, and society in general, appropriating the synergies that are characteristic of an organised structure. The promotion of this kind of volunteerism appears to be consonant with the general policies of the states of the region.[6]

Based on this brief analysis of the region's legal frameworks, their characteristics and some of their future challenges, it is fitting to conclude that the legislation referred to has contributed to the development of volunteerism. It has generated both the

material conditions — such as technical and financial measures — for the promotion of volunteering, as well as the legal frameworks that identify the institutions and confer legitimacy on the different parties. This has resulted in a qualitative improvement in the system or social network created by these initiatives. Furthermore, the laws cited above have favoured a distinct model of volunteerism – organised volunteering — into which they have sought to channel isolated and sporadic projects. This has strengthened those entities that have gradually become well-known players in sectoral public policy debates, achieving what has been called 'policies from below'.

All things considered, although the current state of the region's legal framework for volunteerism is far from satisfactory, some promising trends can be seen in the passage of a small number of laws and the legislative progress, albeit slow, of bills on the issue. National legislation has been able to establish certain standards for volunteering and has generated positive results in the qualitative growth of voluntary activity. Even though the measures for the promotion of volunteering are, on the whole, incomplete, they do provide a basis for future legislation, both in relation to the definition of the volunteer and with respect to the rights and obligations involved in volunteering. In the years to come, we will see if more Latin American states join in and legislate on the subject, as well as the ways in which social organisations manage to get states in the region to commit themselves to even more resolute measures for the promotion of volunteering.

Before concluding these reflections, we highlight some fundamental aspects to be considered by public agents who have the responsibility of formulating public policies related to voluntary practice. Firstly, we are faced with a private activity that contributes substantially to the increase of the GDP in those countries whose legislative frameworks have established legal bodies that promote the diversification and strengthening of volunteering. On the other hand, volunteerism does not only result in isolated benefits for its direct beneficiaries. It has immediate benefit for the actual volunteer, contributing to a better knowledge of the society in which he or she lives, which in turn promotes the formation of stronger civic and democratic values. In the same sense, organised voluntary action enriches the social fabric and allows the formation of social capital networks, which open public spaces for the construction of a more democratic society.

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Notes

1 Traditional volunteerism is defined by capital contributed mainly by natural persons or legal entities (mainly private) and volunteers normally not specialised for the work to be done.

2 The so-called 'new social movements' have this characteristic (Touraine, 2001).

3 In this sense, it should be highlighted that civil society organisations – together with the bureaucracy, political parties and pressure groups – have become important actors in the processes of public policy formulation.

4 According to the UN, volunteering activities represent between 8 per cent and 14 per cent of the gross national product of developed countries (Sec. Gen. Report, 2001).

5 However, the citizen is free to join a particular organisation as a volunteer or not, being able to agree to specific obligations, which, nonetheless, could not prevent the volunteer from freely withdrawing from the programme or organisation, by virtue of his or her service being provided voluntarily.

6 On this point, it is important to state that the said regulation must ensure that labour rights are guaranteed in such a way that volunteerism is truly the free expression of solidarity, and not an imposition by the employer seeking to generate a marketing campaign at low cost.

PART 3

Leadership and Youth Service

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Youth Service in Latin America and the Caribbean:

Exploring the potential for social development

LISSA JOHNSON, AMANDA MOORE MCBRIDE AND RENÉ OLATE

SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter is to review the potential role of youth volunteerism and civic service in social and economic development in the Latin America and Caribbean region. The focus is on youth as both "strategic actors" and beneficiaries.

The chapter describes goals and areas of service of youth volunteerism and civic service programmes. These programmes address problems in the areas of basic needs, health service, education, skill development, community development, the environment, human rights and peace.

The discussion is divided between potential impacts on the hosts and host communities, and on the volunteers

themselves. In conclusion, implications for programme, policy and research are discussed.

Introduction

In the Latin American and Caribbean region, the majority of the population is under age 30, and approximately 30 per cent are between the ages of 15 and 30 (Eclac, 2003). Recognising the capabilities of youth as well as the need to increase their capacity, there is growing interest in the potential of youth volunteerism and service to contribute to social development (IDB, 2000, Unesco, 2000).

We define social development as "a focus on how people, families and communities increase their capacity to meet basic needs, formulate and reach life goals, and contribute to the economy and society" (Sherraden and McBride, 2004, p. ix). To achieve these outcomes, social development often requires structural change, cross-sector collaboration, and the active engagement of a range of stakeholders. In this view, social development is both a process and an outcome. Given this, we propose that youth volunteerism and service can make potentially significant contributions to social development, creating new institutions and positively impacting communities and nations, while simultaneously impacting the skills, potential and engagement of youth volunteers.

It is likely that economic development and democratisation in the region are leading to increased civic engagement among the citizenry. Core social institutions such as schools and religious communities are mobilising citizens in voluntary action. Citizens – including youth – are organising themselves, and overall, cross-sector collaborations are emerging to promote citizen engagement aimed at the amelioration or prevention of social issues. In the realm of civic action, we distinguish between informal and formal volunteerism, focusing on volunteerism and service that occurs through structured programmes. Programmatically based volunteerism may be long-term and intensive, which we refer to as "civic service". Commonly, civic service[1] programmes are explicitly arranged to impact the volunteers as well as the hosts and host communities. As the institutional infrastructure of the voluntary sector develops, programmatic forms of youth volunteerism and service may continue to increase. Why is this important for the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region?

As we know, youth refers to the period from late adolescence to young adulthood when a young person begins to focus on self-identity and societal role. At this life stage, individuals begin to develop a moral and social conscience (Lickona, 1983). Service programmes may engage youth in service to their fellow citizens and communities through building houses, tutoring children, and developing small businesses and sustainable agriculture. Through these activities, important community needs are addressed and, as participants, youth may be impacted in ways that support their development, e.g. resulting in increased employability, social capital, and social and civic skills.

The purpose of this chapter is to review the potential role of youth volunteerism and service in social development in the LAC region, focusing on youth as both 'strategic actors' and beneficiaries (Rodriguez, 2003). The chapter describes areas of activity and goals of youth volunteer and service initiatives in the LAC region that contribute to social development, addressing the areas of basic needs, health services, education, skill development, community development, environmental sustainability,

and human rights and peace. We divide the discussion between possible contributions to the hosts and host communities and possible effects on the volunteer. Lastly, we discuss implications for programmes, policy and research.

Youth volunteerism and service in the LAC region[2]

The Centre for Social Development has worked collaboratively with researchers in the LAC region to identify organisations and initiatives focused on youth volunteerism and service. From their efforts, over 500 such projects were identified, ranging from those sponsored by local, national and international non-government organisations (NGOs) to those implemented by government, schools and religious-affiliated organisations.[3] The identified organisations and initiatives explicitly recruit youth as volunteers, and some were founded by youth themselves.

The list was derived from reports, expert knowledge and extensive searches of websites. As such, this effort was not systematic. The intention was to demonstrate a range of activities, types of organisations, and programmes in the region, and to identify areas for future research. Below we provide an institutional perspective, and identify primary areas of service activity and programme goals. While research on effects is limited, service activities and goals may be an indicator of potential effects. We offer this synthesis and programme examples to inform a larger research agenda on youth volunteerism and civic service in the LAC region.

Institutional sectors

Volunteer and civic service initiatives are often implemented by distinct institutions within society. These include governments, schools and universities, churches and NGOs. Most programmes – by virtue of their connection to the voluntary sector – may be implemented by NGOs, which can be international, national or local in scope (McBride, Benitez and Sherraden, 2003). We use this institutional perspective to categorise contemporary forms of volunteerism and civic service, but we are also cautious, as noted by Espinoza (1977), not to generalise across all countries. The role of volunteerism and its status cannot be the same in every country because the levels of development and the status of democracy vary greatly across countries (Espinoza, 1977). In addition, categorisation can limit understanding of the dynamic nature of inter-organisational networks and public-private partnerships, which may be at the heart of programme implementation (McBride, Benitez and Danso, 2003). We offer this institutional perspective as a potentially illustrative analytical device, and encourage research into the nature and impacts of programme hosts, networks and partnerships.

Local and national NGOs

Volunteerism and civic service may be implemented by NGOs that are focused on specific local or national needs. Local youth groups and informal grassroots volunteer activities may contribute to the formation of more organised local or national NGO programmes. Local-level volunteerism may indeed be the most prevalent form of volunteerism in the LAC region as well as worldwide. Particularly notable in the region are local initiatives that have been started by youth and in most cases by students.[4] This model highlights the increasing roles youth are taking to respond to social issues such as rural poverty and lack of housing. Examples are Opción Colombia and Un Techo Para mi Chile. Both organisations have expanded from local to national to regional presence through replication of their model across countries, resulting in the creation of Opción Latinoamérica and Un Techo Para mi País.

International NGOs

Beginning in the 1940s and 1950s, voluntary action in Latin America was marked by increased internationalisation of volunteers and volunteer organisations, and the increased participation of international Protestant volunteer organisations like the Quaker American Friends Service Committee and the World Council of Churches (Gillette, 1968). In McBride, Benítez and Sherraden (2003), 18 of 20 identified long-term volunteerism or civic service programmes in the LAC region were international. Some international programmes recruit both foreign volunteers and local volunteers in the countries where they operate. International service programmes may have offices in host countries where foreign and local personnel often run the programmes. In this chapter, we define an international NGO programme as being international in scope, having a local organisational presence in the LAC region, and hosting local and foreign volunteers. An example of this type of programme is the International Red Cross Red Crescent Federation.

Government

Governments in Latin America support youth volunteer and civic service programmes through policy sanction, financial contributions, or direct programme management. In Mexico, for example, government policy mandates service as a requirement for university graduation (see *Schools and universities* below). In Brazil, government agencies provide some financial support to such programmes as the Civil Service Project. A third level of involvement, which is the focus of this classification, is government agencies that run youth volunteer programmes. Programme examples include Ser Solidario, a project of the Colombia Joven programme of the Colombian national government, Instituto Nacional de la Juventud in Uruguay, and Dirección Nacional de la Juventud (Dinaju) in Argentina. The goals of these programmes are to promote youth civic participation through activities that assist needy families and communities.

Schools and universities

School and university programmes are perhaps the most prevalent, structured form of service in Latin America. School programmes can take many forms, varying in formality, scope and time commitment. They can range from primary or secondary service-learning projects that occur over a weekend, to semester-long, university-based projects. Service-learning in many Latin American countries, particularly Argentina, is student-organised, and designed to address specific community needs, which may enhance the learning process (Tapia, 2003). School and university programmes occur in both public and private institutions. Servicio Social in Mexico is perhaps the oldest form of university-based civic service (Niebla, 2001).

Many Central and South American countries have government-sanctioned civic service programmes at schools or universities, or both. In Mexico and Costa Rica, for example, students have service requirements for university graduation. In other countries, such as Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Peru and Venezuela, only students seeking professional graduate degrees such as those in the medical field are required to participate in voluntary service programmes (Garrido, 1998). To graduate from secondary school, students in countries such as Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Venezuela and Panama must complete a required number of hours of community service (Franco, 2001; Tapia, 2003). Other South American nations have also begun to introduce youth volunteerism and civic service in their national education policies for primary and secondary school, as is the case in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay (Tapia, 2003). Government partnerships with universities and private corporations have provided the impetus for taking volunteerism to scale, offering more extensive variety and numbers of service opportunities through the collaboration.

While university and school programmes are probably the most prevalent institutionalised forms of service, it is important to remember that a minority of youth have access to advanced education. In Brazil, for example, university students represent only about six per cent of the population of 18- to 24-year-olds (Sampaio, Vargas and Mattoso, 2001).

Religious-affiliated organisations[5]

Religious-affiliated organisations provide opportunities for people to express their faith through service to others. This may include community and economic development work as well as work for the environment, but excludes activities that are intended for evangelisation or indoctrination into a religion.

Religious-affiliated organisations offering volunteer and civic service opportunities are diverse in administration and location. Programmes such as the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, a Catholic-based organisation, offer long-term assignments administered by local Jesuit communities in Belize, Chile, Haiti, Nicaragua and Peru. Established in the 1950s, its members live in poor communities, teaching, organising and helping

residents provide for their daily needs. Another example is Transparencia in Peru, founded by religious leaders in 1994 to promote fraud-free elections. Transparencia volunteers help communities and local associations to organise and monitor their own electoral processes, promote citizen participation, and educate secondary school students on civic participation. In 2000, Transparencia mobilised 20 000 volunteers; 60 per cent were between the ages of 18 and 30, and 43 per cent were high school and university students (Bernbaum, 2002).

As an example of the potential prevalence of faith and church volunteerism, a survey on volunteerism in the metropolitan area of Lima, Peru, showed that young people were most likely to volunteer through churches, and that church or church-affiliated organisations were second only to neighbourhood organisations in facilitating volunteer activity (Portocarrero, Loveday and Millán, 2001). Forty-seven per cent of the young people in the survey indicated that volunteer work is part of their religious beliefs (Portocarrero, Loveday and Millán, 2001).

Summary

While volunteerism and service may be rooted in local and religious-affiliated organisations, there are two notable areas of growth. The first is the growth in institutional forms of volunteerism in the education sector. This growth is occurring at the university level, and emerging in primary and secondary schools as service-learning. Our review of the history, research and programme examples suggests that education is one of the strongest institutional sectors of formal civic service in the LAC region.

The second area of growth is youth-initiated, particularly student-driven projects. Many such local initiatives have become established as local or national NGOs, contributing to the development of civil society. Growth in youth-focused civic participation has the characteristics of an emerging social movement.

Goals and possible contributions to hosts and host communities

In this section, we examine programme goals based on areas of service activity and the potential contributions of youth volunteerism and service to the intended beneficiaries. Across a range of initiatives, target populations may include children, indigenous youth, older adults, women, those with disabilities, extremely impoverished communities, and rural areas.

We begin each section by briefly identifying important issues facing the LAC region, and then provide programme examples that aim to address those concerns. The issues are classified by service areas, and correspond generally to those identified in the *2003 United Nations World Youth Report*. These social-development issues include basic needs and emergency services, health, education and skill development, community development, environmental development, and human rights and peace.

Basic needs and emergency services

Basic needs include food, shelter and other daily subsistence and care provisions. These needs are addressed by a variety of institutions and initiatives. Activities in this area of service may overlap with other service areas such as community development and health. Hermanos del Anciano volunteers serve the elderly in Acapulco, Mexico, by providing food, house repairs and companionship. The Brigada de Voluntarios Bolivarianos del Perú (BVBP) also visit patients in hospitals and nursing homes.

In general, emergency services such as disaster relief tend to be sponsored by multinational or international NGOs, and are not necessarily marketed as youth service programmes, although youth do participate in such activities. The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and the Disaster Relief and Conservation Project between Honduras and Nicaragua are examples. The Disaster Relief and Conservation Project, involving the Asociación de Organizaciones no Gubernametales (Asonog) in Honduras and the Consejo Nacional de la Juventud (CNJ) in Nicaragua, engages in both disaster relief and conservation projects with a focus on promoting youth participation. The group was formed as part of the disaster-relief efforts following Hurricane Mitch in 1998.

Health

Substance use. Alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and inhalants are the most common substances used by youth. Reports of current alcohol consumption in Central and South America range from about 38 per cent of youth aged 15 to 19 years in the Dominican Republic, to about 44 per cent of urban secondary school students in São Paulo, Brazil (Roberts, 2003).

In Mexico, Centros de Integración Juvenil is an organisation focused on drug abuse prevention and treatment, operating at the community level throughout the country with approximately 11 000 volunteers and reaching over two million people (Centros de Integración Juvenil, 2005). Another example is the Rehabilitation Centre at Hogar Crea Dominicano in the Dominican Republic, which has incorporated volunteer service into the rehabilitation process. As part of re-entry into society, residents engage in community service, providing education on drug abuse, HIV and AIDS, and general literacy.

HIV and AIDS. In the LAC region in 2001, about 560 000 youth aged 15 to 24 were infected with HIV and AIDS (Unicef, 2002). Within the region, HIV prevalence differs widely. The Caribbean is the most affected region after sub-Saharan Africa. Transmission via drug use is a growing phenomenon, particularly in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay (Lopez, 2003).

The Volunteer Youth Corps (VYC) in Guyana has contributed to community education and awareness regarding HIV and AIDS. VYC led a comprehensive educational programme to educate about HIV and AIDS, involving youth representatives from political parties, religious organisations, the private sector and educational groups. Another example is the Red Cross Red Crescent Youth of the Caribbean, which has implemented prevention programmes based on peer-education.

Wellness. Volunteer projects focused on health range from providing vaccinations to community education. A 1996 project of the Universidade Solidaria Programme in Brazil inoculated all children within a community in one day (Sampaio, Vargas and Mattoso, 2001). A project of the 2001 GYSD facilitated by Cebofil in Bolivia targeted a children's hospital, building a children's playground that also serves as a classroom for young volunteers conducting educational activities. Volunteers of Actividades Comunes a Capacidades Diferentes (Accadi) in Argentina support children with special needs, assisting with rehabilitation efforts, and engaging them in social, cultural, educational and sports activities.

Education and skill development

Education. While primary and secondary education attendance and completion rates in the LAC region have increased in recent years (Wolff and Castro, 2003), several goals remain, including reducing inequalities in the educational system and creating a stronger link between education and the needs of the employment sector (Portillo, 1999). The *Social Panorama Report of 2001-2002* and the *2003 United Nations World Youth Report* note that education should become more relevant to the current economy and employment opportunities (Chisholm, 2003; Eclac, 2002). In the past two decades, vocational and formal schools have been given more attention. However, there "remains a need for apprenticeship and work experience opportunities in combination with knowledge and skill delivery" (La Belle, 2000, p. 30), for which volunteer and service programmes may be well-suited.

Basic education that promotes literacy and societal participation underlies a variety of social and economic issues. Education on specific life skills, public health and environmental issues is also important. Volunteer and service programmes are designed to address these educational needs. For example, Group for Life Incentive (GIV) in Brazil provides community education on HIV and AIDS. Other programmes focus on literacy and leadership training, such as those offered by Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes (ACJ) and Corporación Colombiana de Voluntariado.

Examples of youth-driven programmes that aim to increase literacy include Adopta un Herman @ in Chile and Voluntades in Peru. Adopta un Herman@ pairs university students as tutors with at-risk school children. Voluntades was begun by a group of young people concerned about the critical situation of Peru's economy. Volunteers contribute by tutoring school children as well as providing other areas of service. The programme has deployed over 1 400 volunteers throughout the country since it began in 1997.

Job skill development and entrepreneurship. Youth unemployment is high in the LAC region, typically double the adult rate (Hopenhayn, 2002). Some Caribbean islands report the highest youth unemployment rates in the region, which may be as high as 47 per cent (Hopenhayn, 2002; National Youth Forum, 2003; World Bank, 2003). For growing numbers of young people in Latin America, the only possibility of finding a job is in the informal economy, where they earn low wages and are often subjected to poor working conditions. In the past decade, seven out of ten new jobs were created in the informal sector (Hopenhayn, 2002).

Entrepreneurship is a growing area of interest in the LAC region and perhaps an opportunity for expansion of service activity. In 1999, 18 individuals were trained on beekeeping as a viable income-producing activity, by volunteers with the Brazilian Universidade Solidaria (Sampaio, Vargas and Mattoso, 2001). Other programmes include the Asociación Jóvenes del Perú Volunteer Programme, which focuses on developing job skills and economic entrepreneurship. The Guyana Information Youth Project integrates skill-building with access to information technology. They operate a learning resource centre that provides information on small business development and training on data processing.

Skill development related to information and communication technology. Increasingly, the degree to which individuals, communities and nations have access to and can use technology – such as the telephone, computers and the Internet – impacts their participation in the regional and world economy. The 'digital divide' relates to unequal access to technologies as well as to the ability to use that technology. In the LAC region, only five per cent of households own computers (Wolff and Castro, 2003). The number of Internet users across the region, whether accessing through homes, schools, libraries, businesses or other means, is estimated at 33 million (Suoronta 2003; Norris et al., 2001). This represents approximately six per cent of the population.

Another initiative focused on bridging the 'digital divide' is the Committee for the Democratisation of Information Technology (CDI). Founded in Brazil in 1995, CDI is focused on increasing access to information technology in marginalised communities. Volunteers assist in establishing computer resource centres, training and providing technical assistance (CDI, 2003). In a focus group with youth service programme representatives, this initiative was highlighted as a valuable and substantial contributor to expanding access to information and communication technologies throughout the region (IDB and GSI, Chile, 2003).

Community development

Community development is a broad category that overlaps with goals such as increasing local economic development and civic engagement. For the purposes of this chapter, we define community development as local-level activities that link institutions and resources, promote quality of life, and foster a sense of togetherness among citizens. Seligson's (1999) research asserts that community development organisations in Central America increase democratic participation because they address critical social and economic issues, working with government officials and other community leaders. Community development is particularly relevant to the LAC region where citizens in emerging democracies exercise their civil rights. There are many programme examples in the LAC region that focus on community organising, mobilisation and advocacy.

One example is the Civil Service Project of Brazil. This is a collaborative programme between universities and government, which operates through the Ministry of Justice. Youth serve from nine to twelve months, assisting impoverished communities and cultivating their own sense of citizenship and respect for human

rights (Sampaio, Vargas and Mattoso, 2001). Results indicate that local community organisations increased their knowledge and skills, and that the development was sustainable as the organisations were able to continue the work initiated by the youth volunteers. Positive changes were also found in community members' behaviours and attitudes toward drug use, sexuality, violence, education, family and work (Sampaio, Vargas and Mattoso, 2001).

Argentina's focus on service-learning in the primary and secondary school curriculum has yielded important contributions to community development. Tapia (2004) notes that service-learning may benefit the students, but it is also strongly focused on the 'service' side of service-learning. For example, of the 50 best service-learning projects identified by Argentina's Ministry of Education, half were performed by low-income students whose service addressed their own community's concerns (Tapia, 2004).

Other examples of LAC programmes focusing on community development are those administered by religiously-affiliated organisations with a history of active collaboration among local parishioners and community members. One example is Hogar de Cristo, which has programmes throughout Chile facilitating housing assistance and agricultural co-operatives. In 2001, Hogar de Cristo mobilised 112 000 volunteers in support of approximately 850 projects (Erlick, 2002). Another example is Habitat for Humanity International, a prominent religiously-affiliated international NGO, which provides housing assistance in communities throughout the LAC region and around the world. In 2000, more houses had been built in the LAC region than in any other region of the world (Banks, 2001), and by 2003, Habitat volunteers had assisted in building 50 000 homes throughout the LAC region (Fernandez, 2003).

Environment

In the LAC region, environmental concern is focused on ozone layer depletion in the Southern nations and the effects of global warming that may contribute to more frequent natural disasters (CLADEHLT, 2001). Deforestation is another major concern. Latin America accounted for 20 per cent of the world's forested areas in 1958, dropping to 15 per cent in 2000. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation ranks Brazil as having the highest deforestation rate in the world, with four other Latin American countries in the top six (CLADEHLT, 2001).

Many organisations recruit both international and local volunteers to work on environmental issues. Examples include Iracambi programmes in Brazil, Vida in Costa Rica, and Jatun Sacha in Ecuador. The Youth Institute for Sustainable Development (Injudeso) in Costa Rica recruits local youth for environmental projects. Guardaparques Universitarios, a student-run organisation in Venezuela, promotes and organises environmental-education campaigns.

Human rights and peace

Over time, volunteerism and civic service directed at human rights and peace has been a focus of religious-affiliated organisations though these activities, and goals are

not limited to them. Red Cross Red Crescent, founded in 1919, is one of the oldest organisations involved in this area of service. Witness for Peace, in Nicaragua, and Opción Colombia in Colombia, are examples of volunteer efforts to promote peace and social justice in the region. AFSC is another example of an organisation whose origination was based on opposition to war. AFSC volunteers have been addressing issues of peace and human rights in the LAC region since the 1940s.

Goals and possible effects on the volunteer

The previous section examined programme activities and possible contributions to hosts and host communities. In this section, we examine programme activities and goals for the youth volunteer. Effects on the volunteer have been more widely studied than effects on hosts and host communities (McBride, Lombe, Tang, Sherraden and Benítez, 2003). Attitudinal change tends to be the focus; behavioural or long-term change is rarely studied. Nevertheless, the service experience provides opportunities for education, skill development and civic expression, which have been found to positively impact the volunteers (Perry and Thomson, 2003). We organise the following discussion around these areas of possible effects on the volunteer, and illustrate with programme examples.

Education and job skills development

The service experience may expose volunteers to opportunities that increase skills or allow them to practise the skills they already possess. Portocarrero, Loveday and Millán (2001) found that the highest motivating factor for youth to volunteer was to learn and gain experience. By expanding their skills and experience in areas related to potential employment, youth can explore career opportunities and choices (Aguirre International, 1999b; Cohen, 1997; Griffiths, 1998; Jastrzab et al., 1996; Sherraden et al., 1990; Starr, 1994). Some service programmes invest directly in the youth through awards that help pay for education (Neumann et al., 1995; Wang et al., 1995). Studies also suggest that volunteering increases occupational achievement. For example, a study involving US youth showed that ten months after programme completion, volunteers had higher employment and educational achievements compared with those that did not participate in the programme (Jastrzrab, 1996).

One example of a programme designed to increase job skills and work experience is Servicio País in Chile. This programme, targeted at those under age 35, was developed to assist in the transition from university to the job market, helping young professionals gain experience while also providing important services to under-served communities. Volunteers report that they highly value this programme because it offers an opportunity to practise their skills, help people, and be appreciated for their expertise (Espinoza, 2000; Palacios, 1997).

Service-learning at the primary, secondary and university levels provides both an experiential approach to learning and a way of addressing community issues (Tapia, 2004). In Argentina, service-learning in primary and secondary school curricula has become more widespread, totalling approximately 13 per cent of all schools (Tapia,

2004). Recognising that other factors contribute to the effects, initial research suggests that service-learning may reduce grade repetition and drop-out rates (Tapia,2004). In university-based service programmes, such as Opción Colombia in Colombia, Servicio Social in Mexico, and Universidad Católica de Santa María in Peru, students apply their skills through providing assistance to resource-poor individuals and communities.

Personal skills development

Perry and Thomson (2003) distinguish types of skill development ranging from professional skills, as discussed above, to more generalised skills, including "communication, interpersonal relations, analytical problem solving, understanding organisational systems, and technology" (p. 56). For certain programmes, these generalised skills show the most significant positive change.

Civic service, specifically, has been associated with positive changes in maturity, self-esteem and personal autonomy (Perry and Thomson, 2003; Starr, 1994). Positive impact on self-esteem is based on the belief that helping others validates oneself (Wilson and Musick, 1999). In the transition to adulthood, such validation may lead to greater self-confidence and recognition of one's contribution to society.

Such effects are reinforced by volunteers of the North American Community Service Project (NACS) in Mexico. NACS was a cross-national pilot programme between Mexico, Canada and the US. An NACS volunteer, reflecting on educational activities with young children in a community, stated: "The children all participated and worked very hard to show us what an amazing impact we had on them and how they have changed each one of us!" (Sherraden and Benítez, 2003, p. 25).

Volunteerism and service are also associated with improved discipline among youth and reductions in risk-taking behaviours (Jastrzab et al., 1996; Kalu, 1987). One study suggests that volunteerism may reduce delinquency and risky behaviour such as skipping school and using drugs (Wilson and Musick, 1999). However, effects may be mediated by the volunteer's own perception of the value of the service activity to him or herself, such as being enjoyable, voluntary, challenging or skill-building (Wilson and Musick, 1999). These mediators may be important considerations for designing programmes and determining service activities, especially for programmes that target at-risk youth.

Cultural integration

Volunteerism and civic service may improve social skills, including the ability to interact positively with others (Cohen, 1997; Egan, 1994; Griffiths, 1998; Jastrzab et al., 1996). They may also play a potentially significant role in linking individuals of different socio-economic or ethnic backgrounds. Civic service, in particular, is associated with the development of positive attitudes toward different ethnic groups and promoting cultural sensitivity (Cohen, 1997; Frees et al., 1995; Jastrzab et al., 1996; Kornblum, 1981; Macro International, 2000; Sikah, 2000; Newton, 1992; Omo-Abu, 1997; Purvis, 1993; Starr, 1994). Results from the NACS pilot programme

showed that key strengths of the programme were its emphasis on "creating a sense of responsibility for and connection with the North American continent as a whole" and the opportunity to "develop friendships in other countries" (Sherraden and Benítez, 2003, p. 38).

These effects are important to consider for the promotion of human rights, peace and tolerance. There are many cultural differences within and across nations in the LAC region. For example, there are stark differences between rural and urban areas, and there are many programmes that send urban youth to rural areas. For example, one volunteer of Opción Colombia, working in a dangerous region where rebel forces had attacked, reported: "I learned to love Colombia more because I got to know it better, its good and its bad side" (Martínez, 2002, p.3).

Civic engagement

Volunteer and civic service programmes may help participants acquire civic knowledge and values (Cohen, 1997; Jastrzab et al., 2001). Several studies on service in the US reveal changes in the volunteers' expressed civic attitudes and civic engagement following the service experience (Jastrzab et al., 2004; Aguirre International, 1999b; Griffiths, 1998; Hajdo, 1999). Service may also help to create a 'pipeline' leading to careers that are focused on social issues (Jastrzab et al., 2004; McCabe, 2001). An evaluation of the Universidade Solidaria Programme in Brazil attributed the programme to citizenship training for the university students (Sampaio, Vargas and Mattoso, 2001). Early results from service-learning programmes in primary and secondary schools in Argentina suggest that they may also have an important impact on citizenship education (Tapia, 2004).

In addition to hands-on volunteer service programmes, it is important to mention the growth of youth networks, alliances and structured opportunities, such as conferences, that are focused on organising and cultivating civic engagement among youth. These groups offer an opportunity for youth to have a voice in the regional and international youth development and policy-making agenda. There are many examples of voluntary youth involvement in regional and worldwide civic networks. One is Global Youth Service Day, involving worldwide participation including 20 LAC countries and 108 000 LAC youth celebrating and providing volunteer service (Ortega et al., 2005). Other civic networks include IDB Youth Network; Foro Latinoamericano de Juventud (FLAJ); Red Latinoaméricana de Juventudes Rurales (Relajur); Caucus de Jóvenes de las Américas contra la Discriminación, Comunidad Latinoamericana de Juventudes (CLAJ), Red Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Jóvenes por el Medio Ambiente, Youth Latinoamericana, Youth Employment Summit (Yes) and International Youth Parliament (IYP).

Summary

For the LAC region, the most common areas of activity and goals across all types of institutions may be, respectively, community development, education and skill development, civic engagement and health. Different institutional sectors may

emphasise different areas of activity and goals. For example, relative to other programmes, local NGO programmes may give more emphasis to specific populations and community development. National NGOs and government programmes may have more general orientations, and thus, may be more equally distributed across the service areas. International NGO programmes may give more focus to emergency services in particular, while faith and church programmes may stress human rights and peace. Governmental programmes and school and university-based programmes may rate highest in the promotion of civic engagement.

We recognise that the list of volunteer and service initiatives reviewed for this chapter is not comprehensive. Moreover, the institutionally based categorisation may not be reflective of programmatic reality, but very cautious general observations may be offered. These observations represent testable hypotheses that can inform a rigorous analysis of the scope and nature of youth volunteerism and civic service in the LAC region.

What do these general assessments suggest for targeted programme and policy development? Institutional-based programming may be the most efficient and sustainable course for development, so that programmes and policies can be built around what the given institutions do best and what is most natural for their missions and resources.

Contributions toward social development

Youth service programmes may have social development effects, mutually benefiting the volunteer as well as hosts and host communities. Sherraden (2001) describes the potential for service experiences to be 'strong policy', producing multiple outcomes for multiple stakeholders. But rather than focusing on a single action with a single outcome, a strong policy or programme is one that produces multiple positive effects, and youth service may do just that. Obviously, certain social, economic and political conditions may be necessary for volunteerism and service as an intervention. In this section, we only address the intervention.

Implications for programmes, policy and research

How can youth volunteer and civic service programmes be most effective in addressing social-development goals? In brief, there should be participation, it should be inclusive, actions should be effective, and there should be a plan for sustainability and expansion. Achieving these goals – providing greater opportunities for volunteer participation and greater effects by serving larger numbers of beneficiaries – suggests the need to expand the volunteer infrastructure and institutional mechanisms to support youth civic service. But hypotheses and recommendations are based on limited research. In order to best inform policy and programme development, it is important to continue conducting research into the effectiveness of volunteer and civic service programming in achieving a beneficial threshold of social development.

Scope and institutional forms. A systematic assessment of the scope and institutional forms of service in the LAC region can lay the groundwork for policies and programmes that are more informed and better targeted. For example, a study across programmes could assess variations in time commitment, structure, areas of service and goals, and how these are related to outcomes. With respect to programme partnerships, it is important to understand in what ways the increase in inter-organisational networks and programme partnerships impacts on social capital and civic service. Other questions involve policies and how they may support or hinder programme implementation.

Participation of youth in programme design. An essential element of programme design and implementation is the involvement of all stakeholders. Including a range of stakeholders ensures diverse perspectives on the benefits that can be achieved by programmes. Obvious, but sometimes overlooked, stakeholders in youth volunteerism and civic service are the youth themselves. There are many examples of youth leading projects and creating organisations to address a variety of social issues. The establishment of such organisations helps to expand the volunteer infrastructure and creates more organised opportunities for youth volunteerism and civic service. Youth civic engagement can be a key factor in the social development of the region.

Inclusive opportunities to participate. While we do not readily know how many youth are volunteering across the region, a critical question is who is *not* serving and why. Portocarrero et al. (2004) find that volunteer participation in Peru occurs more frequently among those with higher income and higher education is a signal that the inequalities of the region might be reflected in opportunities to volunteer (certainly, inequalities in participation also occur in the United States and European countries, but this does not make them acceptable). Some countries, such as Brazil and Argentina, have passed laws that provide social security and other insurance for volunteers (Toro and Moret, 2000). As indicated previously, government involvement in service programming, such as in university or school partnerships, offers greater access for a larger number of youth to participate in service opportunities.

Additional research is needed to identify and study policy and programme designs that focus on inclusion, expanding opportunity for participation of low-income, rural, indigenous, disabled or other marginalised groups of youth. Inclusive models of service should be sensitive to the servers' needs for performing the role, including accommodation for physical or developmental disabilities and costs associated with choosing voluntary over paid work. Financial incentives and government policies for increasing participation should be more fully explored. The issue of stipendiary service is controversial but may be an important variable for those who could not otherwise leave the workforce. School-based service-learning may be a strategy that is both more inclusive and less costly to the volunteer.

Goal-directed activities. Goals should be clearly articulated, focused concretely on what is to be achieved, and integrally connected to larger national and regional social and economic agendas. Connecting education to service appears to be a good design for providing a bridge from education to work and for multidisciplinary

approaches to problem-solving, such as projects devoted to community development. With the growing infrastructure of service in the education sector, both voluntarily from students, as well as by government sanction, such an integrated approach is both logical and appropriate, creating more opportunities for those serving, and identifying more clearly those in need of services.

One area of service that merits additional focus is youth entrepreneurship. Existing programmes include various strategies for obtaining education and job skills, but cannot assure employment. Programmes might consider expanding some of their education and skill-development services to focus on how individuals can directly apply their skills to start their own businesses.

Assessment of effectiveness. In order for youth service programmes to be considered viable, they must produce positive outcomes. One recommendation is to include an evaluative component when setting programme goals. An evaluation defines measures of success, tracks specific programme activities, and establishes intermediate and final outcomes in order to assess how well programme goals are being addressed. Such information can help assess which programme characteristics and models are most effective, as well as what may be good service practices.

Results are promising regarding the effects on the volunteer, but it is necessary to know if positive effects accrue beyond the volunteers to the individuals, organisations, communities and nations being served by the given programme. Cost/benefit analyses are highly valuable but include the challenging task of measuring intangible benefits (such as self-esteem and social values). The most valuable but costly research designs are longitudinal, following volunteers and beneficiaries over time. Such information would provide an ongoing resource for informing and refining programme implementation and policies.

Programme sustainability and expansion. How can programmes expand participation and reach more beneficiaries? The most successful programmes to date are those that have established partnerships with other organisations, or use designs that are easily replicable. Partnerships build social capital, connecting resource-rich institutions such as universities to impoverished areas such as rural communities. School or university-based programmes are examples of those that maximise community partnerships. Programmes such as Opción Colombia, Un Techo Para mi Chile, and CDI are examples of those that have been replicated across countries.

An example of the potential for partnership to leverage resources across sectors is Sirve Quisqueya, a committee led by the NGO Alianza to co-ordinate Global Youth Service Day 2003 in the Dominican Republic. Members of the alliance include local and national governments, international and national NGOs, religious-affiliated organisations and university students, with modest contributions from private corporations, international governmental bodies and foreign government civic service programmes such as the Peace Corps. While the alliance began as a means to organise a national/global educational service event, it resulted in an ongoing structure that allowed many of the major youth service-related programmes to co-ordinate resources, ideas, advocacy and learning.

Conclusion

Youth volunteerism and service is not a panacea for issues facing the LAC region. This strategy is just one of many strategies that can contribute to social development. Much more research is needed to assess the impact on youth volunteers and beneficiaries at the individual, family and community level. If youth volunteerism and civic service is as effective as it appears to be, how can this intervention be maximised? The political answer lies in generating vision and political will among leaders at all levels. The economic answer lies in finding resources to support civic service as a social and economic development strategy. The administrative answer lies in examining programme models to determine which designs offer the greatest potential for increasing participation, and expanding those opportunities and incentives. Finally, the academic answer lies in generating a greater knowledge base, especially regarding measuring effects. This chapter has provided an overview of youth volunteerism and civic service in the LAC region. While systematic evidence is in short supply, we have outlined what is currently known. We have proposed programme implications and a research agenda with the intention of maximising institutional support for youth volunteerism and civic service that has the greatest potential to contribute positively to social development.

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Appendix A

Youth Volunteerism and Civic Service in Latin America and the Caribbean

Areas of service by institutional sector: A preliminary analysis

		Areas of service															
Institution type	**N**	**Education/ skills development**		**Community development**		**Basic needs**		**Health**		**Environment**		**Emergency services**		**Human rights/ peace**		**Civic engagement**	
		n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Local NGOs	9	7	78	6	67	4	44	4	44	1	11	0	0	1	11	1	11
National NGOs	25	17	68	24	96	8	32	9	36	8	32	2	8	3	12	11	44
International NGOs	5	4	80	5	100	3	60	2	40	1	20	2	40	1	20	2	40
Government	6	4	67	6	100	3	50	2	33	2	33	2	33	1	17	6	100
Schools and universities	20	20	100	18	90	3	15	10	50	9	45	1	5	1	5	12	60
Religious-affiliated organisations	11	7	64	10	91	7	64	6	55	1	9	2	18	7	64	3	27
Total	**76**	**59**	**78**	**69**	**91**	**28**	**37**	**33**	**43**	**22**	**29**	**9**	**12**	**14**	**18**	**35**	**46**

Note: Some initiatives may have engaged in multiple service areas. Percentages for each area are calculated within institution type. Total percentages are calculated across all institution types.

Notes

1 Throughout the remainder of the chapter we refer to 'civic service' as 'service' for economy of expression.

2 We acknowledge that not every type of volunteerism is represented. Corporate volunteerism and participation in political parties are not included because they are not specifically focused on youth, although these are growing areas of volunteer activity. There are also a myriad ways that people help each other on a daily basis through mutual aid or local grassroots volunteerism and, despite their lack of structure, may be the most prevalent form of volunteerism in the region.

3 Some of these initiatives are listed online at http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/csd/gsi/library/progdb.htm.

4 Youth-driven volunteerism may or may not occur through NGOs.

5 We distinguish religious-affiliated organisations from other local, national and international NGOs because of their distinct and historical role in development and volunteerism in the region, even though the organisational base for the religious-based programme may categorically be an NGO.

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Voluntary Service by Youth in Community-Based Organisations

DACIL ACEVEDO RIQUELME AND GUSTAVO SMITH

SUMMARY

This chapter reviews the potential role of youth volunteerism and service in social development in the LAC region, focusing on youth as both actors and beneficiaries. It provides a detailed description of volunteering in the LAC region, examines programme goals based on areas of service activity, and looks at the potential value of youth volunteerism and service to the beneficiaries. The effects of volunteering are considered in three broad categories: education and job skills development, personal skills development, and cultural integration and civic engagement.

The chapter examines the implications for programme policy and research with a particular focus on how youth volunteering and civic service programmes can become more effective in addressing social development goals.

It is argued that there should be increased and inclusive participation, that the actions undertaken should be effective, and that there should be a plan for sustaining and expanding the programmes.

"We cannot build a different world if we remain indifferent."
– Gandhi

Introduction

Volunteerism in Latin America and the Caribbean has re-emerged as a powerful expression of positive values and concern for social issues. Voluntary service, defined as caring and acting for the benefit of others, dates back many centuries and has its origins in the communal traditions of the indigenous peoples of the continent, colonial institutions and women's charitable organisations. The Catholic Church and other religious groups also developed forms of volunteerism based on their particular notions of charity and service.

These traditional forms of volunteerism had their own logic and mode of operation, which were shaped by the economic, political and social context. Moreover, they were carried out by people whose notion of citizenship was vastly different from that of today.

Today, the motivation of volunteers, the contexts in which they operate, the profiles of the institutions that support them and the kinds of work they undertake differ enormously from traditional forms of volunteering, and young people are emerging as the new protagonists of voluntary service.

Young people have become key players in defining new forms of volunteerism. Analysing the transition towards a new paradigm of volunteerism depends on understanding youth involvement in volunteering within the general context of exclusion and poverty – of which they are the main victims. It is difficult to understand voluntary service in Latin America and the Caribbean without linking it to the situation of young people in the region and to the strategies they employ in pursuing their own development as well as the development of their communities.

In conceptual terms, the notion of charity that flows unilaterally from the beneficiary to the recipient has changed to that of communitarian volunteerism. The latter is characterised by a horizontal relationship between those who give and those who receive. Most of them are young and poor, and in this context, the idea of 'reinsertion volunteerism'[2] makes sense, since it involves both parties in contributing ideas and initiating actions. This vision highlights the empowerment of young people as autonomous subjects rather than political objects, and focuses on their ability to influence their local environment and contribute to the development of their own communities.

It is clear, therefore, that this is an area to be explored if we are to explain the extent of youth voluntary service in community-based organisations, understand their methods and recognise their virtues, while, at the same time, identifying their weaknesses.

Young people in Latin America: Between exclusion and prominence

The concept of youth is a historical, social and cultural construct.[3] It deals with a vital period in the lives of human beings, during which their identities as autonomous subjects are formed, their public roles and functions are defined, and they progressively acquire full citizenship.[4]

The United Nations (UN) organisation classifies young people as those between the ages of 15 and 24. In Latin America, however, most government and other organisations define a young person as a man or woman of between 15 and 29 years old, with the categories subdivided as follows: adolescents (13- to 18-year-olds)[5], young people (18- to 25-year-olds) and young adults (25- to 30-year-olds).

At present, more than 50 per cent of the world's population is under 25 years of age. Some 84 per cent of the world's young people live in developing countries. In Latin America, "there are more than 100 million young people between 15 and 24 years of age, representing 19,3 per cent of the region's total population".[6]

In State of World Population (1998), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFP) outlined the greatest global challenge of the 21st century as follows:

> *In the next two decades, some of the least-developed regions of the world will see an increase in their economically active population. This 'demographic voucher' offers these countries an opportunity to build human capital and underpin long-term development – if investments are made in education, work and health services …*

Given that 62 per cent of the region's population is younger than 30 years old,[7] the demographic voucher arises as a historic opportunity. Latin America and the Caribbean is a young sub-continent with vast human potential, and therefore it is important to invest in human capital to build social capital by focusing on young men and women.

The general outlook for the region is less than encouraging if one considers that, for the past 20 years, it has displayed the world's most unequal distribution of income. The huge economic disparities have generated large-scale social instability and brought into question the credibility of democratic governance in certain countries.

Today, one in every two Latin Americans lives below the poverty line. The main victims of social, economic, political, cultural and technological exclusion are children, young people and women of all ages. The majority of young Latin Americans must deal with the fact that education is generally of poor quality and difficult or impossible to access; and that their daily realities include unemployment, unstable employment, poverty, delinquency, and social and institutional violence: Latin America has the "the highest rate of youth homicides, being 36 for every 100 000".[8]

According to the CEPAL[9], 80 per cent of the young Latin American population is concentrated in poverty belts on the peripheries of cities. The latest estimates of the Inter-American Institute of Co-operation for Agriculture (IICA) are that there are 32 million[10] young people in rural areas. The lack of development opportunities in rural areas causes many of them to migrate to the cities, where they are hampered by their lack of skills. Unable to compete in the labour market, they join the ranks of the vast numbers who struggle to survive in the peri-urban slums.

In the year 2000, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Millennium Declaration, which pledges the international community to reducing poverty by 2015 by meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). On 20 June 2005, the Agencies of the United Nations[11] published a document entitled *Millennium Development Objectives: A Vision from Latin America and the Caribbean*. It concluded that the most important reason for inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean is that the region has not improved its distribution of income nor access to goods and resources by the poor, whose plight is made worse by the lack of employment opportunities.

In view of this situation:

> *… a concerted regional action is required, co-ordinated and articulated as a collective and synergistic effort of institutions and/or public organisations, private and civil society, which all permit the effective achievement of ODMs in Latin America, empowering the youth in a way that they can play a prominent role in combating poverty, and promoting social, educational and labour inclusion to the full.*[12]

Voluntary service is a development strategy that is central in the fight against poverty. Youth volunteerism is a particularly powerful tool, not only because it facilitates the social and economic inclusion of young people, but also because it promotes their empowerment in an enterprising social environment. Community-based youth voluntary service is certainly a key factor in local development, as well as in attempts to make our region economically competitive, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable. The youth, therefore, represent strategic capital in fighting poverty and strengthening democratic governance in the region.

Youth expert Ernesto Rodríguez holds that, while policies aimed at children must focus on protection, and policies for women must focus on equality, youth policies must focus on participation. He describes the promotion of youth volunteerism as a strategy specific to this region, explaining that:

> *… it is our societies that systematically lose out with youth exclusion, and therefore it becomes a matter of urgency to radically change this focus, which can be done by the promotion of alternative strategies that rely mainly on the potential of young men and women, and that concentrate on generating spaces for youth participation at all levels. This is due not only because of strict criteria towards a neglected sector of the population, but also and fundamentally for the development of our countries.*[13]

It is important to interpret youth participation according to the codes of young people in the 21st century, rather than from an anachronistically traditional perspective. Sergio Balardini, therefore, maintains that:

> *... the north seems to point towards the fight for inclusion [where] … young people today participate in well-defined actions, with concrete claims and denunciations, from which they expect a certain effectiveness, related with their life due to a certain proximity, not channelled through traditional organisations in most cases, in which it does not matter to obtain a positive end-result in*

organisational terms, according to the '70s canons. It could also be affirmed that young people today are more inclined to relate to or associate with projects on concrete issues, and less with the objective of representing interests.[14]

From this generational perspective, volunteerism is seen as a powerful tool in youth participation, as it permits "the reduction of unequal situations and the promotion of the common good"[15] Volunteer actions in different fields such as education, health, environment and culture promote the "interrelation between young men and women and their community, and the conjugation of the verb 'solidarity' is possible as an option in life, in which remuneration is not of an economic nature."[15]

Youth participation and the construction of citizenship

Faced with the diversity and fragmentation of our societies, a correlation emerges between the new perceptions and identities among the youth that manifest themselves in the building of social capital, primarily at local level.

For Dina Krauskopf, the integrated development of young people implies a combination of participation, commitment and empowerment. The optimal outcome is achieved when "young people develop their own projects and suggestions, fix their objectives, methodologies [and] innovative codes, and look for support and advice when necessary".[16] Furthermore, the author observes, there are new dimensions in youth participation that translate into new orientations and forms of youth organisation, as observed in the following table.

Table 1 Changes in the dimensions of youth participation[17]

Dimensions	Old paradigm	New paradigm
Collective identities	Based on socio-economic and political-ideological parameters	Based on ethnic-existential parameters.
Orientation		
Social change	Modification of the structure changes the individual	Personal change orientates itself to modify collective living conditions
Spatiality	Local epicentre, global trenches	Global epicentre, local trenches
Temporality of the actions	Seeking effectiveness on a long-term scale; aims for future solutions	Seeking effectiveness on a short- and medium-term scale, palpable aims
Organisation		
Structure	Pyramidal, institutionalised	Horizontal, networks, linking and flexible
Role	Centralising, representative	Facilitator, mediator with respect for diversity
Action	Collective, overcrowded, hegemonic and bureaucratic	Transitory co-ordination, affirmation of individual participation, weakly institutionalised

Base youth organisations

Characterisation of community-based youth organisations

In general, the civil society organisations in Latin America and the Caribbean run by and for young people are characterised by diversity and heterogeneity.[18] Among them, we find base organisations, social movements, development organisations, civil rights organisations and inter-institutional networks.

Community-based youth organisations are also characterised as *de facto* associations; those that are more formally constituted are classified as non-profit civic associations. Most are informal groups of young people who organise around a specific project or issue arising within their community location, for example, the construction of a football field or the implementation of a community radio programme.

Large, traditional youth organisations like the Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes (Young People's Christian Association) are usually organised on a nationwide basis. Informal groups and smaller organisations tend to have local outreach, and their life spans tend to be short. Their ephemeral nature is due mainly to their inability to generate economic resources to support themselves, as well as to their lack of formal institutionalisation, which works against their sustainability.

In terms of human resources, organisations are kept going almost exclusively by volunteers, both at management level and at their base. In terms of financial resources, most are supported by contributions from their members and donations in kind or in cash for specified jobs. State subsidies for local projects are uncommon, and international assistance is almost inaccessible. Where external support is obtained, it is usually channelled through an adult and/or a more formal CSO.

The agendas of these organisations vary, but since they are organisations of and for young people, they endeavour to portray a youthful perspective in their actions and in the themes they focus on. These themes include young people and the protection of the environment; issues affecting young women, youth and leadership; supporting enterprising young people; youth and education; youth culture; young people and AIDS; youth unemployment; youth employment training; rural youth; and supporting disabled young people and young business people.

Thinking globally and acting locally

One impact of globalisation on this type of organisation is the progressive change towards thinking globally and acting locally. A very important factor in this regard has been the annual celebration of the Día Global del Servicio Voluntario Juvenil (Global Youth Service Day)[19], which started in 2000 in almost all countries in the region. The prominent role played by youth in community-based organisations is highlighted as they celebrate the day by making visible the labour they contribute.

In most cases, these organisations count on the support and co-ordination of more mainstream civil society organisations, which have more formal structures, and greater reach and visibility. The celebration of Día Global has helped to publicise the labour of community-based youth organisations, facilitating their networking,

promoting horizontal co-operation among participants and providing links with more formally constituted organisations that can act as mentors.

In addition to the work of Día Global, it is important to mention the participation of youth organisations in global networks organised around themes, such as the Youth Global Action Network (YGAN)[20], which is dedicated to youth participation; Taking it Global (TIG)[21], which is dedicated to information technology and communication; the Youth Employment Summit (YES)[22], which is dedicated to youth employment; the International Association of Voluntary Effort – Youth Area (IAVE)[23], which is dedicated to volunteerism; and International Youth Parliament (IYP)[24], which is dedicated to youth activists.

At a regional level, a few of the best-known organisations are Foro Latinoamericano de Juventud (FLAY)[25], which is dedicated to the ideas of young people; the Red Latinoamericana de Juventudes Rurales (RELAJUR)(Latin American Network of Rural Youth)[26]; Opción Latinoamérica[27], which is dedicated to university volunteerism, Red de Jóvenes del BID[28], with a membership of 12 000 young people and 5 000 institutions across Latin America; Caucus de Jóvenes contra la Discriminación[29]; Comunidad Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Juventudes (CLAJ)[30], a network of university students working on youth themes and the Red Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Jóvenes por el Medio Ambiente, la Vida y la Paz[31].

The Internet is the main means of communication in these global and regional networks, but for most community-based organisations, access is limited. They usually communicate with other initiatives through bigger and more formal organisations that link the global, regional and local spheres.

Since 2000, and mainly as the result of the worldwide anti-globalisation movement, new forms of social protest have been observed in relation to the social movements in the region. Led by young people, they offer new ways of participating in the struggle for social inclusion.

These new forms of youth expression also provide us with new insight into the youth's commitment to social inclusion, including the questioning of current economic, social and political models. Once again, we observe a plurality of strategies and actions, as well as a heterogeneous range of circumstances within which young people commit themselves to action intended to transform current reality. The study of these new forms of youth participation is recent,[32] but it is clear that they make an enormous contribution to new social movements.

Base youth organisations in the volunteer movement of Latin America

The *First Directory of Volunteer Organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean*[33] indicates that the category of 'youth' is one of the three people-centred priorities of both male and female volunteers within these organisations, even though only ten per cent of these organisations plan to work specifically on the theme of youth. This implies that most volunteer organisations rely on young people to carry out services

intended to benefit not only other young people, but also the community and the population in general.

Apart from the examples of service-learning, the youth volunteerism projects that have originated either from civil society or from government tend to be characterised as inorganic and unstable, with little capacity for sustainability, and a lack of economic, legal and financial resources. In particular, their lack of formal structure has made it difficult for them to forge close associations with youth-based organisations. It has also limited their activism to short-term action that is isolated, unstable, not anchored at grassroots level, and ineffectual.

Policies orientated towards encouraging and developing voluntary service among young people, in which they are subjects rather than objects of volunteerism, are indispensable in creating a social consciousness and achieving sufficient impact to break the cycle of poverty and exclusion.

The experience of voluntary service with young people from and in *favelas*, which was taken forward in Brazil by Comunidade Solidaria[34], is particularly relevant. It is interesting to note that this intervention was originally initiated by the federal government during the administration of Fernando Henrique Cardoso and has continued at the request of civil society.

Within the context of the celebration of the Global Youth Service Day in the region, a study was produced in Argentina in 2004 entitled *Profile of the Young Volunteers of the Youth-Based Organisations taking part in the Youth Projects Fair*. Despite the methodological limitations of the event, it was considered important to publish the profile of young volunteers who participate in this type of fair, since the description of the young Argentine volunteers and the coherence with the regional experience of CACID could also be applied to volunteers in the wider regional context.

Significantly, the profile indicates the following:

- The majority of the participants in volunteer youth organisations are small organisations of fewer than ten active and permanent members.
- The bigger organisations (of more than 30 members) do not make up even 20 per cent of the total participation.
- Sixty per cent of the membership of these organisations is female.
- The strong presence of volunteers with university-level education is noteworthy. This is related to the increase in service programmes and projects, including university voluntary service programmes, which link university students with the youth in community-based organisations.
- Youth organisations offer commitment and comradeship to young people who otherwise are isolated. This demonstrates the importance of external support from more consolidated organisations to the success of youth projects.

This analysis makes it clear that, in general, community-based youth organisations depend on other organisations with greater experience, more resources and wider

communication networks. Generally, they begin their activities with a group or an individual who has originated the idea, and then carry it through. Many of these organisations have tutors and mentors, young adults or older people who guide the organisation. However, decisions are taken collectively by the membership, especially in organisations where most of them have secondary education.

It appears, however, that it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep these youth-based organisations functioning. This is because of problems with logistics, materials, finance and social support. A study of volunteerism in Bolivia reveals that 97 per cent of youth volunteer organisations do not have essential equipment like computers, telephones, fax machines, desks or storage facilities.[35]

Other obstacles that hinder the work of volunteer organisations in general, and youth organisations in particular, are the following, which are mentioned in the *First Directory of Volunteer Organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean*[36].

- **Finance**
  The stability and sustainability of these organisations is often tied to external support. This frequently generates a sense of dependency, so that members fail to develop self-management skills or plan to become financially sustainable. This prevents the organisations from operating autonomously, and hampers their continuity and further development.

- **Limited legal status**
  A central characteristic of regional youth volunteer work is its limited formality. Most youth organisations that dedicate themselves to volunteerism do not consider their legal status to be important. Therefore, a gap exists between youth organisations and other volunteer organisations, which have progressively moved forward in this regard. According to the *First Directory of Volunteer Organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean*, 85 per cent of the organisations have a legal status, but of all the listed organisations, only ten per cent are youth organisations.

  This is an unresolved issue for community-based youth organisations. Their lack of legal status limits their access to financial support both from government and from international sources, which seriously limits their sustainability as well as their opportunities for growth and development.

  Bearing in mind that the economic contribution of volunteerism to the GDP of developing countries is between 8 and 14 per cent,[37] there is no doubt that one of the best ways to achieve these objectives is to incorporate volunteerism into all spheres of activity. It is also important to support the volunteer service of youth-based organisations that focus on the youth, and to do so within the local environment where it is easier to measure their contribution to development. After all, the youth are the present and future of Latin America.

The role of the state in the promotion of youth-based organisations

The increase in volunteer activity is still insufficient to establish a strong, permanent and continuous volunteer service. It is necessary for the Latin American state, which has distanced itself from priority issues during the last few decades, to fulfil once again its role as facilitator, catalyst and promoter. In the case of volunteer service, this means strengthening the human, professional and technical capacities of volunteer organisations, especially the grassroots volunteer organisations. Volunteer work is still, in general, part of government actions or plans, and not part of public policy agreed by consensus and consolidated over time.

States in Latin America and the Caribbean countries seem slow to perceive the opportunities offered by volunteerism, not only in terms of its value in service provision and the benefits it brings to those who give as well as to those who receive, but particularly in terms of its economic impact. Only the Colombian government, through Law 720 on Volunteer Service, has committed itself to establishing the necessary mechanisms to facilitate the construction of an instrument that values the contribution of volunteer action to the gross domestic product of the country. This general deficit prevents volunteer work performed by young people in grassroots organisations from being properly recognised and valued, both in its symbolic and material dimensions. As a result, the huge contribution the youth are making to local and national development remains unknown.

Other than service-learning programmes, few programmes and projects that explicitly involve youth volunteer service emanate from government. Very few young people participate in volunteer programmes organised by the state, compared with those organised by civil society and educational institutions with experience of service learning. This highlights the important role the state can play as a facilitator and catalyst of voluntary service rather than as merely the implementer.

This is even more evident when one analyses youth public policies. While the number of young volunteers in civil society organisations is expanding significantly, youth policies, in general, do not count youth volunteer service as one of their priorities. When youth volunteerism is mentioned within youth policy, it is couched in terms of activities specifically for the youth rather than as a real contribution to the Millennium Development Goals and the country's strategy to fight poverty and exclusion.

The state provides indispensable support to grassroots youth organisations, especially when one considers the important work they do at local level. However, there is a growing tendency for the state to focus on volunteer service organisations that are listed in registers and directories produced by the big organisations. Little is known about the small organisations – their work, their characteristics, their scope and impact. The state could assist by publicising them and helping them to connect with more established organisations that can strengthen them through the transfer of skills and institutional capacity.

There is a great deal of social capital among the youth in Latin American countries, but it is dispersed and fragmented. Consequently, its visibility and impact is limited to the local level and fails to articulate with the national level for greater impact and scope. The state must fulfil its role in supporting the grassroots youth organisations, enhancing their access to information and opportunities, and strengthening their legal status. It should also be called upon to serve as a link between youth and other organisations to facilitate their access to resources.

For this reason, it becomes necessary to plan an alternative strategy and to help build the state's capacity to formulate a structured, organised and stable public policy for youth voluntary service, so that it becomes possible for local programmes to have national impact. For this to happen, the Latin American states must produce youth voluntary service public policies that are participatory and inclusive — both in terms of organisation and geographic reach. Multisectoral participation from the state, civil society, private companies, the media, networks, etc. can foster social co-responsibility for the design of concrete activities and make visible the contributions that this sector carries out for the good of the development of our region.

Conclusion

Youth voluntary service is a social practice that expresses positive values. It has acquired great community relevance over the past few years. In a regional context of economic crisis, social exclusion and political instability, volunteerism – taken forward by an increasing number of young people in community-based organisations – appears as a form of citizen participation, which, through local action, endeavours to counteract these negative trends.

Studies that shed light on youth participation are becoming increasingly important. Young people's work in community-based organisations is scarcely recognised, even when their contribution is decisive. The support that different sectors can provide to stimulate local youth action therefore remains an area for future investigation. We need to study the role of the state and youth policies in more depth, and examine how this relates to the volunteer service that young people have taken forward through small organisations with few resources. Further investigation into how private initiatives can channel their resources in support of these actions, is also needed.

The United Nations' Millennium Development Goals emphasise the role of volunteerism in the development of communities. For this reason, fostering the growth of volunteer organisations and supporting their activities means not only making a commitment to the prominent role of youth in this process, but also to building a better society.

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Notes

[2] Garcia O (2004).

[3] The concept of youth is therefore not a biological notion, like puberty is, for example. Nor is it merely conceived as an intermediary period between childhood and adulthood. It is a transition period towards other stages of life with its own rights, tasks and responsibilities.

[4] Kessler G (1996).

[5] Pre-adolescents refers to those persons between the ages of ten and twelve, beginning adolescence at 13 years of age. We point out that those between 13 and 14 years of age are not contemplated in the official youth bodies that were mentioned previously.

[6] Organización Iberamericana de juventud (Youth Latin American Organization) (2004).

[7] In accordance with the results of the InterAmerican Development Bank Youth Programme (BID): www.iadb.org/exr/mandates/youth/indice.htm.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Economic Commission for Latin America (2004).

[10] In accordance with the information provided by the Latin American Network of Rural Youth (RELAJUR):www.iica.org.uy/redlat.

[11] The following agencies of the United Nations participated in the elaboration of the document: CEPAL, OIT, FAO, Unesco, OMS, PNUD, PNUMA, Unicef, UNFPA, World Food Programme, Habitat, UN and Unifem.

[12] Extract from the Declaration of Asuncion for Youth Employment final document "Encuentro Latinoamericano por el Empleo Juvenil: Avanzando en los Objectivos de Desarrollo del Milenio" (First Latin American Meeting for Youth Employment: Advancing in the Millennium Development Objectives) called for by YES Latin America and the Paraguayan Government. With the co-ordination of the "Red Nacional de Empleabilidad y Emprendabilidad Juvenil –YES Paraguay" (National Youth Employability and Enterprising Ability Network –YES Paraguay) developed in September 2005 in Asuncion. Available on www.yesweb.org.

[13] Rodriguez E (2000).

[14] Balardini S (2000).

[15] "II Foro de Jovenes del MERCOSUR, Bolivia y Chile", (Second Forum of Young People of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile") (2000).

[16] Krauskopf D (2000).

[17] Ibid.

[18] We take as reference the typology carried out in the chapter on youth of the "Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo" (InterAmerican Development Bank), (1998) "Conjuntos: la sociedad civil en Argentina".

[19] www.gysd.net.

[20] www.youthlink.org/gyanv5/index.htm.

[21] www.takingitglobal.org.

[22] www.yesweb.org.

[23] www.iave.org.

[24] www.iyp.oxfam.org/index_sp.asp.

[25] www.cinterfor.org.uy/public/spanish/region/ampro/cinterfor/temas/youth/doc/not/libro100/.

[26] www.iica.org.uy/redlat/.

[27] www.opcionlatinoamerica.org.

[28] www.iadb.org/bidjuventud.

[29] http://caucusjovenes.tripod.com.pe/caucusjovenes/index.html.

[30] www.claj.org/cumbre_claj.htm.

[31] www.geocities.com/grupotayrona/antecedentes.htm.

[32] In that respect, we should emphasise the first day of "the youth protest in the face of the neo-liberal crisis", organised by the Work Group on Youth and the Social Observatory of Latin America of the Consejo Latinamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLASCO) (the Latin American Advisory of Social Sciences), 17 September 2001 in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Buenos Aires.

[33] Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID)(2004).

[34] www.comunitas.org.br.

[35] Bolivian Centre of Philanthropy (2001).

[36] Op.cit.

[37] In accordance with the studies carried out by ATD Fourth World, presented in the 18th World Volunteer Conference of the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE), Barcelona, August 2004. www.iave.org.

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Creating an Enabling Environment for Youth Service Policy

GRACE HOLLISTER, BRETT ALESSI AND EDWARD METZ

SUMMARY

Recent research has demonstrated that youth service is an effective strategy for addressing community needs while positively impacting on programme participants. Recognising that human and financial capital can stimulate policy creation and spur the public resources necessary to implement youth service programmes, Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP) sought to strategically invest in youth service policy development by inaugurating the Small Grants for Innovation in Youth Service Policy project. The aim of the project, which started in 2003, is to fund civil society organisations in countries around the world, in order to facilitate policy development related to youth community service.

This chapter examines the enabling factors of the Small Grants project that facilitated youth service policy

development in Panama, Brazil and Peru, and analyses three projects undertaken by the civil society organisations of Fundacuna/Promesa (Panama), Viva Rio (Brazil), and the Ibero-American Youth Organization (Peru).

This chapter is intended to serve as a resource for organisations that can contribute to the development of youth service policy through their in-depth knowledge of a country's circumstances, as well as for funding organisations that support this work.

Introduction

International recognition of the challenges presented by a burgeoning youth population, and lagging progress towards essential development goals has resulted in increased attention being paid to the emerging field of youth service.[1] Recent research has demonstrated that youth service provides an effective strategy for addressing community needs, while impacting positively on the participants in such programmes.[2]

Increasingly, policy-makers, educators and practitioners are concluding that effective policies provide essential frameworks to support youth service programmes. A recent policy scan in Latin American and the Caribbean (described in Chapter 10) indicates that 13 out of the 19 countries studied have a national youth service policy in place.[3]

Recognising that human and financial capital can stimulate policy creation and help to create the public resources necessary for the implementation of youth service programmes, Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP)[4] sought to invest strategically in youth service policy development by implementing a project entitled Small Grants for Innovation in Youth Service Policy. The aim of the project is to fund civil organisations in countries around the world, to facilitate policy development related to youth community service. Grants were awarded for amounts of up to US $15 000 for a period of nine months. This was the first attempt by ICP (or any other organisation) to operate programmes focusing specifically on grants for the development of youth service policy, and it is now able to provide information for other organisations, policy-makers and funders interested in youth service policy development.

This chapter examines, from a funder's perspective, the enabling factors of the Small Grants Project that facilitated youth service policy development in three Latin American countries: Panama, Brazil and Peru. These projects, which were undertaken by the civil organisations of Fundacuna/Promesa, Viva Rio and the Ibero-American Youth Organisation respectively, provide useful examples because of the diversity of their approaches to youth service policy development. Despite problems that occasionally altered the organisation's intended course of action, each grantee organisation succeeded in drafting a youth service policy to meet the needs of the youth population in its country.

Getting under way

In 2003, in response to a request for applications from organisations and agencies around the world (government, educational, community-based, non-profit, etc.) seeking funding for youth policy development programmes, the ICP received 180 letters of intent.

Grants were available for amounts of up to US $15 000. An important component of the project design, stated in the initial request for letters of intent, was the definition of key terms relating to the project. This was necessary in order to eliminate misunderstandings arising from differences in vocabulary in the youth service field, which are often exacerbated by language differences.[5]

The following terms and definitions were included:

Youth: The United Nations General Assembly defines 'youth' as persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, inclusively. However, this definition of youth may differ from country to country. Proposals concerned with persons younger than 15 and older than 24 (but not older than 30) would also be considered.

Service: An organised period of substantial engagement and contribution to the local, national or world community, which is recognised and valued by society, with minimal monetary compensation for the participant.

Policy: A strategy devised to create or contribute to sustainable youth service on a local, regional or national level.

Feedback received from the applicant organisations gave grants programme staff insight into the context within different countries, and aided grantee organisations in focusing their proposals on youth service policy. Still, many proposals described projects that supported youth policy but did not relate specifically to youth serving in their communities. Other proposals required the funding of youth service programmes, but did not include plans for policy development.

ICP selected 31 organisations with innovative plans to submit full proposals. Grants programme staff asked the applicants questions to determine whether they would be able to focus on developing policies specifically for youth service. When elements that would contribute directly to policy development were highlighted, ICP observed that many organisations reformulated their plans in order to focus more closely on those elements.

In 2004, ICP awarded grants to eleven organisations in the following ten countries: Argentina, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Ghana, Panama, Peru, Romania, Russia and Uruguay. Each of these organisations met the criteria for youth service policy development and innovation. The following section describes case studies of three of these organisations, detailing the progression of each one towards its goals.

Case studies

Fundacuna/Promesa, Panama

Fundacuna/Promesa[6] is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) dedicated to the promotion of social development in Panama, with a particular focus on children, youth, women and families. Fundacuna/Promesa was the country's lead agency for Global Youth Service Day in 2003 and 2004, organising the first national youth service award in Panama (2003), and a seminar on international youth service policies (2004); these two actions demonstrated knowledge of the youth service environment in the country.

At the time of funding, Panama had no national youth policy, despite the existence of both civil society and governmental mechanisms created to deal with youth issues. The National Youth Council represents civil society's involvement with

youth, while the Ministry of Youth, Women, Child and Family[7] was created in 1997 by the government of Panama.

Advances included the creation of institutions to address issues affecting youth, efforts to formulate a national youth policy, and the passing of a law in 1995 that provided for 'social service' as part of the education policy, However, there was neither a national youth policy nor, more specifically, a youth service policy.

Panama was in the middle of an election cycle during the grant period. The presidential candidates understood that the youth vote would be a determining factor in the election, due to the country's changing demographics. Each candidate saw the youth as key actors in the country's development and as an important item on the public agenda. The time was ripe for promoting youth policies in the country, and Fundacuna/Promesa seized the opportunity to bring innovative thinking into the process.

Fundacuna/Promesa's project included a variety of activities directed at actors in both government and civil society who were vital to the advancement of youth service. The organisation believed that the development of youth service policy would be facilitated by building a 'collective memory' with regard to youth service in the country. It began by getting leaders of the public sector, civil society and universities to acknowledge that no public, recognised or formal youth service policy existed. In order to generate awareness about youth service, Fundacuna/Promesa developed an 'intergenerational dialogue on youth voluntary service' by forming an advisory council to listen to the opinions of young people. It also implemented a consultative council that involved NGO leaders in discussions about possible legislation relating to youth policy.

This dialogue represented an important opportunity to lobby for youth service within public policy. It was also a chance to train young people in youth service policy formation and leadership skills for use in a future youth service programme. In consultative meetings at national level, the Fundacuna/Promesa project team was able to successfully advocate the inclusion of youth service as a key strategy for youth participation within the youth public policy endorsed by the Youth Minister and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in August 2004.

Fundacuna/Promesa capitalised on the change of government by making strategic institutional contacts that gained them an important role in the policy-making process. The outcome of the election was positive for this project, as Leonor Calderon, president of Fundacuna/Promesa, was installed as Panama's Youth Minister in September 2004. Once the transition had taken place, Fundacuna/Promesa initiated a training course on youth service policy implementation for staff in the ministry. It also drafted a youth service policy in conjunction with the consultative and advisory councils, for submission to the new Youth Minister. The policy included a law regarding youth service and suggestions for its implementation. It was linked to the youth public policy adopted in August 2004, and to the UN Millennium Development Goals. As a result, a National Programme in Volunteer Service was launched by the Youth Minister in 2005; a development assisted by presidential support for youth service as an important strategy in the country's development agenda.

A final and integral part of Fundacuna/Promesa's efforts was the development of a publication entitled *Youth Service in Panama: Tools for Innovation in Public Policies*. This toolkit outlined the empowerment of each actor involved in the project, and has been used as an important reference for other entities interested in the development of youth service policy and programmes.

Fundacuna/Promesa's achievements were not without problems. A key feature of the project design was a response to the lack of awareness among policy-makers and the general public of youth service and its benefits. Many of the activities were designed to build knowledge, and were tailored to the different types of audience involved. Once the benefits of youth service were understood, Fundacuna/Promesa received input on its proposals from various groups, and training in youth service policy development and implementation was accelerated.

The advisory council, comprising young people, was especially important in the feedback process. Fundacuna/Promesa recognised the need to include them in policy development, as well as to include measures within the policy that targeted young people who were not engaged in school or work. The consultation process was designed to recognise the previous and current efforts of youth groups and organisations working on youth service. Input from the various sectors helped to ensure that the resulting policy documents were regarded favourably by those responsible for the implementation of the policy.

The timing was right for youth service policy development in Panama. Fundacuna/Promesa had already begun the process of lining up important partners and developing an inclusive strategy when the ICP grants programme provided capital to convene the stakeholders and advocate for youth service policy. Fundacuna/Promesa was able to achieve its goals. At the end of the grant period, the Youth Minister was presented with a draft youth service policy, and plans for its implementation were under way, including the development of a national youth service programme.

Viva Rio, Brazil

Viva Rio[8] is a non-profit organisation created in 1993 in response to escalating violence within Rio de Janeiro. Since that time, Viva Rio has worked with representatives from different levels of government and assembled a network of more than 500 civil organisations. Several programmes within the organisation have been involved in advocacy of youth service policy for Brazil's at-risk and marginalised youth, with the assumption that effective social inclusion comes via policy that "stimulates the formation of responsible citizens through volunteerism".[9]

Various programmes to involve youth in service and job-training existed in Brazil before the project started. The Civilian Volunteer Service (Serviço Civil Voluntario) began in 1998. It combined education courses and volunteer work for 18-year-olds in poor communities. Another programme, My First Job (Meu Primeiro Emprego) provided working internships for youth between 16 and 21 years of age, to help reduce unemployment. Although these programmes were directed at improving the lives of young people and communities, they did not target young people who were

often at the greatest risk (at-risk youth) – those who were employed in the drug trade or involved in armed violence.

Viva Rio's proposal was designed to target this segment of the population, for two reasons:

- Young people learn and develop through active participation in planned and organised services that have tangible results for both the youth themselves and the communities they serve.
- Youth service provides young people with opportunities to increase their self-esteem and escape from their involvement in crime.

In order to effectively lobby for the inclusion of youth service in government programmes, Viva Rio adopted a two-pronged strategy directed at the federal and municipal governments. Two policy papers on at-risk youth were drawn up for this purpose, distributed in the public arena and submitted to government officials. Viva Rio's project was especially innovative in training young people in the design and implementation of policies, using examples from other countries to obtain their input in developing a youth service policy for at-risk youth. This Youth Policy Creation Group comprised young people formerly in the at-risk category, who had personal experience to base their policy recommendations on.

Viva Rio assessed all the Brazilian government bodies involved in youth policy-making and implementation. They found that government action directed at youth was occurring in a fragmented manner, with no national policy to co-ordinate the various efforts. During the grant period, an inter-ministry commission was formed to assess existing youth-serving government projects and programmes in Brazil.

The commission proposed a National Youth Secretariat which would be responsible for implementing national youth policies and programmes, as well as for designing and co-ordinating pilot programmes to support fast-track education, job training and youth service. Other related initiatives focused on Brazilian youth and included the following:

- An effort of the Brazilian Congress to study youth policy proposals and design a National Youth Plan with input from young people, specialists and researchers from national and international organisations
- The Youth Project of the Instituto Cidadania, an NGO created by President Lula da Silva to broadly examine issues facing Brazilian youth.

In the light of these achievements, Viva Rio resolved to pursue its original advocacy strategy at the federal government level.

Viva Rio also engaged in a municipal strategy, making use of a concurrent project within the organisation that involved working with the city of Resende to develop a plan for public security, which would integrate policies to reduce instances of

armed violence. Viva Rio approached this project with a supply-and-demand model, reasoning that if more opportunities were provided for youth through youth service programmes, fewer young people would become involved in the drug trade, which would, in turn, reduce the local demand for firearms.

The grants team worked with the public security team to inform young people about youth service and gain their input for the youth service policy proposal. Viva Rio then proposed to Resende's youth co-ordinator the adoption of its own programme model, Fight for Peace,[10] incorporating a specific emphasis on youth service. The programme began in Resende in February 2005, with 30 young people classified as 'in conflict with the law'. It was modelled around five core principles: encouraging leadership, promoting community service, promoting active citizenship, improving education standards and providing sports training. Viva Rio intended to begin actively advocating youth service policy on the municipal level once the programme had begun to operate at full capacity.

Viva Rio's strategy also included a variety of outreach components, and was co-ordinated around municipal elections. On the federal level, Viva Rio began by meeting with individuals involved in the government's efforts to create a National Youth Secretariat.

These meetings laid the foundation for Viva Rio's participation in prospective discussions, and for the submission of the proposals contained in the policy papers. The papers were officially launched, and were publicised by the media on 31 January 2005. Viva Rio intended to send copies to all National Youth Secretariat staff as well as members of Congress who took part in the aforementioned National Youth Plan campaign. On 1 February 2005, the secretatiat was formed in co-operation with Pró-Jovem, a national programme to promote inclusion of youth between 18 and 24 years old who have not completed the necessary requirements to enter secondary school. Community service is one component of this programme, which is designed to provide education and training for young people in Brazil's state capitals.

One of the problems that Viva Rio faced was convening a focus group of young people who were previously involved in drug trafficking. This group was intended to extend the participatory component of the project by incorporating additional youth perspectives. The work of the youth policy development group was divided into two phases. The first phase included instruction on the design and implementation of policies at various levels of government, while the second phase allowed for the participation of young people in discussing successful youth service policies in other countries, developing a questionnaire for other young people in their communities, and contributing their ideas on a draft youth service policy for Brazil. The conclusions of the youth policy development group were incorporated into the two advocacy papers.

Although Viva Rio has not yet seen the adoption of a youth service policy at the federal or municipal level, the organisation has created space for policy where none existed before. The grant allowed Viva Rio to identify and form relationships with actors at both levels of government, and to position itself at the forefront of the movement to create youth service policies. Many policy advocates believe that government officials often need to see evidence of successful programming before a policy can be designed and implemented. Viva Rio was able to give input into youth

service programme design while developing draft policies that will be reinforced by the current youth service programming. This two-pronged strategy requires more resources than it would if it concentrated on only one level of government; however, Viva Rio is now in a position to demonstrate its awareness of the rationale for youth service when opportunities for policy implementation arise.

OIJ, Peru

The Ibero-American Youth Organisation, or Organizacion Iberoamericana de Juventud (OIJ)[11], is an international organisation, formed in 1992, to promote dialogue, concerted action and co-operation on matters of youth public policy among 21 Latin American countries. Much of OIJ's work focuses on developing and working with government bodies that design and implement youth policies and programmes. In Peru in 2002, a member of OIJ initiated a government body, the National Youth Commission (CONAJU), which is represented at the Peruvian Council of Ministers.

At the time of funding, Peru did not have any policies incorporating either volunteering regulations or youth service, although there had been many previous attempts to create legislation pertaining to volunteer work. In 2003, the Peruvian Congress attempted to institute such a law. It was endorsed by the President and sent to the Congressional Commission for Women and Development, where it remained without implementation.

The original goal of the OIJ's project was to advocate for the passage of a national law on volunteering that would provide a legal framework for participation in volunteer service. OIJ proposed an analysis of the current situation of volunteer projects and key voluntary bodies in Peru, an examination of legislative proposals related to volunteer work, and a process of consultation with representatives of government and civil society. This would inform OIJ's development of a new legislative proposal, which would include measures for youth and civilian participation, and would be presented to the national authorities for adoption.

Two months into OIJ's project, the Peruvian Congress passed a General Law on Volunteering (LGV), which provided opportunities for all Peruvian citizens to become involved in service and volunteering, but did not specifically address the needs of the youth. The passing of the law resulted in a redirection of OIJ's efforts. Rather than working to advance the creation of a youth service law or policy, OIJ developed new goals to promote youth service within the LGV, proposing the following:

- A modification to the General Law on Volunteering.
- The creation of national volunteer service programmes for youth.
- A legal framework for youth service.

Working with CONAJU, OIJ hoped to improve the status of young people within the new legal framework, and to guarantee youth participation in volunteer service by introducing provisions that targeted youth involvement. This led to the development of a Green Paper on youth voluntary work that expanded upon relevant sections of the law,

referenced OIJ's analysis of voluntary work in Peru, and incorporated youth interests into a proposed national youth service policy. A meeting of experts to discuss the Green Paper, organised by OIJ, resulted in a consensus about the need to improve conditions for youth volunteers in Peru. This meeting, which was also attended by representatives of civil society and government, took the place of the previously proposed consultation process and allowed OIJ to gather support for the draft legislation they planned to introduce to Congress. To inform the policy creation process further, OIJ undertook an analysis of legislative frameworks for voluntary service throughout Latin America, broadening its previous inquiry on internal mechanisms in Peru.

OIJ developed two draft bills during the grant period:

- A modification of the general law on volunteering, to incorporate representatives of the National Youth Commission and Ministry of Education into the National Commission on Volunteerism.

- A Supreme Decree for the advancement of youth volunteering, which would help to implement the policy and provide concrete opportunities for youth to serve. A central aspect of the Supreme Decree, presented to the House of Government in April 2005, called for the creation of a National Programme of Youth Volunteerism[12], designed to recognise and support the various modes of youth volunteering, and promote its educational and skills development benefits as well as its contribution in other strategic areas of national development. The programme would provide support and incentives for organisations and schools that implement service programmes, and award funding to organisations whose initiatives target national development aims. A pilot phase was proposed, during which programmes could be tested. This would be followed by the publicising of goals and implementation methods.

CONAJU made a valuable contribution to this project, collaborating with OIJ on the analysis of voluntary work and organising the workshop between government and civil society leaders. OIJ also faced challenges. It was required to rethink its functions in order to fit in with policy changes in the government, and this required some creativity. Rather than working directly to implement a law generally accepted by the government, OIJ concentrated its efforts more specifically on advocating for and articulating the needs of youth in volunteering policy.

The passage of the General Law on Volunteering persuaded OIJ to expand its thinking beyond the boundaries of Peru and to consider tactics used in other Latin American countries in advocating for youth service. OIJ was able to push through a lot of legislation in a short period. Because the government had achieved some momentum in relation to volunteering, OIJ used the General Law on Volunteering as a stepping stone to encourage greater youth participation, advance a concrete strategy for the implementation of a youth service programme, and ensure opportunities for youth engagement.

Enabling factors in advancing youth service policy

ICP's experience in administering the Small Grants for Innovation in Youth Service Policy project resulted in the identification of certain enabling factors for the development of youth service policy. Some of these factors are internal to the organisation and project design, while others are external and related to the political, social or economic context of the country. Although the presence or absence of the following factors has not been shown conclusively to be essential for the development of youth service policy in any country, organisations and governments who wish to facilitate a nascent movement toward youth service policy may find them useful in constructing a plan of action.

Partnership development: From the inception of each project, partnerships were deemed important by the grantee organisations. Some organisations had formalised partnerships prior to the start of the grant period, while others planned to involve various sectors through consultations and workshops. Making the effort to bring key stakeholders together to discuss youth service policy was an important step towards achieving buy-in for youth service policy proposals. A consultation process that included a variety of perspectives led to sound proposals for legislation and well-conceived plans for moving these proposals forward. Viva Rio exemplifies this model. In the city of Resende, the public safety partnership that Viva Rio had previously established resulted in the organisation working with city officials to integrate a youth service component into the larger public safety plan. It is hoped that this initiative will become part of the policy landscape at the municipal level.

Government support: Certain project outcomes would not have been possible without government support. Most of this support was obtained by establishing a relationship with the government body responsible for youth issues. However, this approach is not the only possibility, since bodies such as youth ministries do not exist in every country. Organisations also lobbied educational bodies for support by promoting youth service's impact on learning outcomes. Partnering with willing government bodies is a means of ensuring that they give input to and support for each phase of the policy development process. Fundacuna/Promesa developed a strong relationship with the Youth Ministry to promote youth service policy. Support from the youth minister allowed Fundacuna/Promesa to engage with ministry staff, providing training in youth service policy implementation to guarantee continued support for youth service.

Needs analysis: Developing an awareness of the youth service policy climate was a component of each of these projects. Grantee organisations that were determined to learn from past initiatives looked at the state of the field of youth service and youth policies in their countries. Studying the historical context of service, as well as recent developments related to youth participation in society, provided organisations with the information to identify and target the greatest needs of the youth population in that country. In Panama, Fundacuna/Promesa undertook research into historical precedents of service in the country and determined, as a result, that integrating the previously isolated measures was necessary for developing a cohesive youth service policy.

Policy space identification: Once each organisation had determined the needs of the youth population, a specific analysis of policies related to youth participation and service opportunities was necessary to ascertain the appropriate vehicle for promoting youth service policy implementation. In some cases, policy shifts during the grant period resulted in organisations looking for space within existing policies where a youth service component could be inserted. The grants programme demonstrated that there are numerous entry points for youth service policy implementation; options include insertion into a national youth policy and a law designed to regulate volunteering.

In other cases, a youth service policy can be designed to stand on its own, such as Viva Rio's focus on at-risk youth. Legislative developments in Peru caused OIJ to re-examine the policy environment for youth service. The organisation created a strategy that not only pushed for recognition of youth within the newly instituted legislation, but went a step further by drafting a policy for the implementation of a national youth service programme.

Youth participation: In their attempts to construct a youth service policy that reflected the specific needs of youth in their countries, organisations found it necessary to involve youth in policy development. A consultative process that took into account a variety of youth perspectives legitimised the policy in the eyes of those it is intended to serve. Participation in this level of decision-making also teaches young people about the political process, which is seen as an essential goal of youth service. In Viva Rio's policy development process, the organisation chose to integrate young people from the segment of the population the policy was intended to target, namely, youth involved in the drug trade and armed violence. Not only did Viva Rio ask for input from young people, the organisation went a step further in educating them on how policies are developed and enacted, so that they could better understand the process before giving feedback.

Technical assistance: The integration of technical assistance is crucial in helping grantee organisations achieve goals of policy creation. Technical assistance comes most often from the organisation providing the funding, as these organisations often have a track record in providing this kind of service. Potentially more helpful sources are organisations that have previously undertaken the development of youth service policy, such as the grantee organisations profiled here. For example, Viva Rio developed a curriculum for training young people in youth service policy development, and this could be adapted to a wide range of situations, for use in different geographic locales and political contexts. Mechanisms specifically designed to connect organisations involved in youth service policy development would be an important addition to the field of youth service and could strengthen the argument for the introduction of these policies.

Political will: Grants and technical assistance are not the only means of facilitating movements toward youth service policy. A favourable political environment, coupled with the support of a sympathetic government body, can make the difference between institutionalising youth participation and neglecting the potential of young people to make a difference in their communities. Developing the means to cultivate partners within national governments could have an accelerating effect on the development of

youth service policies around the world. OIJ's partnership with CONAJU exemplifies how international organisations can achieve positive results by working with national government bodies, possibly establishing a model for future collaboration in Latin America. Organisations with a multinational reach have the capacity to target policy-makers with an interest in tapping the potential of youth for community development, perhaps creating a network to share experiences that policy-makers and NGOs could contribute to.

The role of the funder in supporting youth service policy development

ICP approached this project from a unique standpoint, being one of the few organisations dedicated to the development of youth service policy around the world. Experimental in its nature, the Small Grants Programme served not only to provide resources to the organisations with the greatest chance for success, but also to assess the status of the youth service policy field. ICP's experience demonstrated that the availability of funding for youth service policy creates demand for this type of project. The completed projects detailed here can serve as models for the many organisations interested in pursuing youth service policy development, and include examples both of good practice and of pitfalls to avoid. The enabling factors listed above are expected to inform funder organisations on how to structure grants programmes with similar goals.

It is important that funding is available to support the movement toward youth service policy, as this encourages organisations to become more policy-focused in their efforts. Organisations interested in youth issues may give more consideration to youth service as a potential investment area, and those that manage youth service programmes successfully, may have concrete ideas about how policy can support their efforts. ICP received proposals relating to both policy and programme development for youth service. With the emphasis on developing activities that target policy maturation, programme-related activities were scaled back and grantee organisations focused on activities and elements that they believed would be most useful for policy development. These included elements such as the key features noted above. In Panama, Fundacuna/Promesa had already begun to collect contacts and strategies; and funding allowed the organisation to connect the people and resources necessary to concretely advance the movement towards policy development.

Delivery of technical assistance along with financial resources is critical to the success of youth service policy development. ICP provided assistance in the form of organisational knowledge about strong youth service policy. In future, technical assistance from grantee organisations that have addressed similar challenges, and that have a good understanding of regional contexts, may prove a valuable source of knowledge. Building a knowledge base with the input of those involved in first-hand policy development could have important results. It is hoped that the availability, in future, of youth service funding with a policy focus will begin to tip the balance

towards an environment where strategies for youth to provide service to their communities are the norm.

ICP plans to continue providing grants and technical assistance to support the development of youth service policy around the world. With the input of former grantee organisations and others experienced in advancing the movement toward youth service policy, interest in involving young people in service will expand. The methods described above are intended to provoke discussion about the best means of supporting youth service policy development, and kindling interest in its funding.

Conclusion

To achieve their goals, the grantee organisations combined creative thinking with in-depth knowledge of the policy climate. Significantly, these policy advancements were achieved with limited resources: the project was entitled *Small* Grants for Innovation in Youth Service Policy, and awards were capped at US $15 000 per organisation. It is hoped that these organisations will continue to advance the agendas based on the partnerships they have developed, and on the policy proposals drafted during the grant period.

The importance of youth service policy and its ability to provide an important framework for youth engagement cannot be underestimated. A policy that defines opportunities for youth to serve their communities also provides a framework that, with public resources and goals, can be used to take youth service programmes to scale. Consequently, the implementation of youth service policies has the potential to engage hundreds of thousands of Latin American youth in actively addressing community needs.

The ICP Small Grants for Innovation in Youth Service Policy also demonstrates that the movement toward youth service policy implementation can be advanced in a cost-effective manner. With support, these funds can be leveraged to create opportunities for young people in countries across the region.

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1 GYSD, International Year of the Volunteer.

2 Perry J (2003) Civic Service: *What Difference Does It Make?* ME Sharpe: Armonk, New York.

3 Metz E, Alessi B and Stroud S (2004) *An Exploration of National Youth Service Policy in 17 Countries in Latin American and the Caribbean: Findings from the Global Youth Service Policy Scan*. Washington, DC: Innovations in Civic Participation.

4 Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to strengthening policies and programmes that promote civic engagement through service. To contribute to the organisation's goal of promoting policy formulation, ICP designed a grants programme to support innovative approaches to the development of youth service policies. www.icicp.org.

5 Additional perspectives on the language of service are contained in Part 3 of *Service Enquiry: Service in the 21st Century* (2003).

[6] The information on this organisation was current as of April 2005.

[7] The name of the Ministry in Spanish is Ministerio de la Juventud, la Mujer, la Niñez y la Familia. In August 2005, it was renamed the Social Development Ministry.

[8] More information about the organisation can be found on Viva Rio's website, http://www.vivario.org.br. The information contained on this organisation was current as of October 2005.

[9] Dowdney L. Proposal to the Small Grants for Innovations in Youth Service Policy. Design and promotion of youth service policies for youth affected by drug trafficking, crime and organised armed violence in Brazil. Viva Rio, January 2004.

[10] Fight for Peace is a Viva Rio projects that was established in 2000 in order to offer alternatives to the drug trade and reduce ongoing conflict between the city's principal drug factions.

[11] More information about the organisation can be found on OIJ's website, http://www.oij.org. The information contained on this organisation was current as of October 2005.

[12] Ibero-American Youth Organisation. ICP Small Grants Program Final Executive Report: Execution of Law Initiative of Volunteerism in Peru: Analysis and monitoring project. March 2005.

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Learning and Solidarity Service in Educational Institutions and Youth Organisations:
A common itinerary

MARÍA ROSA TAPIA DE RODRÍGUEZ

SUMMARY

Many organisations and educational institutions carry out projects in which young people integrate other learning and solidarity activities into their studies, with the aim of meeting various community problems. The service-learning methodology, integrated with the young people's learning content, aims to attend to the real and heartfelt needs of a community, in a limited way.

This chapter presents the 'integrated itinerary of service-learning projects', pointing out the steps young people take in the fields of both formal education, and youth organisations and groups. The word 'itinerary' refers to the route followed by the projects. The author presents similarities and differences for the development stages and processes in both fields.

The curriculum of the Programme of Youth Volunteerism in the Americas (PaSo Joven) arose as an initiative of the Inter-American Development Bank, with the participation of organisations from Argentina (CLAYSS – Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario and the foundation SES Sustentabilidad – Educación – Solidaridad), Bolivia (CEBOFIL – Centro Boliviano de Filantropia) and Dominican Republic (Alianza ONG).

During the programme's development, between 2004 and 2006, the capacity of civil society organisations and educational units was increased to include young people in permanent and significant community-service projects through a series of training sessions in service-learning methodology. The Regional Trainers of Argentina, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic worked with teachers and youth leaders to bring together and train a network of teachers.

The author presents a synthesis of the contents developed, with the intention of continuing to promote young people to become responsible citizenship leaders. This chapter presents PaSo Joven's shared work, conclusions and future plans for development.

Introduction

A number of organisations and educational institutions carry out projects in which young people combine a significant number of learning and solidarity activities in order to address various community problems, and learn about their rights and duties as citizens at the same time. For example, technical school students learn while making wheelchairs and helping to build houses; students from special schools make bread for deprived children in baking workshops; and groups of young people promote health issues and campaigns using self-designed leaflets.

Such organisations apply service-learning methodology to develop solidarity service among young people. The service is planned as an integrated offering, combining the content young people must learn with a genuine intention to meet some of the real needs of communities.

The recent responses of schools to community demands, as well as the need to encourage civic participation in the next generation of citizens within a well-defined pedagogical context, all help to promote contact between schools and communities. While aiming to respond to social demands, the identity of the schools is preserved and priority is given to students' learning.

The link between schools and communities has two components:

- **The development of solidarity projects:** The school generates community intervention projects to serve the needs of the community, which are designed to fit in with the school's curriculum structure. The students play a leading role in these projects, which are co-ordinated with different areas of the formal curriculum. This methodology has brought about improvements both in the quality of academic learning and in community service activities. It has also contributed to personal growth among the participants, regarding the development of value systems and responsible civic participation, on all learning levels and in all social sectors.

- **A network of community organisations** through which the social demand is derived, and which complement the schools in terms of communication and synergy. The school diverts problems it cannot solve on its own to specialised governmental or non-governmental organisations. A network is formed with community organisations with different characteristics. This maximises the efforts of each party and strengthens the capacity of the school.

> According to the investigation carried out by CLAYSS, derived from the experiences presented to the Solidarity Schools Presidential Award (2000-2001), it is significant that 67,77 per cent of the registered experiences analysed were carried out with a link to one or more civil society organisations or social institutions. Some 18,08 per cent of analysed experiences were performed in alliance with four or more organisations. These figures are consistent with the high number of experiences that are carried out with the material support of civil society organisations.
>
> These data manifest a strong change in the paradigm of solidarity schools, abandoning the traditional model of the school as being cut off from reality, and of the 'community-centre school', which, of its own accord, attempts to meet the multiple problems identified, while devoting attention to the pupils and focusing on social demands. The picture that emerges is that of schools being capable of establishing alliances and creating or forming part of complex community networks.
>
> ... Finally, these types of alliances are also auspicious for students' learning. It would be interesting to measure, in a few years' time, how much the experience of solidarity education carried out in alliance with other institutions has stimulated the participation of the students in civil society organisations in the medium and long term.[2]

These organisational networks often have a school as a reference point, or they work in similar fields, not only because they perform educational tasks, but because they measure the impact that education has on building a more just society. For this reason, a number of civil society organisations have carried out and developed training programmes in different areas, promoting important educational processes.

Arising from the field of formal education, the service-learning methodology has turned out to be attractive to many youth groups and social organisations, as it aims to develop a specific service and put innovative education projects into practice, develop learning systems, and train their members along the lines of a youth service clearly related to service-learning.

In social organisations, the formal curriculum is replaced by a learning segment previously agreed on by the institution. In order to incorporate and consolidate volunteers to carry out service jobs, social organisations have recognised the need to systematise learning to produce strong leaders. Some have developed activities in co-ordination with educational institutions (schools and universities), while others have organised themselves autonomously. In the latter case, solidarity activities are planned based on a methodology decided upon by the associations' leaders in accordance with their mission and objectives, and the main themes of learning are determined by their own practices. These projects contribute to the young people's competence in problem solving, motivation, interpersonal communication and the ability to observe and apply knowledge, as well as personal development and commitment to the values of democracy and solidarity.

The active form of service learning allows 'learning while doing', and helps consolidate the learning content, integrating and applying knowledge from different disciplinary fields in the same activity. This integration increases noticeably when, as well as carrying out the activities, young people teach them to others.

We identify two large groups of organisations that promote service learning in the informal education field:

- those organisations that set out to support school processes
- those organisations that look for their own objectives without referring to schools

In the first case, the organisations set in motion strategies to improve school qualifications and to stimulate children and adolescents into continuing their school studies, reducing the high rates of repeating grades and school drop-out. However, in many cases, these actions are carried out separately from schools, with the occasional sharing of a school building being the only point of contact.

In the second case, youth organisations, scout groups, youth houses and community cultural centres develop service activities with direct and specific learning objectives.

It was within this setting that the Programme of Youth Volunteerism in the Americas, PaSo Joven, arose as an initiative of the Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (Inter-American Development Bank), BID Juventud, with the participation of organisations from Argentina (CLAYSS – Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario and the foundation SES Sustentabilidad – Educación – Solidaridad), Bolivia (CEBOFIL – Centro Boliviano de Filantropia) and Dominican Republic (Alianza ONG).

The global objective of this programme was to offer the young people of the Americas the opportunity to improve their communities through voluntary work, service-learning and civic action.

The specific objectives of PaSo Joven were:

- to increase the capacity of civil organisations and educational units to form and include young people in permanent and significant community service projects that improve and develop their communities
- to offer adolescents and young people the tools to contribute to the improvement in the quality of life of their communities, and to become responsible citizens.

The PaSo Joven Programme was developed from 2004 to 2006, with the following numbers of participants per country:

3 regional trainers (trainers of trainers)	
20 service-learning trainers	20 youth-leader trainers
200 teachers	200 youth leaders
2 000 students involved in service activities	2 000 young people involved in service activities

Through a series of training sessions, the regional trainers of Argentina, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic worked with teachers and youth leaders to bring together and train other teachers and youth leaders who were already working with young people, thus involving them in the development of service-learning projects.

In the three participating countries, the numbers expected were exceeded, primarily through participation in the national and regional scope organisations programme. In some cases, this participation also had an impact on the reformulation of the curriculum and internal training material of each organisation, as in the case of the guides and the Youth Pastoral.

During the training periods, joint efforts were promoted between the different actors (teachers, youth leaders and youth) by identifying common work strategies. The training materials, though highlighting particular features of service-learning projects in educational institutions and youth organisations, presented a common conceptual framework to profile the leading role of young people in solidarity, beyond the particular area in which they performed their task.

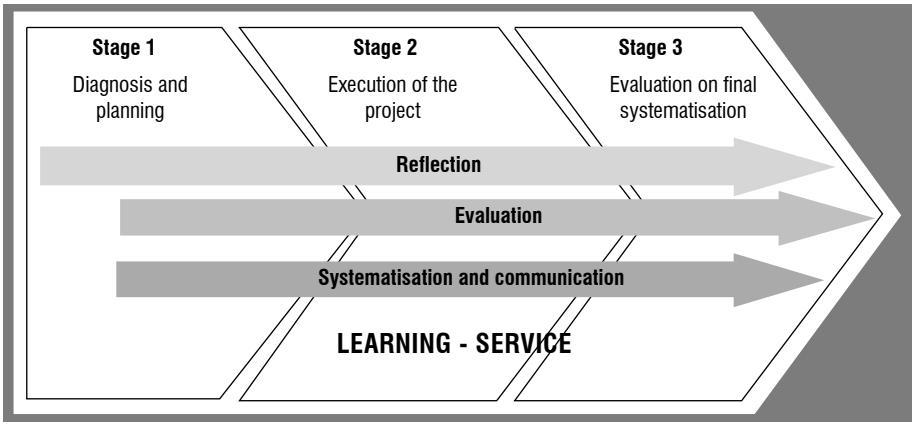
A synthesis of the contents developed is presented below, with the intention of continuing to promote a common itinerary for the youth.

An integrated itinerary for service-learning projects

The implementation of projects is one of the most useful strategies for responding simultaneously to the challenges of urgent social problems and the effective formation of children and young people, in both formal education and youth organisations and groups.

The word 'itinerary' is a metaphor for the route followed by the projects, and refers to the actions that each group or institution takes to set them in motion. Both those who undertake service-learning projects in educational institutions and those who do so in social organisations must go through a process comprising three stages. These stages are, in turn, 'cut across' by three simultaneous processes (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Itinerary of service-learning projects



Stages and processes of development

First stage: Diagnosis and planning

This is the stage of motivation, analysis, diagnosis and decision-making, taking into consideration the variations that each situation requires and based on institutional culture. It includes a realistic and specific planning design. More than the application of ready-made formulae from a manual, it must be a learning experience for all participants, starting with the decision 'to do something' and culminating in the implementation of a defined project.

Second stage: Execution of the project

This includes setting the project in motion, feedback strategies and monitoring mechanisms. The action and reflection present in each moment will ensure effective learning.

Third stage: Evaluation and final systematisation

Although the reflection, evaluation and systematisation processes took place during the previous stages of the project, in this stage they are completed. Final conclusions of an evaluative nature are reached, bringing together different materials and anticipating the publication or diffusion of the project and its results.

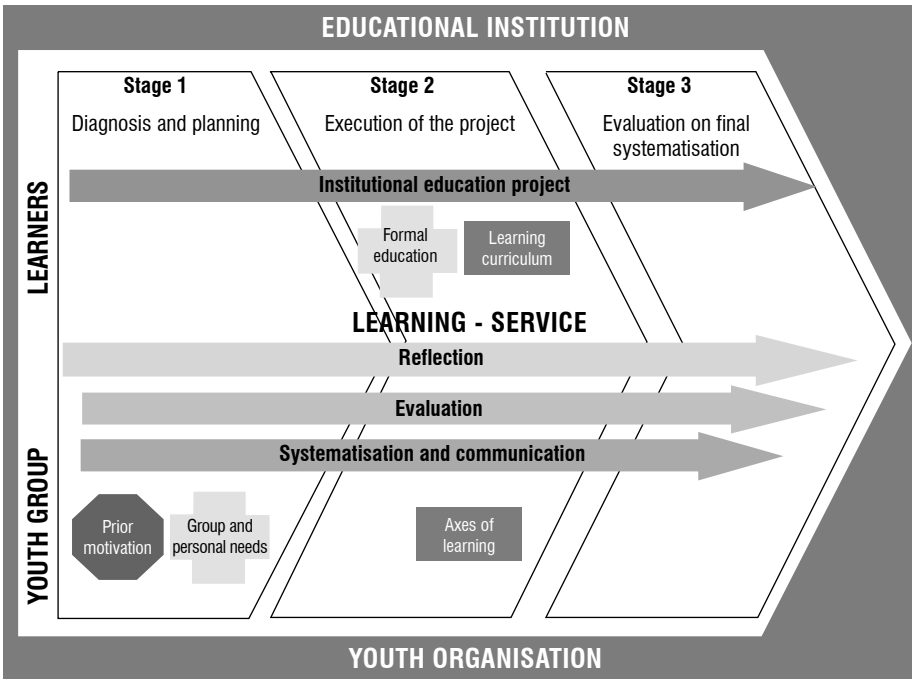
Besides the learning objectives that they contain, each one of these stages requires attention to the **reflection, evaluation and systematisation** processes that take place alongside them.

What **similarities and differences can be highlighted in the development of these projects in educational institutions and in youth organisations?**

Outlined below is an integrated itinerary (Figure 2), in which it can be observed that the service-learning projects developed from schools, like those emanating from youth organisations, not only share the same young leaders but in many cases,

the same recipients, central themes, resources and work methodology, as well as numerous meeting points, exchanges and feedback.

Figure 2 Integrated itinerary of service-learning projects



First stage: Diagnosis and planning

In order for a service-learning project to begin, there must be a specific motivation. This can have different origins:

- The interest of an educational institution to give instruction in solidarity
- The need to respond to a particular demand
- The intention to respond to a youth problem.

In some cases, an organised and systematised service is put forward by the leadership of the organisation or school. In the case of educational institutions, this action is integrated with the pupils' learning objectives. In youth groups, the organisation agrees upon the established institutional objectives up front.

Many projects are initiated by organisations and then taken over by schools, with the intervention of teachers who are 'experts', or interested in subjects related to the problem to be tackled. Community work makes it possible to value the capacity young

people have when facing problems "to contribute ideas and solutions often generated from 'school content' which [they] could not make any sense of until then".[3]

Also, many service-learning projects designed in teacher-training colleges or institutions are taken over and amplified by organisations. This is because they have the same recipients – young people – and the tendency to organise themselves in networks is a way to make the most of the resources of all the participants, including schools, social organisations, government bodies, etc.

On other occasions, it is the young people, teachers or co-ordinators who are directly affected by a problem or sensitised by the situation in which others live, who take the decision to 'do something' about it. Projects are built by looking at reality. The motivation has to develop from that stance, which generates the commitment to a proposal for change.

The service journey of youth can begin while they are students; and it can be encouraged by their peers, teachers and principals; through participation in a project promoted by schools; or by joining a youth organisation.

The motivation that causes a young person to become involved in a youth group devoted to a particular issue or service (for example, the protection of the environment, art education or school tutoring) is different to the type of motivation that leads a young person to continue with his or her school studies, where "the school generates specific cognitive demands, different to those that people are faced with in daily life ... Learning in schools implies not only formal content and explicit knowledge, but also the appropriation of the particular features of school activity, and learning to perform in it adequately a specific job; the job of being a student".[4]

In order to develop the service-learning methodology in social organisations, a group or organisation must have committed itself to a service action. "The group is a structure made up of people who interact in the same time and space, who are aware of each other and possess certain common objectives. For this reason, before thinking of a community project and beginning to work together, they try to get to know each other on a deeper level as individuals and in relation to the similarities and differences they maintain with the people around them, defining their own personality. Before starting specific work on the project, it is necessary also to reflect on the task group that will carry it out. In other words, they think about the group set-up, in terms of understanding how it works and what the strengths and weaknesses are, which all helps in preventing errors and facing their proposed task more efficiently".[5]

The group that decides to engage in youth service is a necessary prerequisite for the development of this methodology. In the following steps, the incentive or motivation for the service is a given. However, for educational institutions, the process is different. Both the decision which leads to the development of a solidarity service and the strategies they develop originate in different experiences, and therefore constitute a key moment in the elaboration of the project. For this reason, in the first stage of the itinerary, some time and reflection are dedicated to the 'motivation' and the intentionality that guide the efforts of the schools. This often arises from a specific task such as a practical assignment, a field experience or community service.

In other cases, awareness and analysis of the situation is necessary for young people to commit themselves to a service activity. However, social problems are numerous and complex, and the school cannot and should not expect to respond to

all of them. The risk of employing the students as cheap labour to perform tasks that should be covered by other public or private institutions is always present. When defining the problems to be dealt with, it is necessary to prioritise those that can be addressed by means of a strictly pedagogical project, with a high level of participation and learning on the students' part. Eventually, the school can establish links with other community institutions, official bodies, non-governmental organisations and businesses, which will permit the tackling of the problem from different angles. This allows the educational institution to preserve its own function and identity. While moving forward with a project, relationships can be enriched by clearly demarcating the school's limits, and establishing agreements of collaboration and mutual participation. This also promotes mutual understanding and enables the different participants to work together.

Second stage: Project execution

In general, a 'project' is a collection of co-ordinated activities, done in a specific order, with the aim of achieving an objective. It requires an elaboration stage, development within the established time, and an evaluation at the end.

In this case, we are referring to projects which, within in the defined theoretical framework, are planned, developed and evaluated by an educational or youth institution and include solidarity action in a specific community.

Projects of this type possess explicit educational components (either from the curricular point of view, in an educational institution within the formal system, or from the learning curriculum of a social organisation), and therefore must be considered as educational projects. They also try to offer an effective service in response to problems affecting a community, which is social intervention. They should therefore also be considered as social projects.

In the education field, the terms 'work through projects' and 'classroom projects'are frequently used. They bring with them a specific didactic and pedagogical framework, and are intended to improve the motivation and quality of learning. At the same time, the education reforms implemented in Latin America in the 1990s included, in many cases, the concept of an 'institutional education project'.

This kind of project co-ordinates the actions of an education community around its mission and general objectives. It encourages reflection and discussion on specific objectives and shows up a common set of values through which the school views the world. The PEI, as it is frequently referred to, is a useful tool for the school community and becomes the axiological[1] and practical framework in which a service-learning project must be inserted once it has been consolidated within the education community.

A service-learning project is a work plan organised from schools to generate a learning process that includes a community service. It is led by the students and involves the participation of other actors in the education community. It also occupies a specific space in the curriculum structure of the school. At the same time, it responds to necessities of the community, linking with other groups and organisations.

Such projects are intended to replace both the solutions that are linked to a traditional, closed concept of schools, as well as those that assign the schools tasks that try to turn them into 'assistance centres'. Combining theory and practice, they aim to help students

learn on a conceptual and a procedural level, change their attitude to life, and learn to 'be' and to 'live together'. They do this through projects that seek comprehensive development through participation in an effectual community service.

Within the projects developed in the educational institutions, theoretical learning has previously defined moments; reflection, systematisation and evaluation processes – which can include curricular learning or not – are a constant. The service, according to the type of project, is developed in a specific time and space.

A social project, on the other hand, is the co-ordination of individual or group actions, destined to produce modifications in the reality of a certain social group, which results in an improvement in the life quality of the recipients.

The development of service-learning projects in social organisations is one of the most effective ways of co-ordinating different learning contents with social service. Such projects consolidate the institution by means of the prominent role taken by the youth. At each stage, implementation and elaboration should be integrated with reflection and the progressive identification and integration of the different learning contents the experience provides. "Systematic reflection is the factor that transforms an interesting and committed experience into something that decisively affects students' learning and development."[6]

Based on the basic principles of popular education, it is possible to identify a 'learning cycle'. In all educational processes, the joint construction of new learning is proposed, taking as a starting point the previous knowledge and the practice of each one of the participants, and the group as a collective subject.

In youth service projects, the focal points of community development and the proposed core themes are present in different ways during the three stages. However, they can be worked on with greater emphasis in the execution of the youth community service project, through workshops and specific activities. In turn, the processes guarantee the necessary learning dynamic for the proposed service.

Third stage: Evaluation and final systematisation

Once the execution of the project is finalised, the process should be evaluated, bearing in mind the following dimensions:

- the service project
- the learning process
- the group experience
- the personal experience.

Evaluation is not just a matter of reviewing the results, but the processes as well. It is also necessary to incorporate the registers carried out during the execution of the project, as well as any adjustments, sharing this information with the actors and organisations that participated in the project.

In a service-learning project, the fiesta is when the conclusion of the project or an important achievement is celebrated. The fiesta is also the key moment at which

the service project is made known, and it should include the actions carried out, the learning acquired, and the impact on the recipients and the participating community. There should also be an expression of appreciation to all those who made the project possible.

In educational institutions and youth organisations, recognition and celebration are fundamental ways of sharing with the community, and they strengthen the relationship between the recipients and those who participated in the project. This helps to consolidate the sense of belonging and encourages the continuation of projects, acknowledging young people's contributions in the community and strengthening their self-esteem.

Conclusion

There is still a wide gap between the formal system of education and the non-formal experiences, due to the development time of projects as well as differences in organisational culture. For this reason, the building of learning communities has become a matter of urgency. "It is expressly a matter of an educational policy proposal and a strategy for educational change. Starting from the local level, it adopts a comprehensive and systemic view of education, it adopts learning as the focal point, and involves agreement and operating and strategic alliances both at the micro- and macro-level." [7] The different actors will assume different responsibilities while concurring in accordance with the education process of the community group, and promoting a better reciprocal knowledge to enable the planning and development of new projects. The young people leading the action, who in many cases participate in both spheres, must receive the support, orientation and stimulus, both from educational institutions and youth support organisations, to be able to take action on innovative proposals to help social inclusion, work training and citizen participation.

Just as everything that has to do with learning should not be reduced to school or the formal education environment, service should not be restricted to the community environment. Both extremes and postures are reductionist and do not bear in mind the holistic nature of the young person or the child as a subject of personal and social development.

Volunteerism is strengthened by the incorporation of conceptual contributions and technical tools that allow improvement in the quality of interventions, supporting both the volunteers and the beneficiaries of the activities. It is therefore important to count on comprehensive training materials to promote the participation of young people in service-learning projects, both in the fields of formal and non-formal education.

Service-learning projects become good tools to modify the images that young people have of themselves, as they allow them to discover their capacities and values while they are committed to service projects in the community. They are the ones who take steps towards the resolution of concrete problems that they observe in their community, and who learn in order to serve better, and who learn better through service.

The experience developed through PaSo Joven confirmed the effectiveness of service learning in forming young leaders committed to their communities, and also to advance the development of a common itinerary between the educational institutions and organisations. By strengthening the networks, the projects and each one of their participants are also strengthened.

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Notes

1 Axiology is the study of value, or goodness, in its widest sense.

2 Cf. Tapia N, González A and Elicegui P (2004) *Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario en las escuelas argentinas: una visión descriptiva a partir de las experiencias presentadas al Premio Presidencial Escuelas Solidarias (2000-2001)*. CLAYSS (Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario) – Global Service Institute. An abridged version is available at www.clayss.educaciondigital.net.

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Servicio País:

Ten years of working against poverty in rural Chile

MARÍA ALEJANDRA MORA CASTILLO

SUMMARY

The Servicio País Programme is an initiative of the Fundación Para la Superación de la Pobreza, FUNDASUPO (Foundation to Overcome Poverty) in Chile. The organisation calls together young professionals from various disciplines to live and work together in a rural "comuna" or poverty-stricken territory in Chile, for a period of 13 months.

During the past ten years, multiple lessons have been learnt about the territories and towns in which this work has been carried out. More than 2 000 professionals and more than 200 comunas (60 per cent from the national territory comunas) have participated in the programme.

Servicio País is the only model of its kind in Chile. The programme has established itself as a social intervention programme, with the intention of:

- Influencing the different levels of decision-making, and contributing quality and relevance, in order to generate better conditions for communities;
- Favouring certain areas of participation;
- Strengthening municipalities' capacity to promote local development and provide resources for the country's poverty sectors; and
- Making the State's instruments more pertinent to the territorial diversity of Chile.

The chapter describes the political and historical context in which Servicio País developed, discusses its work methodology and results, and presents the following three case studies:

- The Canela Housing Office in Canela comuna, region IV, North of Chile;
- The Huichas Islands Development Council in Puerto Aysén comuna, region XI; and
- Austral zone and Trawu Peyum Intercultural Hamlet in Curarrehue comuna, region IX, Chile (a town located 150 metres from the international route that connects Pucon and Villarrica with Argentina).

Introduction

The Servicio País Programme is an initiative of FUNDASUPO (the Foundation to Overcome Poverty) in Chile. Its main objective is "to instil social-cultural transformation processes in and through rural communities, through the technical and human excellence of young professionals who are orientated towards [finding] an integral solution to poverty problems".[1]

Every year, Servicio País calls together professionals from different disciplines to live and work together for 13 months in a poor, rural community or territory within the country.

The initiative has been running for ten years and has been enriched by the diversity of territories and towns in which the organisation has carried out its work. During this time, more than 2 000 professionals have participated and many lessons have been learnt.

Over the past decade, the form and content of the programme have been adapted to different settings. Firstly, the initiative has been driven and developed by young people, which in itself is a transforming factor. Secondly, being committed to the principle of decentralising knowledge and generating initiatives from within the local communities, it has spread through the isolated, profoundly marginalised regions of rural Chile.

Servicio País is the only programme of its kind that has contributed towards building a more socially and territorially integrated country. Even now, more than ten years since its inception, Servicio País still embodies real promise, and the 2 000 professionals who have participated in the programme have the potential to shape the destiny of the country.

Political and historical context

At the beginning of the 1990s, the arrival of democracy in Chile marked the beginning of a series of initiatives to reconstruct a society that had been marked by authoritarianism for almost three decades. A series of structural economic reforms placed a tremendous social debt on the most dispossessed sectors, but at the same time brought this reality into the realm of public discussion.

During the 1980s, the structural adjustment policies that were implemented by the military government improved economic growth, but had a strong impact socially, leading, among other things, to a high level of unemployment and the privatisation of public services. The State assumed a subsidiary role in the area of social intervention and, in turn, privatised the education, health and the welfare systems, entrusting their administration to the private sector.

The new democratic government of the 1990s faced two great challenges: on the one hand, to regain the democratic practice that had been lost in previous decades, and on the other, to address the tremendous social debt it had inherited by implementing concrete measures to start alleviating the poverty in which millions of Chileans were living. Poverty thus emerged as a key challenge for the government, as well as for civil society, which in turn raised issues of citizenship.

In 1990, the first democratic government, headed by Don Patricio Aylwin, took the initial steps towards addressing the poverty crisis by creating the Ministry of Planning and Co-operation (MIDEPLAN), which was entrusted with the design of policies, plans and programmes on social matters. Other authorities also emerged, including FOSIS (Solidarity and Social Investment Fund) and SERNAM (National Service of Women), which were entrusted with the co-ordination of policies and programmes aimed at those sectors considered most vulnerable at the time.

After assuming the second concertación (multiparty coalition) government, the elected President Eduardo Frei Ruiz Tagle continued the efforts made by the previous administration. In line with his election manifesto, which envisaged overcoming poverty as a national task, he decided on the creation of the Council for the Overcoming of Poverty – today known as FUNDASUPO (the Foundation for the Overcoming of Poverty[2]). As an advisory body for the president, consisting of 20 representatives of different classes within the country, it collaborated with the State to help eradicate poverty.[3]

On one hand, the role of the body was to reflect and make suggestions for different initiatives oriented towards the eradication of extreme poverty. On the other, it assisted the authorities in applying the National Plan for the Overcoming of Poverty.[4] In addition, the council put forward plans, initiatives and programmes that would help the State to produce more efficient policies.

In 1994, the council's president, Alberto Etchegaray, proposed the creation of a body of professionals to work towards overcoming poverty, following the model of what was then known in Chile as the General Zone Practitioners of the old National Health Service. The main purpose of this initiative was to address the tremendous lack of professional resources, especially in the more geographically and socially isolated areas. The prevailing situation meant that, depending on the region, gross inequality was evident.

In addition to this initiative, the council participated in other actions and, finally, after two years of work, in August 1996, it published *Poverty in Chile: A challenge of equity and social integration*. This document provided a non-economic approach towards the concept of poverty, highlighting the qualitative dimensions of the phenomenon and the inadequacies of the measurement and conceptualisation of poverty up to that point. This publication marked the beginning of a new stage for the institution, when the Council decided to create an autonomous and independent body: the FSP (National Foundation for the Eradication of Poverty).

The origins of the Servicio País programme

The foundation began to outline its principal activities, defining itself as an autonomous body representing civil society. It relied on the government to provide financial support to Servicio País, which was granted year after year by the Congress. This made it possible to consolidate its commitment towards young people and to decentralise knowledge. In this way, Servicio País started to become one of the foundation's main intervention strategies.

Even if there was consensus in terms of the importance of the initiative within the FSP, opinions differed as to what the emphasis of that programme should be.

Some stakeholders placed greater value on the role of the formation school, whose main contribution would be the generation of new leaders for the construction of a new national public policy. Others saw more value in the potential of Servicio País as a social intervention initiative to help eradicate poverty. The original discussion on the kind of contribution that the programme was envisaged to make has persisted throughout its history, leading to the conclusion that it is an initiative with dual potential or double impact.

As a result, in May 1994, the basis emerged for a professional service designed to promote social development and destined to make professional and technical resources accessible to the poorest communities in the country. The original design of Servicio País conceived the programme as "civic service of a voluntary nature to which young professionals and technicians can gain access with the objective of lending their professional services for a fixed period of time in specific projects and programmes to eradicate poverty in poor areas and communities in the country. On the other hand, the work that the young people carry out must also serve as an opportunity for their own professional development".[5]

The history and context of the Servicio País programme has also shaped its methodology and way of working. During the past ten years, it has moved from the concept of "civic service of a voluntary nature" to an intervention model that aims at "rendering more professional" both the task and the contribution that this initiative tries to replace, retaining some of the original concepts of the programme and transforming others.

Most evident, as previously described, was the political context, including the lack in quality and quantity of human resources linked with social development, which is a feature in isolated regions and towns. This lack was expressed in the fact that municipal authorities and other local government structures had no expectation of professional expertise bringing more resources to their regions.

For this reason, professionals went to live and work in the communities for ten months, concentrating on presenting projects and bringing public investment to the poorest areas of the country.

This professional service required a strong personal commitment from the participants. At the time Alberto Etchegaray[6] pointed out "... there are those of us who believe in a certain type of society, a certain type of country and a certain type of integration. We are driven by a profound vocation to serve, to share our knowledge – that capital we forged, the talents we received, and those abilities we developed with determination and personal effort. It is an honest job, without arrogance; it is demanding, committed, and it comes to public knowledge not because it is extraordinary, but because it is well done, opportune and necessary in contributing to the creation of more opportunities for other people".

These words, no doubt, demonstrated the concept that was basic to this initiative, of an eminently voluntary nature.[7] It was a type of 'volunteerism' that undoubtedly went beyond the mere existence or non-existence of an economic remuneration. The granting of a basic stipend was necessary to make it possible for the young professionals to live in the designated areas. For them to leave the standards of urban life and to go and work under precarious conditions required enormous willpower, commitment and dedication.

Another of the most distinctive characteristics of Servicio País is the fact that volunteers actually live and work within the communities or territories in which they are placed.

This highlights the fact that, from the beginning, Servicio País viewed itself not as an external consultancy that was out of touch with the realities on the ground, but instead valued the bonds built by the professionals year after year within the communities, which was seen as fundamental to their intervention. Living and working within an area transforms the professionals' experience both on a personal level and in the professional sphere, fostering bonds with the community and enhancing the degree of empathy with this reality.

How Servicio País works

Every year, young professionals are invited to participate in the programme by living and working in a rural community for a year and experiencing its poverty. Having a professional team in the area for 13 months requires that the programme follows a rigorous process, including the promotion of the programme to potential candidates, and the applications and selection process. The programme ends after 13 months, however it is interesting to note that almost 50 per cent of the professionals remain in the regions to which they have been assigned.

In the promotion, applications and selection components,[8] the definition of a professional and human profile is crucial, as without this, it is impossible for the objectives established by the programme to be fulfilled in the communities. A rigorous selection process is employed to select the best professionals for the task.

Once the selection has been made in accordance with the profiles established for each intervention, the professional teams undergo training to equip them for their new roles.[9] At the same time, they study themes such as rurality, citizenship participation and territorial identity. This preparation includes a constant interplay between the concrete interventions the professionals are expected to carry out, and reflection on lessons learnt. Through the respective processes of systematisation, the programme is able to generate knowledge through practice.[10]

Although the programme operates year after year with a functioning structure that allows each professional to live and work in a community, there is another fundamental and important pillar that enables it to fulfil its central objective: the so-called welcoming institutions enable the programme "to instal social-cultural transformation processes in and from rural communities, through the technical and human excellence of young professionals who are oriented towards [finding] an integral solution to poverty problems".

The municipality: A key actor in local development

In view of the commitment to contributing to local development in poverty-stricken territories, the programme offers two fundamental options. The first is the option focused on the local reality, which considers municipalities as organised expressions of the most important material, human and physical resources in the territory, and makes them promoters, articulators and facilitators of local development. The second option is to generate sustainable action in order to make a real contribution to local development. This implies that, even though the programme renews its teams of young professionals from year to year, a key factor in every community is the sustainability of what is achieved there.

The "local reality" option refers to the territory in which people live, the ways in which they relate to others, work and organise themselves, as well as the sharing of norms, values and customs, etc. The fundamental elements that constitute and shape the local reality are the land, the social actors and the relationships generated there.[11]

For this reason, up until the year 2004, the programme favoured the deployment of multidisciplinary teams of professionals to generate development initiatives at local level and pass on capacity to the communities, while understanding that the need to equip municipalities was essential for the sustainability of the actions undertaken.

The programme has established that, given the present conditions, development at local level only is impossible. Although it is important to generate citizenship awareness and to strengthen the role of municipalities, it is equally important to look for other spheres of influence that will enhance this type of development, moving from an approach that is focused on local and rural development, to an approach that brings about the development of a territory in all its dimensions and on a broader scale.

Although the programme results bear evidence of the involvement of a significant number of 2,000 professionals placed in more than 246 communities nationally, the results of greatest relevance are the initiatives and unique experiences located in each of the territories in which Servicio País has operated. These experiences emerge from the needs and problems of citizens, or they strengthen the work of local government and their relationship with the community, or else they promote the importance of cultural identity by preserving the ancestral traditions of ethnic communities in the country.

The diversity of the programme

The three experiences that follow demonstrate the diversity we have come across during the past decade.

Canela Housing Office. Comuna of Canela Region IV, North of Chile

On 14 October 1997, Chile was affected by a severe earthquake in Region IV of Coquimbo. The intensity of the seismic activity was 6.8 on the Richter Scale and the epicentre was 25km from Illapel.[12]

Due to the construction methods employed in many of the affected zones (which were mainly rural areas in which adobe and other light materials were traditionally used to build dwellings), many houses collapsed or were severely damaged by the earthquake. The resulting number of homeless people was aggravated by existing housing problems in the affected zones. A campaign for housing support and reconstruction was initiated on a regional level, managed and directed by the municipalities.

Canela was one of the communities worst affected by the earthquake. Because of the magnitude of the disaster, the government earmarked funds to be granted and managed on the basis of the necessity for housing in the affected communities.

As a way of supporting municipal management throughout 1998, the Servicio País Programme focused on housing, with teams that would provide professional expertise to applications for benefits and to the technical aspects of constructing settlements and houses.

Another important theme was land occupancy and other problems linked to the quality of housing. Many homes were in a poor condition, especially the adobe quincha houses with their thatched roofs and mud floors. The majority of local people lacked basic services and had no access to safe drinking water.

With the help of the municipality, the regional government and Servicio País, the number of beneficiaries with subsidies within the comuna went from 23 in 1997 to 49 and 79 in 1998 and 1999 respectively. At the same time, the municipality focused on providing information about different types of subsidies available and assisted local people to follow the steps required to obtain them. The other priority was organising and strengthening housing committees.

To begin with, since so many people in Canela were in need of shelter, the provision of temporary housing was considered. Sandra Corvalán, a social worker and member of Servicio País 2000-2001, explains how this short-term solution made way for a longer-term option: "It was thought that the solution to this problem was in wooden basic structures. However, they desisted from the idea precisely because a long-term solution was required, which led to the spark of a new idea, which took shape in the form of the housing office, due to the very need of the people."

Despite the new resources that had been focused on relieving these needs, the programme did not have the intended impact because of municipal constraints in meeting the demand. In addition, the settlements were geographically isolated from one another and communication with the central comuna was difficult. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that no one was mandated to take responsibility for the task.

In 1999, it was concluded that the housing problem had persisted almost two years after the earthquake and the Oficina de la Vivienda (Housing Office) was formed, with a full-time person to run it. With the municipality's support, the office

was positioned within the community, making it possible to establish co-ordination with other municipal departments.

The office has had a positive impact and has continued operating. Its positive impact is seen in the statistics, which are considered to be the best at regional level by the Servicio de Vivienda y Urbanización, SERVIU (Housing and Urbanisation Service).

The Huichas Islands Development Council, Puerto Aysén comuna, Region XI Austral zone

The Huichas Islands are an archipelago five hours by ship from the capital, Puerto Aysen. They have a population of 1,500 and a surface area of approximately 120 hectares. The climatic conditions are extreme, which increases the sense of isolation. From a social and cultural viewpoint, there is a strong sense of identification with and ownership of the territory, with strong bonds evident within families and communities.

Traditionally, fishing is the main occupation of the families who live on the island. This activity gives extra support to the deep-rooted culture and traditions of the island-dwellers. Although fishing is informally organised, it is the primary form of employment. However, the population of the archipelago faces serious difficulties in meeting its day-to-day needs, which negatively affects the quality of life of the community and restricts the possibilities of individual and collective development. The political and administrative distance from the municipality and regional public services also make it difficult to access services or to attract state investment.

To deal with this situation, community leaders and economic organisations in the territory decided to combine their efforts and create the Concejo de Desarrollo de Islas Huichas, CODIH (the Huichas Islands Development Council)[13]. The objective was to generate a sustainable local development strategy representing the wishes of the majority of the population, and giving legitimacy to negotiations with public and private organisations. This council is made up of representatives of the socially productive organisations of the Huichas Islands, who have chosen to co-ordinate their activities and to construct a common plan of action that will meet the needs of the population, which can then be negotiated with the public and private authorities that operate in the territory.

The main potential of this initiative is the emergence of community collective action to identify problems and formulate solutions. This has led to a growing desire to make the Huichas Island into a comuna – an entity recognised by local government that represents local communities, and which is represented by a group of leaders who express local demands and are capable of making pertinent and sustainable proposals.

This council has recognised the importance of working in co-operation with the public and private bodies that intervene in their territory. In this way, the different actions that are implemented come from public bodies, and are pertinent to the local reality.

The actions proposed by this council have had a direct impact on the quality of life of the local population. Through the empowerment of the community, better standards of living have been achieved, together with the consolidation of the structure of the Huichas Islands Comuna, 2008.

Trawu Peyum Interculturak Hamlet: Curarrehue Comuna, Region IX

The name of the intercultural hamlet Trawu Peyum means[14] "where we will get together". It is a centre for local culture and development, located in Curarrehue, a town 150km from the route that connects Pucon and Villarrica with Argentina. Its mission is to open up opportunities for intercultural learning, creation and communication, contributing to the appreciation of local cultural practices and human diversity.

The initiative was originated by the art teacher Maria Paz Miranda Araya, who is the executive secretary of the Intercultural Hamlet, and the anthropologist Tomas Sepúlveda Schwember. The two worked with the community during their participation in the Servicio País Programme. They spent two years getting to know the community and engaging in dialogue with different local stakeholders, until they were able to articulate the ideas and aspirations shared in the Curarrehue comuna (Region IX).

Local indigenous communities and organisations, including the association known as Fütxa Winkul, youth groups, women, older adults, students, teachers and others, participated in the process. While engaged in self-diagnosis and the development of proposals, these groups commented on the paradox that, in spite of the cultural and environmental richness of the zone, the Curarrehue comuna is still among the poorest in the country.

Architecturally, the hamlet was designed according to the aesthetic principles of the indigenous mapuche culture and consists of different areas – a museum, a mapuche restaurant, a traditional market, a meeting hut or ruca, and an office for indigenous affairs. It is currently administered by a non-profit private law corporation and is fully active, having been consolidated, over the years, as a point of reference for social, cultural, artistic and productive activities in the comuna and the region.

These three examples have one factor in common: they have all emerged from the concerns of the local community in which they took place. The role of the programme and its various teams has, therefore, been to facilitate and support those processes.

Final comments

Some ten years since its inception, Servicio País has experienced a series of transformations in Chile, adapting itself to the national context and steadily documenting its actions. The plan has been to use these experiences to develop learning material that contributes to the decentralisation of knowledge, and that generates public policies that are relevant to the territories in question. Today, in spite of a more economically developed Chile, there are still challenges in the area of social equality.

Servicio País has established itself as a social intervention programme, with an important and distinctly transformative purpose: to influence the different levels of decision making, promoting quality and relevance in the process. For instance, it aims to generate better conditions in the communities, and favours opportunities

for grassroots participation, in order to strengthen the capacity of municipalities as local development entities, and to make the State's instruments more relevant to territorial diversity in areas such as product development and housing.

What is enormously valuable about this initiative, and what transcends the results obtained so far, is the fact that more than 2,000 young professionals have participated in the programme. Another achievement is the quality of the interventions that have been carried out. This programme has had the possibility of being conducted and constructed by young people at all levels – who have comprised its management team, technical consultants, and so on. It consists of the same young people who lived and worked in rural comunas and who, in the course of the past ten years, have had the opportunity of creating and leading the initiative.[15] These young people aspire to a fairer and more egalitarian society, not only between different social groups, but also across different territories.

This aspiration could have extraordinary implications, making it possible to imagine a generation of young people who dream of changing the destiny of their country, who design and carry out social policies by working from a local basis, and who recognise and understand situations as they occur, even in the farthest corners of the country, because they have physically been there, making their professional contribution.

Today, the challenges remain significant. Even if the context of the country has changed (the figures show a steady decrease in poverty, and the economic model predicts good news), social inequality still exists, especially in the more isolated territories. This makes the objective for which Servicio País was created as relevant today as it was in the very beginning.

The organisation has in place a set of plans and programmes for various types of interventions, among them Chile Solidario, which aims to end extreme poverty. The State also develops policies and programmes that share the idea that it is possible to achieve development on the basis of active citizenship.

It is common today for institutions and public services to be more in tune with the demands of the people – something that was merely an idea ten years ago. However, it is vital to keep advancing, not only in terms of meeting local needs, but also in maintaining the relevance of the solutions to the local territories in such an enormously diverse country.

Without a doubt, the programme will continue both promoting the role of citizens in generating development, and encouraging citizens to become active participants, in order to take leading roles and exercise their influence and power in decision-making. We are not alone today – there are many committed to this task.

Finally, those of us who work in Servicio País yearn to convey this experience to others, to take it beyond our borders to other countries in Latin America, which still face tremendous challenges regarding poverty, social exclusion and social problems.

It is important to communicate this experience to others and help them understand that it is "possible as civil society and especially as young people, to bring about the construction of more dignified and socially just countries, believing that development can be brought about by the communities themselves".

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Notes

1 Central Strategic Concept of the Servicio País Programme.

2 FSP; Servicio País Programme (2005) "Memoria *Servicio País*, 10 años trabajando por un Chile sin pobreza". (Servicio País Memory: 10 years working for a Chile without poverty).

3 On 27 May 1994, through the Supreme Decree 227 of MIDEPLAN, H.E. the President of the Republic, Don Eduardo Frei Ruiz Tagle created "el Consejo Nacional para la Superación de la Pobreza" (the National Council for the Overcoming of Poverty), assigning it the mission of involving civil society in this task.

4 The objective of the plan for overcoming poverty was to direct public action towards the territories and/or segments of the population, and to co-ordinate public programmes aimed at overcoming poverty. The main two courses of action were to motivate and stimulate the ministries to visualise and evaluate their priorities and programmes for the overcoming of poverty, and to design and implement a "Programa Especial de Comunas" (PEC) (Special *Comunas* Programme).

5 Document "*Servicio País*", CNSP, 1994.

6 Alberto Etchegaray, former housing minister during the Aylwin presidency, assumes role of president of the *Consejo para la Superación de la Pobreza* (Council for the Overcoming of Poverty).

7 This is associated with the idea of lending a voluntary service towards a determined cause.

8 In the past few years, Servicio País has achieved an average of 3,000 candidates who stand for election each year.

9 The professionals who, for example, are sent to extreme zones in the country must possess certain human and professional characteristics that enable them to adapt to the isolated conditions, adverse climatic conditions, lack of resource materials, etc. This is particularly important when one considers that the majority of professionals who live in urban centres are recently graduated and, in the majority of cases, are leaving their family home for the first time.

10 Since 2003, the programme has circulated various publications with the aim of gathering and registering the successful experiences of the municipalities. The *Catalogue for Recording Experiences* "Catálogo de Recuperación de Experiencias" will publish its third version this year.

11 *Sentido Experiencia y Acción* (2003) Programa Servicio País.

[12] Illapel is the provincial capital of Choapa and neighbouring municipality Canela.

[13] The Council for the Development of the Huichas Islands (Consejo de Desarrollo de las Islas Huichas) was founded on 5 February 2003 and manages resources of the order of some $239,5 million for the territory.

[14] Etymologically, it means "language of the land", and refers to the language of the mapuche people.

[15] The management team of Servicio País (Dirección Nacional, Direcciones Regionales, Unidades de Estudio y Asesores Territoriales) comprises professionals who have all been Servicio País professionals in Chile.

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Lessons Learned in Developing Alliances for Scaling up Youth Service in the Caribbean

MICHAEL MCCABE AND ADDYS THEN MARTE

SUMMARY

The diversity of cultures, languages and government structures established during the colonial period has made Caribbean integration and the sharing of resources a constant challenge. Nonetheless, it has also allowed for an array of different approaches to problems such as promoting youth service and participation that can benefit these countries as they struggle with high levels of unemployment among the youth, growing reliance on service industries such as tourism, and teen sexual health issues. In order for these initiatives to have the necessary impact, countries need to build their capacity to mobilise strategic partnerships to create a service movement.

In his best-selling book *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell presents three key components in changing social norms and creating social movements. These three components

of social marketing have been used in parts of the Caribbean and other countries to expand youth service as a movement. They include identifying two groups of key actors: 'connectors' and 'salespeople', to promote the initiatives; developing 'sticky' messages that attract other participants and key agencies; and taking advantage of local, national and international contexts to promote the social marketing message and actions.

In the case of Caribbean nations, there have been a limited number of key strategic partners and agencies that share the interest and commitment to introduce the new methodology of service or service-learning in their organisations and initiate campaigns and collective projects. It is extremely important that key connectors and salespeople be identified from the start and throughout the process. This chapter explores the development of multisector partnerships for promoting youth service in the Dominican Republic, Barbados, Guyana and Jamaica through the three above-mentioned components of reaching the tipping point.

Introduction

Throughout the Caribbean, efforts are underway to build the capacity of youth-related organisations. Strategic partnerships are being mobilised around youth service in order to address critical issues, among them the high rates of youth unemployment, teen substance abuse and sexual health issues. While this has not yet reached the level of a well-defined sector or social movement, government and non-governmental efforts have created strong potential for reaching a tipping point of influence.

In Malcolm Gladwell's best-selling book, *The Tipping Point*[1], he presents three key components in changing social norms and creating social movements. These three aspects of social marketing have been used in parts of the Caribbean to expand youth service as a movement. They include:

- Identifying two groups of key actors, connectors and salespeople[2], to promote the initiative;
- Developing sticky messages that attract other participants and key agencies through their personal and organisational interests; and
- Taking advantage of the local, national and international context to promote the social marketing messages and actions. For example, in the public health efforts to reduce teen pregnancy and HIV and AIDS, the promotion of key health messages towards youth, peer counselling, and leveraging new information and research about effective forms of prevention is helping countries advance towards the tipping point, where the social norm is higher rates of contraceptive use or delayed initiation into sexual behaviour.

There is a limited number of strategic partners and agencies in the Caribbean with the capacity to introduce the new methodologies of youth service, in order to reach a tipping point of broad youth participation in service, as well as scaled-up programmes. This chapter explores the cultivation of these key actors and strategies to develop multisector partnerships for promoting youth service through a case study of the Dominican Republic (DR). It also highlights various youth service programmes and alliances in Barbados, Trinidad, Guyana and Jamaica.

A short history of service and partnerships in the Caribbean

While community work-sharing was a component of Taino and Arawak Indian life in the pre-Columbian era, the legacy of colonialism converted this work system into one of slavery. The Catholic Church provided opportunities for charitable service throughout the colonial era. However, until the post-colonial period, there were few examples of voluntary agencies. The focus on engaging youth in service is even more recent, emerging between the 1970s and the 1990s, and is linked to the development

of national youth councils, NGOs and governmental youth departments or ministries. Likewise, the growth of non-profit voluntary agencies engaging youth evolved from sports and cultural clubs in the 1970s and 1980s to a more diverse array of political, environmental, health and education action groups in the 1990s and beyond.

Many of the similarities in structure between the diverse subcultures of the Caribbean can be ascribed to the United Nations (UN) or regional organisations that fostered national youth councils at one period, national volunteer co-ordinating agencies during the 2001 International Year of the Volunteer, or national youth service agencies that have been established in the English-speaking Caribbean to promote solutions to youth unemployment. More recently, some of these structures have begun to focus on links between education goals and community action through service-learning requirements at the secondary or university level.

The development of national youth councils and the enactment of legislation on youth participation in many of the countries created opportunities, early on, for government agencies and NGOs to work together. In addition, organisations such as the Caribbean Federation of Youth and the Commonwealth Youth Programme have helped to develop partnerships for youth participation, not only within countries, but between programmes in different countries in the region.

A case study of Sirve Quisqueya: Using social marketing to create a national, multisectoral alliance for service

In 2002, 20 governmental organisations and NGOs in the Dominican Republic gathered to celebrate Global Youth Service Day by holding a forum on Scaling up Youth Service. The lasting outcome was the creation of Sirve Quisqueya, an alliance to promote civic service by all young Dominicans. Since then, Sirve Quisqueya has served as a unique alliance of groups, using social marketing and other strategies to promote and increase youth service in the country. The following case study examines how the burgeoning alliance came to be, and how its national co-ordinating committee has leveraged key actors, sticky messages and context to expand its impact.

Laying the foundations for a new movement

Three key factors formed the building blocks for the youth service movement in the Dominican Republic. In 1988, the Secretary of Education established a high school graduation requirement of 60 hours of service, to be completed by all students in the areas of literacy, reforestation or other health-promoting activities. This initiative was backed by the establishment of an office at the ministry level, and the designation of education officials at the district level to help school directors and teachers understand how to comply with the requirement. While some schools have partnered with agencies such as the Red Cross to carry out youth service projects,

many schools limited themselves to creating their own school-based service projects or reforestation initiatives, thus reducing community interaction.

In 2000, the Youth Affairs Department completed three years of broad consultation with youth groups and other government agencies nationwide on the development of a progressive Youth Law. Among the strengths of this law were the conversion of the department into a Ministry of Youth, the designation of one per cent of the national budget for youth development activities through the ministry, and the focus on promoting the rights and responsibilities of youth in youth participation and community development.

Finally, the organisation of activities around the 2001 International Year of the Volunteer by Alianza ONG and a coalition of governmental ministries and NGOs, allowed for a deepening of relationships between key people in these agencies. It also resulted in research into the sector and the organisation, and the promotion of volunteer-related events and the building of public awareness.

With these foundations in place, a series of actions occurred that can serve as lessons in stimulating youth service movements.

Identifying the key connectors and salespeople for launching a movement

Introducing a relatively new concept such as service-learning to the key organisations and the population in general requires, rather than a broadly disseminated campaign, a focused campaign on key people or connectors who are linked to many other groups, including salespeople who can convey the concept to others open to new ideas. A few lessons related to this particular effort included:

- **Identifying the co-ordinating agency for the Alliance:** Alianza ONG, the lead agency of the International Year of the Volunteer (IYV) 2001, also serves as a formal co-ordinating agency for 21 of the largest NGOs in the country. Their links to other NGOs and the government, and their role in capacity-building and the mobilisation of public awareness around IYV 2001 made them a natural choice as one of the connectors that could convene other agencies without stimulating institutional rivalries for control of the Co-ordinating Agency for Global Youth Service Day, and subsequently Sirve Quisqueya.

- **Identifying the national co-ordinating committee members and recruiting key people from the partner agencies:** While the invitation to the initial planning forum for scaling up youth service was open to all agencies, the core group of agencies that emerged as the most interested established a two-pronged approach to building the committee.

  Firstly, an effort was made to engage the largest youth-related organisations, such as the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Youth, Civil Defence, Pastoral Juvenil, Rotaract, Jovenes por la Paz, the Municipality of Santo Domingo Youth Office, the Civic Education Network, the Association of Business Students and Scouts, as well as support organisations such as Alianza ONG, and the United

Nations Volunteers and Peace Corps. However, the group also set standards for participation in monthly planning meetings and events, which weeded out agencies that were not fully committed or organised. The co-ordinating committee worked to get commitment from the head of each organisation, but more importantly, the participation of a permanent operational contact person who had the authority to commit some of their organisation's resources to Sirve Quisqueya activities.

- **Identifying common interests for the building of an alliance:** The national co-ordinating committee focused on meeting three identified common interests:
  - Increasing the capacity of youth leaders and teachers in service-learning;
  - Increasing the opportunities for service; and
  - Expanding the motivation to serve, through publicity and recognition events.

  By focusing their efforts on these three strategies, the committee could work towards developing basic service-learning information tools that could be co-branded and utilised by all members, such as the initial service-learning lesson plan and a ten-step, project-planning tip sheet. This was of particular interest to government agencies such as the Secretary of Education and the Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development, which often assisted in printing materials.

  Another common interest was that of the individual committee members in improving their knowledge of effective practice techniques that they could take back to their organisations. The deterioration in the effective use of the school service requirement and the low quality of education in the school system also led to member agencies introducing service-learning methodologies, both in and outside the school setting. Furthermore, advancement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was a key common interest of the government agencies, which helped the Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development and the Secretary of Education partner with other NGO members of Sirve Quisqueya to mobilise youth around these goals.

  The ability to identify common interests and priorities allowed Sirve Quisqueya to obtain the funds necessary for its training, events and publications. For example, by developing a manual linking service projects to the Rights of the Child, Sirve Quisqueya was able to get Unicef funding, and by linking manuals to service-learning, the Secretary of Education provided much of the printing and training facilities. The Municipality of Santo Domingo Youth Office, also a member of Sirve Quisqueya, consistently provided the permission and logistics to organise a National Youth Service Fair each year.

- **Forming a national network of governmental and NGO trainers:** The national co-ordinating committee cultivated the key connectors and salespeople by hosting a number of train-the-trainer events with the financial support of the United Nations Volunteer Programme and the Inter-American Development Bank's Paso Joven programme.[3] This network of 22 master trainers from the public and non-profit sectors slowly began training over 400 youth leaders and teachers as trainers in service-learning. The goal was to train over 2,000 teachers and youth leaders on how to engage youth by the end of 2005.

- **Involving universities:** Other key connectors were AIESEC and United Nations Volunteers, which set up a Sirve Quisqueya Universitaria strategy to create university service hubs on three campuses, thus mobilising this group. The partnership between the United Nations Volunteers and the AIESEC groups on these campuses allowed for a moderately successful experience, establishing co-ordination centres on campuses to engage university students in service. Lack of experience in developing local partnerships with NGOs limited the opportunities, and lack of sufficient awareness by students limited participation initially. Nonetheless, this university movement is slowly growing.

- **The role of international agencies in engaging government partners:** Despite the fact that the Dominican Republic is a small country where many professionals know each other socially, it is often difficult for NGO leaders to gain the access to government ministers necessary for consolidating their commitment to certain activities. Sirve Quisqueya found that leveraging the contacts and influence of the Peace Corps and United Nations Volunteers partners helped to open doors and generate interest among government authorities around service learning. Through these high-level contacts, commitments were made that resulted in the assignment of operational representatives to the national co-ordinating committee from governmental agencies.

Developing a sticky message that attracts other sectors through their personal or organisational interests

A second key element of building the youth service movement is to create social marketing messages that can mobilise more youth. Among the lessons learnt were the following:

- **Weaving all the agencies' efforts into a common vision and plan:** The committee held a number of planning meetings to share the array of tools and initiatives that each organisation was working on, as well as to identify the priority needs in terms of capacity building, opportunities for service and public awareness campaigns. The committee also agreed on a powerful vision of working to build the infrastructure and motivation so that "youth service would be the common experience of all Dominican youth". In order to engage the public sector partners further, focus was given to how this service would be carried out to help the country meet the Millennium Development Goals each government ministry was charged with. This vision statement and framework for the plan would serve as the common thread of planning for the movement.

- **Connecting the culture to service:** The national co-ordinating committee recognised the need to develop messages that connect with youth. Using focus groups, various messages were developed and piloted each year through poster and media campaigns. Sirve Quisqueya linked its promotions to the Dominican love of music and baseball. "Discover your (H)uman Spot" subtly played off youth culture's focus on music and tried to convince youth to channel some of their energies towards satisfying the human needs of others. "Be a Community Hero"

took advantage of the number of Major League baseball stars and the dreams of many youngsters to become sports stars. The campaign uses advertisements involving baseball stars to demonstrate how the youth can become heroes by serving their communities. One of the leading baseball teams also promoted Sirve Quisqueya for the UN's International Volunteer Day by carrying out recognition events for youth volunteers.

- **Segmenting the sticky messages:** The diversity of organisations involved in service required segmenting certain messages and initiatives. In addition, Sirve Quisqueya, with the support of Peace Corps, United Nations Volunteers and the Canadian Embassy, began forming volunteer clubs in areas where there were no other organised groups. These Sirve Quisqueya club networks were broken down into five sector categories: Clubes Sirve Quisqueya are general youth service clubs engaging youth aged 12 to 18 in an array of service and leadership efforts. Clubes Escojo focus on training youth HIV and AIDS promoters to teach life skills. Clubes Brigada Verde focus on engaging youth as environmental volunteers and educators. Servir y Juga focuses on incorporating youth involved in sports in service activities, by providing sports equipment in exchange for carrying out community development projects. Sirve Quisqueya Universitaria focuses on mobilising students on three university campuses in service. Through each of these initiatives, messages related to the importance of service could be directed towards the issues affecting youth. All these clubs, as well as the other national co-ordinating committee members, were linked by the Sirve Quisqueya website, www.impulsar.org.

- **Involving the private sector partners:** The national co-ordinating committee worked to engage private companies, both for funding and for expanding awareness. The telecommunications company Orange funded part of Sirve Quisqueya's National Youth Service Fair and, in particular, helped fund 5,000 Sirve Quisqueya wristbands that youth wore as part of a campaign in which youth would do three acts of service and ask those they helped to "pay it forward" by helping others in turn. Other businesses, such as Timberland and Helados Bon, provided support such as 1,000 T-shirts to disseminate the Sirve Quisqueya brand.

Taking advantage of context to promote the message

The third tipping point strategy was to utilise context wherever possible. This was most effectively done by means of international volunteer campaigns to promote national youth service initiatives such as International Year of the Volunteer 2001, Global Youth Service Day, the UN Millennium Development Goals or the Unicef Rights of the Child campaign. In each case, Sirve Quisqueya was able to generate additional interest from the media, government agencies, youth organisations and youth, as they saw themselves linked to a larger initiative and network. In particular, Sirve Quisqueya has been able to generate over two million media impressions each year through its media campaign, which is linked to Global Youth Service Day.

On a national level, Sirve Quisqueya used the Secretary of Education's civic education efforts and the student social service requirement as a means of mobilising more support from within the organisation for staff training and publishing support materials.

Challenges and conclusions for sustaining the alliance

Despite significant progress in its first three years, during which over 5,000 youth were engaged through Sirve Quisqueya's service-related activities, the alliance faces a number of challenges in sustaining itself. First, the turnover of initial key founding partners, because of the change of government and within agencies, has posed a challenge in finding connectors and salespeople who share the passion and vision of the founding members. It has also been necessary to spend additional time and resources to retrain new partners. Second, the lack of steady or significant funding (other than small grants from the Inter-American Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme) has made the development of professional staff positions that ensure continual co-ordination difficult. Third, the focus of the national co-ordinating committee members in the capital has limited impact in the interior of the country.

Nonetheless, Sirve Quisqueya has laid a foundation based on a common vision, key partners and the use of social marketing messages to create a growing youth service movement.

Other examples of youth service partnerships and programmes in the Caribbean

While there has been a proliferation of youth programmes and government departments co-ordinating youth activities in the region, a review of existing research, information on the internet and most volunteer service-related databases, such as the Inter-American Development Bank, United Nations Volunteers, International Association of Volunteer Effort, Global Youth Service Day and Caricom databases, reveals that information on volunteer experiences in the Caribbean is limited, especially on the English-speaking Caribbean, and in terms of evaluating effectiveness, there is even less material. The Dominican Republic has the most information, in part due to its participation as a pilot country in the Inter-American Development Bank's Paso Joven programme and the Global Youth Service Day initiative. This situation demonstrates a need for integration by some of the English-speaking countries into other, broader international service networks.

Regional alliances: Many English-speaking countries have collaborated through the Commonwealth Youth Programme initiative. This initiative focuses on promoting partnerships between government youth agencies and NGOs to create opportunities for civic action through its service internship projects, HIV and AIDS outreach projects, and support of projects that promote innovation in youth participation in the 17 member countries.

The Caribbean Federation of Youth co-ordinates and strengthens the work of national youth organisations through networking, youth exchanges and information sharing. Established in 1986, the Caribbean Federation of Youth operates through the support of the national youth councils and has focused on formulating a Regional Youth Policy and strengthening national youth structures.

The Commission for Human and Social Development of Caricom has developed a Regional Strategy for Youth Development that establishes goals for the English-speaking Caribbean region, such as developing youth statistical databases and training systems for youth workers, establishing national youth councils for all countries, and promoting adolescent health projects and intersectoral projects for community development.

Government-led youth policies, programmes and alliances: Over the past 20 years, many countries in the region have developed formal youth policies to promote participation, co-ordinate resources and provide training. The policies of Guyana, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and St Lucia stand out in terms of detail and operational ability. In general, youth programme responsibilities have been co-ordinated through the Ministry of Education (Barbados, Jamaica, St Lucia) or the Ministry of Sports and Culture (Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago). The Dominican Republic has its own Ministry of Youth that helps carry out the General Youth Law 49/2000 which, among other things, allocates one per cent of the national budget for the ministries' work.[4] In the case of Jamaica, the National Centre for Youth Development was established in 2000 within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture to co-ordinate all programmes and services with other ministries and with NGOs. It also focuses on research, training, funding and sharing of information between the 141 organisations in its youth services database.[5] Barbados established a National Commission on Youth in 1991, which became the Youth Affairs Department in 1994. The department has effectively designed and carried out policies through programmes focused on youth entrepreneurship, youth development and youth service.

Given that some of the highest levels of youth unemployment in the Americas are found in the Caribbean, especially in St Lucia and Jamaica, many of the government–NGO partnerships around youth have focused on national youth service programmes.[6] Some of these national youth service programmes are government-based and others are NGOs working with the government to provide employment preparation for at-risk youth, skills building and work experience through service in the community.

Both Jamaica and Trinidad have launched national youth service programmes that focus on out-of-school youth, helping them to learn new skills and keeping them engaged in civic or productive activities. Jamaica's National Youth Service Programme of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture, engages about 2,000 youth per year in a seven-month programme. The programme includes skills training, a life-skills curriculum and service placement in schools or health centres, early childhood caregiving, or participating in emergency relief efforts. The national youth service programme is mandated to carry out "re-socialisation of youth towards positive values, community building and providing opportunities for their entrance into the labour force".[7]

Recently, the National Volunteering Initiative was launched to further increase the number of youth service opportunities by utilising local parish committees. These are made up of volunteers who organise youth service projects throughout

the country. They have also partnered with the National Volunteer Registry of the Council of Voluntary Social Services, a network of 90 NGOs, to increase the dissemination of opportunities for volunteering. The Jamaican Parliament and Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture have also proposed launching a mandatory youth service programme. The programme has been approved but is yet to receive funding. In addition, Jamaica's HEART Trust National Training Agency reached 31,000 youth under the age of 24 in 1999.

In Trinidad, 15,000 youth a year are engaged in employment skills preparation through, among others, the Training and Employment Partnership programme, Junior Life Centres, Adolescent Community Life Centres and the Youth Development and Apprenticeship Centres. An estimated 500 agencies are registered with the Ministry of Education.[8] In Tobago, the government recently launched a national youth service programme run through the Defence Force, which will also train out-of-school youth in employment skills and community service.

The Barbados Youth Service, a programme of the Youth Affairs Department, is a one-year residential training programme that prepares youth aged 16 to 22 through personal development, work preparedness skills and community placements. While the focus is on employment preparedness, the programme also works to increase the youth's connections with community development through internships with community-based groups. In Guyana, the Youth Empowerment Programme trains youth in employment skills in the areas of construction and architecture, and provides instruction in other livelihood skills.

A final area of government-led collaboration worth noting in the Caribbean is the role of Civil Defence or Emergency Management programmes in a number of countries that mobilise thousands of youth around disaster preparedness and recovery.

In each of these cases, the governmental and NGO agencies are contributing to institutionalising youth service in a way that may lead to an expanded infrastructure for service in the future.

Local and national NGO-driven programmes and alliances

National youth councils in eleven of the Caribbean countries have helped numerous NGOs and youth groups to co-ordinate their advocacy for improved youth policies, greater funding support, public awareness and the co-ordination of their efforts. These national partnerships have strengthened the voice of youth organisations to lobby government and international agencies. In Jamaica, the national youth council has 13 parish youth councils, made up of 350 youth clubs that engage youth in service and advocacy. National youth councils have struggled, however, with typical network issues of funding and politicisation, resulting in the closure of the national youth council in Guyana in 2003, and the closure and reopening of the Jamaican National Youth Council between 2000 and 2004.

HIV and AIDS prevention and life-skills promotion through youth trained as peer educators has been a growing area of service, due to the high level of HIV and AIDS in many Caribbean countries. In addition, organisations have found it easier to find funding to sustain service programmes and create networks linked to preventative

health issues. In the Dominican Republic, the Red de Jovenes focuses on training other youth on HIV and AIDS prevention. Similarily, the Guyana HIV/AIDS Reduction and Prevention Project (G-HARP) is a network of nine organisations promoting prevention with government support. The G-HARP initiative has linked leading NGOs with the government AIDS-prevention agency, developing the common marketing message for youth, "Ready Body … Is it Really Ready?"

Promotion of life-skills through agencies such as Service Volunteered for All (Servol) in Trinidad and Profamilia in the Dominican Republic are other examples of youth service partnerships that link government resources and agencies with NGOs around health issues.

A growing phenomenon in the region has been NGO umbrella organisations such as the Jamaican Council for Volunteer Social Services, Alianza ONG in the DR and the Barbados NGO network for key agencies that want to help interested volunteers connect with opportunities. Many of them have created volunteer opportunity databases, such as the Jamaican National Volunteer Registry or the Dominican database (www.impulsar.org). However, a major challenge has been training NGOs and local groups on how to create and manage volunteer opportunities, especially for youth.

Other large NGO networks engaging significant numbers of youth volunteers include the Scouts, Rotaract, Key Clubs and church-related youth service programmes such as Youth Pastoral in both the Dominican Republic and English-speaking Caribbean countries. The frequency of hurricanes in the region has also facilitated the development of large youth volunteer programmes such as the Red Cross, to co-ordinate with the Civil Defence to promote disaster preparedness and mitigation. Many of these programmes also engage youth in large-scale vaccination campaigns in co-ordination with ministries of health.

In Trinidad and Tobago, Servol is a strong example of an NGO that has developed a partnership with the Ministry of Education to train youth to help design grassroots community development projects. In Guyana, GUYBERnet networks youth to promote education pertaining to sustainable development and information technology training.

International-led volunteer programmes: Among the most common international volunteer programmes operating in the Caribbean region are the US Peace Corps and the United Nations Volunteers. Each year, hundreds of volunteers complete one or two years of service with these programmes. They also focus on engaging local groups in volunteer service. One of the most significant impacts is the multiplier effect, which is the result of having year-round volunteers mobilising thousands of youth into service projects and strengthening their youth group capacity.

Final thoughts on promoting partnerships around service in the Caribbean

The English-speaking Caribbean countries and the Dominican Republic still have rudimentary youth service movements that show limited integration across sectors as well as between countries. To help reach the tipping point of impact and scale of these programmes, four steps are needed:

Promoting interconnectedness: The re-invigoration of national youth councils and service alliances around specific themes such as HIV and AIDS, employment preparation, or the Millennium Development Goals are good opportunities for bridging this divide and strengthening the collaboration. Youth programmes and government and NGOs networks should expand their participation into other, broader networks to allow for extended awareness of effective practices. They must cultivate key connectors that can promote civic mobilisation around youth participation.

Evaluating programmes: While there is an abundance of youth service programmes in the region, there is a need for government and international funding organisations to build into their grants components for helping youth service programmes evaluate their cost-effectiveness and impact. In addition, the development of a database of effective practices, or participation by programmes in pre-existing databases of the Inter-American Development Back, Innovations in Civic Participation and UN will improve the effectiveness of the programmes.

Scaling up: Service leaders need to focus on scaling up around established institutional infrastructure, expanding school-based service-learning models in high schools and universities. There is also great potential for scaling up by linking youth service efforts to other nationally or internationally funded development projects related to employment preparation, HIV and AIDS prevention, and environmental conservation. Furthermore, the development of social marketing campaigns with sticky messages can increase participation among broader segments of society.

Sustainability: The lack of sufficient investment in youth service programmes in the region means that much of the social marketing is done on a voluntary, ad hoc basis, limiting the potential to connect youth to solid youth service opportunities in these countries. Government and international agencies need to view youth service and participation models as key components of development projects.

In conclusion, in light of the benefits of youth service programmes to the full development of young people and their communities, the value of developing multisector collaborations and using social marketing in the Caribbean is vital in reaching the tipping point, which will lead to making service the common experience, and creating service opportunities for all young people in the region.

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Notes

1 'Connectors', as defined in social marketing, are people with broad networks of contacts that help spread social initiatives. 'Salespeople' are people who influence the behaviours and choices of others to establish new social norms.

2 www.pasojoven.org.

3 *World Bank Caribbean Youth Report.*

4 World Bank.

5 World Bank.

6 Jamaican National Youth Service Programme.

7 World Bank, Caribbean Youth Report. p. 69.

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Evaluating and Monitoring Mexican Social Service

ANA DE GORTARI PEDROZA

SUMMARY

Seven decades ago social service was consolidated as an institution of the Mexican State and as a constitutional mandate forms part of students' comprehensive training. In this context, social service is an integral part of the extension and outreach of the Instituciones de Educación Superior (IES) (higher education institutions). This enables the students to relate to society by carrying out activities that are consistent with their professional profile and benefit the community

Every year 300 000 students from different fields of study take part. This group of young people represents an enormous potential resource in promoting strategic links with various sectors, framed within a policy of social co-responsibility.

However, research has made it possible to identify the main problems affecting social service in the academic,

normative and operational areas. It indicates that the social service is performed very unevenly because of a diversity of regional, social, economic, political, academic, cultural and time-related factors.

Research points out, in particular, the existence of structural difficulties in the legal, disciplinary, geographical, cultural, operational and financial areas, which must be assessed with the aim of improving the impact of social service actions, increasing their contribution and making their results more visible.

This chapter underlines one of the most important aspects: the need to carry out evaluations of social service programmes so that useful information can be obtained.

Social service evaluations require focusing on two indicators: academic impact and social impact. The evaluations need to ensure the implementation of lessons learnt, which help improve the social service programmes, with the aim of building models that can be replicated in future.

In order to attain the evaluation objectives, it is advised to use the participatory investigation methodology. This is done by using various evaluation techniques, instruments, and tools.

The following institutions' social service programmes were selected for evaluation: Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (the Meritorious Autonomous University of

Puebla), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (the Autonomous National University of Mexico), Universidad Autónoma del estado de Hidalgo (the Autonomous University of Hidalgo State), Universidad Veracruzana (Veracruzana University), Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí (the Autonomous University of San Luis Potosí), Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro (the Autonomous University of Querétaro), and Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (the Autonomous University of Yucatán).

The author focuses on a particular case analysis: "Study of the management and permanence of the micro-businesses of the marginal-urban and rural areas through the university social service in Yucatán state".

The author concludes that it is necessary to spread the idea that the evaluation is a constructive, self-critical process towards new stages, which sometimes results in abandoning what was being done in order to do it differently and to lead and orientate the re-valuation of the social service towards a new path that clearly and efficiently involves institutions, students and government entities, and requires the adoption of a long-term vision that guarantees the continuity of actions and of institutional permanence, which culminates in the planning of public policies to meet the most urgent needs of the country in terms of its local, regional and national dimensions.

Introduction

Since its establishment seven decades ago, social service has been consolidated as an institution of the Mexican state. Social service is an integral part of the extension and outreach of the Instituciones de Educación Superior (IES) (higher education institutions) and as a constitutional mandate, forms part of the students' comprehensive training. It enables them to relate to society by carrying out activities that are consistent with their professional profile and benefit the community.

Every year, a wide variety of social service projects are performed in different regions of the country, backed by higher education institutions in co-operation with public and social entities. Approximately 300 000 students from different fields of study take part in these projects. This group of young people represents an enormous potential resource in promoting strategic links with various sectors, framed within a policy of social co-responsibility.

However, research has made it possible to identify the main problems affecting social service in the academic, normative and operational areas. It indicates that the social service is performed very unevenly because of a diversity of regional, social, economic, political, academic, cultural and time-related factors.

Research points out, in particular, the existence of structural difficulties in the legal, disciplinary, geographical, cultural, operational and financial areas, which must be assessed with the aim of improving the impact of social service actions, increasing their contribution and making their results more visible.

The legal difficulty has to do with the large number of ordinances and regulations that have impeded a clear and precise definition of the tasks that each person must fulfil, and towards which the social service must be directed.

The disciplinary gap relates to the increasing importance of linking students with different professional careers around problems of local development, in which all disciplines have a place and where the results are very enriching with respect to learning.

The geographical problem, which manifests itself as a concentration of upper intermediate and higher-level educational centres in urban areas, far from the rural and urban-marginal areas where poverty tends to be concentrated, involves large areas of the country where there are only a few social service providers and an enormous number of shortages that, given the scarcity of resources, tend to carry on indefinitely.

Moreover, the fact that serious problems of poverty and regional marginalisation persist in states with a high availability of social service providers indicates that the dissociation of the IES from social development is a structural phenomenon. This phenomenon gets worse with geographical concentration, and reproduces itself, not only at a national level between rich and poor states, but also within regions and cities, and between municipalities and suburbs with different levels of revenue.

The cultural gap has to do with the fact that those who are at university do not come from the poorest social strata in the country, which makes them less sensitive and less ready to participate in the work of combating poverty.

The operational difficulty relates to the way in which social service is integrated into curricula – the link between the content of courses and syllabuses and the

application of theory and practice in solving problems in deprived regions. It is also a product of the scarce participation of academics, due to lack of incentives.

The financial difficulty relates to the reduction of social expenditure, which includes spending on education, and has led the IES to search for resources in order to fulfil its main functions and educational strategies, social service being one of them.

There is consensus on the IES becoming administrators of their own resources through projects or programmes that are submitted to different bodies, such as the three levels of government agencies – so that they can allocate a percentage of the federal, state and municipal budgets for social service programmes.

Considering the present situation, it is essential to co-ordinate the three sectors that must work together: the political, economic and social sectors.[1] In order to achieve this, it is necessary to work out a long-term strategy, with a clear methodology through which funds can be accessed so that the continuity of the projects can be maintained.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects is recognition of the need to carry out evaluations of social service programmes so that useful information can be obtained. This would provide feedback on the strategic planning processes and gauge the social and academic impact of what is learnt, with the aim of building models that can be replicated.

The IES is aware of the importance of evaluations, and is carrying these out in order to get to know the academic and social impact of some of the programmes. It is particularly important to make sure that the academic content is successfully communicated, and that the ways in which values are imparted are rigorously examined.

The importance of evaluating social service programmes

At present, the evaluation and monitoring of social programmes and projects[2] is becoming increasingly prominent. However, efforts and undertakings to engage in exercises that may lead to understanding the efficiency and effectiveness of social programmes are still limited, at least in Mexico.

So, given the constant shortage of resources required to do something about the backlog in social matters, one must keep in mind that investments and related expenditure must be done in a way that is not only effective, but also efficient. For this reason, efforts to implement evaluation of social programmes must not only be increased, but they must also be directed towards monitoring their quality, otherwise they will be of limited use.

The evaluation is not, therefore, limited to registering or measuring results for decision-making, but adds to the knowledge on which decisions are based, contributing to the skills and knowledge of the teams in charge of the projects about the problems they are tackling. This knowledge broadens and enriches their conceptual and practical perspectives, making it possible to scope out actions and improve the control of relationships, variables and factors which have a bearing on

the results or on the changes that are anticipated. Evaluation involves responsibilities and expectations that go beyond mere control, and becomes a fundamental premise in decision-making regarding continuity, termination, diffusion, replication, pertinence or relevance of a project, providing a better understanding of results and changes by means of a more global and integrating perspective.

Social service impact evaluation

How should one evaluate a social service programme?

There is no doubt that it is essential to conduct social service programmes, nor about the advantages of the link they create between the educational centres and the social needs of less affluent Mexicans.

Although there are probably numerous statements by young interns on how the social service experience changed their work outlook and their perception of the country's problems, there is still no real quantification of benefits for the members of the communities served, nor of the students' acquired knowledge. What is needed is a systematic effort to measure these and other specific benefits.

It is not only in the classroom that students acquire knowledge: they also develop ways of thinking, valuing and integrating what they learn as people and as citizens. In this sense, the school must open up to the world of work (preparing students for the work environment), but it must also fulfil its traditional function of fostering and furthering national culture and knowledge; enabling communication and development. This is precisely what – among other aims – social service pursues: linking theoretical and practical knowledge in the surrounding environment.

In general terms, social service evaluation requires focusing on two large groups of indicators: academic impact and social impact.

Regarding process evaluation, it is important to consider efficacy in the definition and programming of actions, transparency, articulation and co-ordination of efforts, as well as consistency in the norms of operation, among other elements.

Concerning the context, it is necessary to know the students' social and professional profile, as well as the economic characteristics and problems of the community in which the social service project is operating.

Regarding coverage, since the programme has two aspects, namely academic development and social benefit, it is important to consider the educational supply and the social demand, and to what extent the social service projects respond to young people's expectations.

Applied methodology may include a field study through sampling analysis and application of interviews or surveys. If this is done effectively, it will lay the foundations of institutional learning for the design, surveying, processing and interpretation of the survey's results, so that proposals can be drawn up to improve the projects.

It has been proved that sampling surveys can generate efficient and reliable results insofar as they make it possible to infer data about the population under study, as well as different behaviours that indicate the situational factors and the programme's contribution.

Preparing surveys requires knowledge tested in the field, the definition of a pilot test to determine the sample population and the survey strategies, knowledge of and extensive experience in handling specialised packages for database treatment, and the ability to do statistical analysis of the data observed.

Careful sampling requires sound knowledge of the programme and makes it possible to maximise results at a lower cost. Costs would become excessive if an analysis of the whole population was attempted.

External evaluation seeks to gauge the social and academic impact through an exercise based on field and laboratory work, using different tools such as sampling surveys and interviews with different actors: students, faculty members and beneficiaries. In the case of internal evaluations, it is necessary to formulate indicators to regularly measure the benefits brought about by the projects.

One of the most important aspects of this kind of evaluation is its capacity to identify and generate useful information on the various stages and characteristics of the programmes and projects to which it is applied. This makes it possible to use information that gives feedback on strategic planning, weighing the impact of actions on the population in a situation of poverty.

Social service evaluation can undoubtedly play a decisive role in the feedback and systematisation of successful experiences and, above all, it can influence the continuity, permanence and replication of the best efforts in other regions and by other IES, in the search for increased funding.

For the IES, evaluation relating to social service provides an opportunity to examine and contribute to the improvement in the quality of community social service projects, as well as measure its results and achievements.

Evaluations, therefore, aim at fulfilling two important functions: the first relates to the fact that the results obtained must provide information on the way resources have been used, to what extent the set objectives have been accomplished, and how the planned activities have been carried out. Secondly, the evaluation should ensure the implementation of lessons learnt, to help improve the social service projects and increase the possibility of replication in the future.

It is worth highlighting the concept of process evaluation, which focuses on the implementation and development of the project with the purpose of analysing the ways in which the activities have been carried out, and deciding on strategies to improve them. The aim would be to ask how the various activities were carried out, the problems encountered while carrying them out, how they were overcome, as well as what the perceptions of the community members are in relation to the project's results.

Following this assessment, evaluation should pursue the following objectives:

- Evaluating the relevance and quality of the projects;
- Highlighting the academic and social achievements and the general impact of the projects;
- Identifying the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats (SWOT) present in the projects;

- Identifying the development potential and future expectations of projects with the possibility of their use as models; and
- Establishing the monitoring and continuous evaluation of the projects to warrant their successful implementation.

Community social service methodologies and evaluation tools

In order to attain the evaluation objectives, it is necessary to use participatory investigation methodology. This is done by means of various evaluation techniques, instruments and tools which help integrate qualitative and quantitative data during the evaluation process. These include:

- An observation guide
- Questionnaires
- Workshops.

This set of tools and instruments is combined with key questions:

- What did we want to accomplish with this project?
- What did we achieve or arrive at?
- How did we use the resources to achieve what we wanted?
- Did we achieve what we wanted?

The people to be evaluated are:

- The students providing social service
- Users of social service projects (beneficiaries)
- The professors/researchers responsible for the projects.

A series of parameters on the most relevant aspects of the projects is constructed with the aim of obtaining a qualitative appraisal allowing the classification of each project. The aim is to construct a number of quantitative indicators on each defined parameter. In this way, it is possible to construct an assessment of each project, both qualitative and quantitative.

It is still imperative, therefore, to define terms of reference containing parameters and criteria. Likewise, it is necessary to prepare and establish, on the basis of statistical information, impact indicators that define objectives, scope, methodologies, periods and other fundamental aspects required in order to gauge efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, synergies, and the social and academic impact of the actions.

Some of the criteria used are shown in the table below. Further on, there is a section explaining in detail the methodology of participatory evaluation, and specifically that of workshops.

Characteristics of the project				
No.	**Criteria**	**Description**		
1	**Thematic core**	• **Rural**	• **Urban**	• **Both**
2	**Problems attended to**	• Public administration	• Urban development	• Production infrastructure
		• Food	• Education	• Urban infrastructure and services
		• Indigenous settlements	• Employment	• Agricultural productivity
		• Legal consultancy (civil, penal and family)	• Energy	• Civil protection
		• Communications and transport	• Equipment	• Productive projects
		• Environmental care, conservation and rescue	• Micro regions strengthening	• Health
		• Culture, sport and recreation	• Municipal strengthening	• Public security
		• Human rights	• Cultural identity	• Social security
		• Agricultural development	• Juridical identity	• National sovereignty and security
		• Scientific and technological development	• Equal opportunity with gender equity	• Housing
		• Other, specify:		
3	**Work structure**	• Title • Summary • Introduction • Methodology • Development • Results • Conclusions (perspectives or proposals)		

Academic impact		
No.	**Criteria**	**Description**
4	Pertinence of the project	The project is congruent with the mission of the institution and the needs of the environment to contribute to the narrowing of social gaps and the comprehensive training of students.
5	Participants in the project	The project is carried out with help from social service providers, researchers and faculty members, preferably those involved in disciplines related to the problems and population being attended to.
6	Multi-disciplinary approach/ trans-disciplinarity	Planning for the realisation of the project is or has been strengthened by a multidisciplinary approach in the action: the interaction of various disciplines contributes to a comprehensive view of the solution to the community problems, and it proves enriching for the provider's professional formation.

Social impact		
No.	**Criteria**	**Description**
7	Project's coverage	The project takes place or took place in previously defined specifically targeted areas: rural communities, urban communities, suburban communities of immediate and priority attention, areas of extreme poverty.
8	Community participation	The participation of the community in presenting their problems and in the design and implementation of strategies ensures or ensured the interaction of its members with a project aimed at achieving the expected benefits, and which, therefore, depends upon their continued support, taking an active part in their social advancement with the support of the educational institution, which provides professional and technical orientation through the faculty members and the students.
9	Permanence of the project (sustainability)	The project or programme is sustained by its social roots and acceptance in the community; by the inter-institutional links; by the availability of resources and human capital in an operation process that includes the continual channelling of providers and professors according to the project's objectives and the goals it has achieved, and the attainment of benefits for the service provider(s) in terms of practical training, and for the community in terms of the project's results.
10	Links with other institutions and social organisations	The inter-institutional orientation of the projects' action enhances their implementation and fosters a policy of collaboration between the various sectors, which contributes to the effectiveness of the community's collective participation.

Field research for the evaluation of the community social service impact

Work universe definition (criteria used for the definition of the evaluated projects)

The first criterion used for the selection of projects to be evaluated was whether or not they had benefited from the resources of the Strengthening and Consolidation Programme of the Community Social Service. As mentioned earlier, from 1999 to 2003, an annual survey was published to provide support to projects of different kinds, driven by and established in different schools of the country's universities. This publication was jointly funded by the Secretariats for Social Development, Education, the Environment and Natural Resources, the Ford Foundation and the National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions. Over the five-year period, 86 projects were supported. A total of twelve were selected, comprising two projects per institution and one IES per region.

In March 2004 a request was sent to the rectors of the IES that had been supported by the Strengthening and Consolidation Programme, for information regarding the current state of the social service projects in their various faculties and schools. It was considered appropriate to include in the evaluation process, first of all, those institutions which answered the request correctly and in time.

The aim of this exercise was to conduct an external evaluation to measure the academic and social impact of these projects in the field, with the following specific objectives:

- To improve on the criteria established in previous official announcements, with the aim of issuing the official announcement of the current year.
- To systematise the evaluation content, in order to set impact indicators for the social service.
- To define objectives, scope, methodologies, time periods and other fundamental aspects of the study in order to determine the relative efficiency, transparency and action complementarity.
- Based on the information gathered, there is a proposal to publish the results in a book with the provisional title of *The Social Service in Mexico: A View from its Actors*. The most consolidated institutional experiences would thus be compiled and recorded for future reference.
- To look for financing and fundraising alternatives.

Evaluated projects, general characteristics and results

With the procedure indicated earlier, the following institutions' projects were selected for evaluation: Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (the Meritorious Autonomous University of Puebla), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (the Autonomous National University of Mexico), Universidad Autónoma del estado de Hidalgo (the Autonomous University of Hidalgo State), Universidad Veracruzana (Veracruzana University), Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí (the Autonomous University of San Luis Potosí), Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro (the Autonomous University of Querétaro), and Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (the Autonomous University of Yucatán).

- **Evaluated projects**
  Twelve community social service projects were evaluated, emanating from seven higher education institutions, as well as eight federal entities.

  For each social service project, two evaluation workshops were held: one with beneficiaries of the project and the second with social service providers. In this way, 24 participatory evaluation workshops were held with more than 400 participants, including faculty members, students and members of the benefited communities.

- **Logistical organisation**
  Carrying out participatory evaluation exercises requires considerable organisational and logistical convening capability. Those responsible for the IES projects and the team of external assessors were responsible for these three tasks. The idea was to hold workshops at every opportunity, in order to ensure the broadest possible participation by those involved, including both social service providers and beneficiaries. Care was taken to provide adequate space and sufficient time, as well as didactic tools to facilitate the carrying out of the workshops.

  This set of organisational and logistical tasks was by no means a minor matter. Much of the success of the evaluation activities and the utility of participatory workshops depended on it. At the beginning it entailed an intense communication process through which the idea was conveyed to those responsible for each project, and even to the IES authorities, that the evaluation was a tool aimed at improving the operational, logistical, organisational and financial management of the projects. The evaluation should be viewed as intrinsic to the projects' development, allowing them to correct, reorient, reverse, complement, reinforce and even cancel a project, and to consider implementing another one with different characteristics, objectives and goals.

  It is necessary to spread the idea that the evaluation is a constructive, self-critical process towards new stages, which sometimes results in abandoning what was being done in order to do it differently.

  In light of the responses of those responsible for the projects, it is probable that the mechanisms used to convey the aims of this first evaluation experience may not have been sufficient. This suggests the following:

- That the mechanisms must be strengthened and expanded if the evaluation exercises are to be given continuity.
- That the IES must work intensively with those responsible for community social service projects to generate a wider and deeper awareness of what social programme evaluation is, and the implications of participatory evaluation.

In relation to what has been said, and as a result of the first exercises of evaluation carried out, several aspects must be kept in mind.

Convening capability is linked to an indicator which is the number of participants per workshop. At the general level there was an average of 17 beneficiaries per workshop, and 13 social service providers per workshop carried out. Regarding the former, the average participation of women per workshop (12) was more numerous than that of men, the opposite being the case with the latter (eight men per workshop). Although this rate of participation – which is not the best according to accepted standards – indicates a less than adequate convening capability, there are various reasons to explain it:

- In most evaluated projects the beneficiary population is open, that is, there is no focused and/or delineated universe of project beneficiaries, and this is why those who attended the workshop comprised only those with whom work had been done previously.
- The workshops took place on working days, so the beneficiaries found it difficult to leave their daily occupation to attend the workshops, no matter how interested they were in attending.
- Those responsible for the projects did not provide the means necessary to ensure greater attendance of the workshops. In rural areas, transport should have been provided in some cases.
- There was no guarantee that those responsible would convey a clear idea of the workshops' objectives to the beneficiaries.
- There was some resistance to carrying out the evaluation exercises on the part of some institutions or project leaders.
- Only in the case of the social service providers were positive attitudes towards participation clearly and consistently manifested.

These observations point to an evident lack of culture regarding evaluation, which is understood not as a regulating and monitoring process in order to correct or proceed with the set guidelines, but rather as an inspection that causes anxiety and leads to practices which try to conceal reality.

Although, in all cases, the projects included their own methods as an intrinsic part of the evaluation process, it is clear that these methods were merely a self-justification mechanism, which lacked the necessary rigour to correct or reorient the process. This underlines the importance of external evaluation, which has even greater potential if it relies on an expanded culture of evaluation among those responsible for carrying out the community social service projects.

- **General characteristics of the projects**
  The names of the evaluated projects and some of their characteristics are recorded in this chapter. As can be observed, six out of the twelve projects belong in the area of health and all have a multidisciplinary character.

  Six projects are located in deprived rural areas or regions, and another six in deprived urban areas. The former are within municipalities with high or very high levels of marginalisation, according to the criteria established to this effect by the Consejo Nacional de Población (CONAPO) (Population National Council).

  The urban projects take place in municipalities with medium, low and very low levels of marginalisation (Boca del Río, San Pedro Cholula, Nezahualcoyotl, la Delegación Coyoacán del Distrito Federal and Mérida), but which are enclaved in poor suburbs in the respective urban centres.

Case analysis: Replica of social enterprises support project in Yucatán State

Background

The link between higher education and the productive sector becomes an important instrument in educational and industrial policy, insofar as it enables the formal incorporation of large sectors of marginalised micro-enterprises into institutional efforts aimed at promoting sustainable and productive social development, and also at overcoming restrictions faced by those sectors in their inclusion into the new economic dynamics.

The social benefits of this link are related, not only to research activities which meet the technological and organisational needs of the enterprises or allow the IES access to additional private financing sources, but also, more fundamentally, to the development of professional human resources

In general terms, the Organisation Model for Social Service Support to Micro-enterprises is in line with the need to promote business and professional training among students and micro-business men/women to increase the micro-business competitiveness and wellbeing and strengthen the quality and relevance of higher education.

In this sense, the objective of the proposed tool is to establish an industrial and educational policy model that can be generalised among the IES, starting from regional innovation schemes that link groups of university students in the economic and administrative areas with the provision of comprehensive assistance for marginalised micro-enterprises through the university social service, while at the same time making use of an investigation concept which enables access and analysis of information that is unobtainable from other sources.

The social impact of models such as the one presented here is not limited to the training of micro-business people in order to increase their earnings, or the training of the students themselves in social services associated with the values of solidarity and reciprocity; but also fosters the use of social resources in development and of a tertiary education that is of a higher quality and more pertinence.

The model consists of the transformation of the university, through the students providing social service to the micro-enterprises, with the aim of transferring knowledge, as the daily work and cost of not doing so prevents the micro-business people from seeking training in formal institutions. This contact enables the transfer of knowledge in both directions, from the students to the micro-business people and vice versa, which allows control over the operations of the enterprises, the formation of an overview of it, and the making of more efficient decisions which impact on their performance.

This model, which was originally developed by researchers from the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (Autonomous University of Baja California) and the Universidad Autónoma de Nayarit (Autonomous University of Nayarit) has recently been replicated at the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (Autonomous University of Yucatán), in a completely different region, both from the territorial and social points of view. Good progress has therefore been made on the replication of the model.

The socio-economic context of Yucatán State

The state of Yucatán is situated within the tropical area, with an area of 43 379sq km and a coastline of 378km. It has a population of 1 658 210 inhabitants, with a density of 39 people per square kilometre and an annual growth rate of 1,98 per cent. Politically, it is made up of 106 municipalities.

Economic activity

Within the classification of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the great division of INEGI for Yucatán, we find that commerce and services represent about 71,4 per cent of the value generated in the state, higher than the national average, while the manufacturing industry contributes just 14,2 per cent. At the national level, the manufacturing industry represents 21 per cent of the national GDP.

On the other hand, the construction sector, with 9 per cent of the state GDP, represents almost double the amount, using the same indicator, at the national level. There has been little exploitation of tourism, despite a wealth of possibilities. In the primary sector, in spite of the fact that almost 30 per cent of the population lives in rural towns with less than 5 000 inhabitants, the farming sector contributes 5,3 per cent of the state GDP, which indicates the low productivity of the Yucatán countryside.

Yucatán had an average annual GDP growth rate of 3,5 per cent between 1993 and 1999, equivalent to a global 22,6 per cent during the same period. During the two-year period from 1998 to 1999, the state GDP represented 1,3 per cent of the national GDP and occupied 23rd place among the country's 32 federal entities.

Yucatán State is an entity with a growing economy, as shown by the previous data. There has been progress in foreign trade, industry has evolved significantly and the Yucatecan community, in general, is more participatory.

As a strategic sector, tourism brings about economic and social development, which contributes to productive diversification, employment creation and the influx of foreign currency, and requires ample and sustained support for the alternatives

to local and municipal economies to materialise, for which tourism is a development trigger. It represents the third-biggest source of income in the country as a whole, contributing almost one tenth of the national GDP. In Yucatán, within the tertiary sector, tourism makes an important contribution.

Yucatán is an ideal tourist destination. It is part of the region known as Mundo Maya (Maya World), which receives more than nine-million tourists and secures $3 300-million a year. There are many resources that can be exploited for tourism, from its 1 600km of coastline to the three-million hectares, which make up 28 nature reserves. Within Mundo Maya, the state offers tourists some of the most spectacular archaeological sites in the country.

Agriculture in the region has gone through various stages, without achieving the growth and development hoped for. This is because the total area of agricultural land is only 3,8 per cent of the country's total and its production represents only 1 per cent of the national production value.

The production of vegetables has become more technical, and specialists are trained to develop these types of agriculture; however, this has not resulted in better living conditions for agricultural workers. This is partly due to the uncertain conditions of the market, phytosanitary aspects, and the fact that the products are marketed without adding value to them. Another factor is the lack of organisation in production and commercialisation. It can be said that there are two aims for production – self-consumption and sale – and these are achieved through rural and technical cultivation, in the open air and under greenhouse conditions with irrigation systems in which more than 5 000 producers participate.

More than 20 000 hectares of cultivation are designated for citrus production, of which 77 per cent is used for sweet orange, whose highest production volume is obtained in a short period and whose principal problem is commercialisation, both as fresh and processed produce.

In livestock farming there is a considerable delay in the adoption of technology, which has repercussions for the productivity and viability of the production lines. The situation has a more direct effect on producers and the social sector: it has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the number of cattle due to previous government schemes. However, the genetic quality of the cattle and pigs is widely recognised, as is the high degree of sanitary control which has been achieved.

Regional development

The infrastructure for the development of the state is found concentrated on the peripheries of urban areas, including the municipalities of Mérida, Progreso, Umán and Kanasín, and absorbs the major part of the principal regions and indicators of development production. Other municipalities such as Chemax, Chankom and Tahdziú situated in the centre and east of the region, are reported to have the greatest degree of marginalisation in the country. Many rural settlements lack sufficient economic opportunities, especially in the field of employment, and this has caused many of the inhabitants of the municipalities to migrate to the city of Mérida.

The present conditions which characterise the different regions clearly illustrate the persistent differences in economic as well as social factors. In most of the regions, there are backlogs in the provision of social services. The primary sector predominates with traditional production techniques and low incomes, while in the other regions there is a wider production diversification and higher levels of social welfare.

These conditions reveal the diversity of the areas, the polarisation of the economy and levels of wellbeing. Many of the regional contrasts are due to the concentration of the infrastructure for development in a few municipalities.

Urban development and poverty

Population growth is concentrated principally in the cities. The surrounding rural settlements make up territorial units with interdependent economies and services. The city of Mérida, the economic and political driving force of the region, has the largest and best quality urban infrastructure. Together with Kanasín, Umán and Progeso, it makes up an economic development area with insufficient services.

Medium-sized cities such as Tizimin, Valladolid, Peto, Ticul, Motul, Izamal and Oxkutzcab participate in the interior of the state as regional service-providers to communities and neighbouring municipalities. Valuable historical and ecological resources can be found in their surroundings. Archaeological investigations conclude that the area had the greatest amount of human settlement during the Mayan civilisation.

The archaeological zones of Chichen Itzá, Uxmal, Ekbalam, Yaxuná, Oxkintok, Labná, Kabá and Kayapán, and other sites provide evidence of this, as do colonial cities such as: Mérida, Valladolid and Izamal. The ecological zones that stand out are Ría Celestún, Ría Lagartos, Arrecife los Alacranes and the zones of Dzibilchaltún, Kabá and Laguna de Yalahau.

In Yucatán the groups that are living in conditions of extreme poverty and marginalisation are clearly identified and make up what could be called the state map of poverty and marginalisation. Some 37 per cent of the inhabitants live in extreme poverty, which means that their income does not meet their

Yucatán State	
Merida City	
Number of districts	68
Population	
Total population	705 055
Men	339 543
Women	365 512
Indian population	92 465
Economically active population	
Economically active population	288 809
Inactive population	246 758
Employed population	286 134
Sectors of activity	**%**
Primary sector	1,58
Secondary sector	26,13
Tertiary sector	70,56
Education	**%**
Literate	95,33
Illiterate	4,51
Housing	
Total no. of family houses	172 383
Poverty	**%**
Poverty index	Very low
No sewage or bathroom	8,09
No electricity	1,32
No running water	2,63
Overcrowded housing	38,20
Dirt floor	1,14
Elaborated by the author based on year 2000 data. Sources: Inegi, CEDEMUN, Inafed.	

subsistence needs. Yucatán shares with Hidalgo State the position of fourth-poorest in the country, and is only overtaken by Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero.

Health and education

In the area of education, Yucatán occupies the 23rd place in the country, with an average of seven years of schooling among the population over 15 years of age, which is below the national average of 7,7 years. Some 9,3 per cent of the children between 6 and 14 years do not go to school, making it the state with the ninth-highest percentage in this regard. The statistics also confirm that a large part of children in poor conditions do not finish primary school, and many of those that do finish do not continue with their studies. This situation seriously hampers the development of the children's capacities.

In Yucatán, the total student population has now reached 524 738 students, taught by 28 889 teachers in 3 652 schools, which means an approximate average coverage of 71,6 per cent in the different education levels. Some 89,2 per cent of the students are in public institutions and 10,8 per cent in private institutions.

The illiteracy rate in the area is 12,3 per cent, while the national average is estimated at 9,4 per cent. As well as being inadequate, the educational infrastructure is not always in the best condition. Of the 1 990 buildings used for basic education, 981 require the building of at least one education space, 1 208 need maintenance or renovation, and a high percentage of the schools do not have enough appropriate equipment or furniture. Regarding the incorporation of technology into the basic school curriculum, the backlog is illustrated by the fact that only 14 per cent of primary schools and 24 per cent of schools in secondary education have participated in the programme Red Escolar (School Network), which provides schools with computer equipment.

In the area of health, life expectancy is still one year under the national average. Infant mortality is at 26 for every 1 000 children, while the national average is 24, a figure that places Yucatán eighth in the country going from highest to lowest. Although the mortality levels and life expectancy have improved, they are still far below the national average. There are municipalities in the state that have the worst indicators of health in the country. The situation is even more serious in families with low incomes, in which malnutrition and infectious diseases are a daily part of life for children and young people.

For every 1 000 inhabitants in this state there are 19,5 medical units, a figure which is slightly higher than the national average of 18,7 units. However, considering the high concentration of medical units in urban areas, and taking only the information from public units, there is a lower level of attention compared with the rest of the country. This indicates that the quality health services are located in urban areas, which means a great part of the population is left without appropriate services.

Housing and services

In the field of housing, great efforts have been made to bring about improvements, but there is still a considerable shortfall, especially among poor families. The moderately poor are not generally eligible for housing programmes, as they are not considered credit subjects. As a consequence, human settlements are created in an irregular manner, generating legal insecurity in the patrimony of families, creating an informal land market and resulting in precarious and unhealthy housing, the disordered growth of cities, excessive costs of urbanisation and deficiencies in water supplies, drainage and rubbish collection, among other problems.

Of the 371 242 occupied houses, 95,4 per cent count on electrical energy, 89,6 per cent have drinking water from taps and 58,4 per cent have drainage. From this information it can be deduced that many houses still lack basic services, which produces an unhealthy environment, overcrowding and a high mortality rate.

Vulnerable groups

With regard to demographic transition patterns, the infant population is the smallest and young and adult inhabitants constitute the greatest percentage, which means there is an increasing demand for well-paid employment. It also shows that there are more old people, meaning that the aging process of this group of inhabitants is constant and they will require more residential space. It is a painful reality that, in lower-income families, the older people have to carry on working.

The Maya ethnic group is one of the groups that falls behind most in the field of comprehensive development. Most of its members form part of the lower-income group, and at the same time belong to the municipalities with the highest degree of marginalisation and poverty. The public policies destined to promote their development have not been able to overcome assistentialist and paternalist practices, impeding the consolidation of a state policy which would help to end poverty in Maya communities in a jointly responsible manner.

The present problems of Yucatán appear in two contexts: urban and rural. In the first, the rhythm of growth of cities is important. Some 424 348 people, who represent 68,6 per cent of the total working population, are concentrated in ten principal municipalities: Mérida, Progreso, Valladolid, Umán, Tizimin, Kanasin, Tekax, Tucil, Motul and Hunucmá.

In the rural context, the contrast between the principal municipalities is significant. There are only 32 763 people in employment, a figure which is the equivalent to 16,3 per cent. The disproportionate distribution of income makes it impossible to maintain a population in appropriate conditions in their place of origin. The result is a major migratory flow from the country to the city, with the consequent loss of human capacity in rural communities and deficiencies in the basic services, increasing the differences in the standard of living between the Yucatecan communities.

Project: Study of the management and permanence of the micro-businesses of the marginal urban and rural areas through the university social service

Beginning of the project: 2003
Institution: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán
Responsible(s): C.P Silvia Cevallos López
Participating degrees: Accounting and Administration, Economy and Marketing and International Business
No. of social service providers: 19
No. of teachers involved: 2
Area of influence of the project: Periphery and rural areas of the city of Mérida.
Community objective: To generate a consultancy project through the participation of previously qualified students, with the aim of strengthening the permanence of the micro-businesses as a way of self-employment and, in this way, contributing to the decrease of marginalisation and poverty in the state.
Academic objective: To get to know the problems of the micro-businesses in the urban-marginal and rural areas of Yucatán, in order to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their administrative and productive processes. This is achieved through the contribution of the university social service, with the aim of improving their business management and their permanence in the productive sector, and using the link to spread information that can be used in the classroom as well as in businesses.
Description of the project: The social service providers locate micro-businesses within a radius of 50km, and in suburbs or neighbourhoods with less than 2 500 inhabitants, and offer them a legal advice service to improve the management of their businesses, as well as equip them with bookkeeping and administration tools to allow them to develop.
No. of beneficiaries: 105 micro-businesses
The support of the Fondo para el Programa de Fortalecimiento de Proyectos de Servicio Social Comunitario 2000 (ANUIES, Sedesol, SEP, FF.) was obtained.

Results of the participatory evaluation

In the workshops carried out, the beneficiaries and social service providers agreed on the following:

Hierarchy of problems

- There are no mechanisms to follow up the advised micro-businesses once the consultancy of the social service providers has come to an end.

- It is necessary to extend the type of advice provided on financial sources for expansion, building renovation and productive infrastructure.

- It is necessary to emphasise the organisation of micro-businesses in order to increase their competitiveness.
- Economic support must be made available to the social service providers, so that they can offer a closer and more constant consultancy service.
- An increase in coverage is needed.
- There are no links with the municipality, presidency or any other government authority.

Relevance of the project

The project is highly relevant because it offers consultancy and support to the micro-businesses of the poorest areas of the city of Mérida, serving those who have scarce economic resources, very limited capital, and a low or non-existent knowledge of production and marketing techniques.

The advice they have received has enabled them to conserve their sources of employment and income, as well as to enlist the support of their families in order to contribute to solving the problems of the poorest people in the state.

It has allowed the social service providers to adapt and put into practice the knowledge acquired in the classroom, and to simplify administrative and management techniques so that they can be understood and applied by those running micro-businesses.

The relevance of objectives, goals and results

From the workshops carried out with micro-business people and social service providers, it can be concluded that the objectives, goals and results of the project have been fully reached. Three generations of social service providers consulted to around 105 micro-business people, and have also prevented any bankruptcies or business closures, which would have affected their families.

Effectiveness of the project

It can be concluded that the project is effective, given that it is of great use both to the beneficiaries as well as the social service providers.

It has also permitted the beneficiaries to gain collective knowledge and tools that apply directly to their micro-businesses. This has allowed them to improve their operations and expand the vision and conception they have of their business and of themselves as people.

This is, without a doubt, a fundamental change, since now they know and apply new ideas that have resulted in the development of their businesses.

The social service providers have been able to apply the knowledge they acquired in the classroom, which has taught them how to adapt such knowledge to the actual conditions of their suburbs and population.

In the workshop carried out with the social service providers, it was made clear that the most valuable outcome was being able to convey to micro-business people the concepts of administration, economy and accounting, and the knowledge to apply these concepts

in practical situations. For these reasons, the project has been highly effective.

Academic and social impact

The impact generated by the project has been very positive, both for the social service providers and for the owners of the micro-businesses.

The project equipped the latter with business administration techniques, elementary marketing and commercialisation techniques, and taught them to calculate their production costs, pricing strategies as well as profits. This has enabled them to maintain and develop their business, and to feel more secure.

It has also allowed the social service providers to test the knowledge acquired in the classroom and, more importantly, to make this knowledge accessible to the micro-business people. Providers also had to adapt the instruments to the prevailing conditions in the poor residential areas of the state.

Operative efficiency of the project

The project was shown, in general terms, to manage itself efficiently, given that no waste of resources or duplication of functions or activities were observed.

It was observed that the direction of the project is appropriate and that the service providers are motivated, which has also meant that these providers have contributed their own resources in order to offer advice to micro-business people.

It was also observed that there was a close link between the students and micro-business people, consolidating the spirit of community social service, that is, the link between the professionals and the community.

SWOT analysis

Strengths:

- The project has helped to maintain sources of income and employment for poor families.
- A close link has been established between the service providers and those who run micro-businesses.
- A change in mentality is taking place amongst micro-business people as they apply their new knowledge of production and marketing techniques.
- Among the social service providers, there has been an increase in creativity in order to adapt the instruments of economic and market analysis to the conditions experienced by the micro-business people.
- Considerable interest has been generated among the social service providers towards the micro-businesses and this has deepened their knowledge of this sector.

Weaknesses:

- The beneficiaries and social service providers are not aware of the agencies and support programmes for micro-business people.
- The organisation of the micro-business people is incipient or practically non-existent.
- The social service providers lack resources to give closer and more constant advice.
- The consultancy is not diversified to other branches of production and is only based on food production.
- Neither the business people nor the social service providers have links with the government agencies.

Opportunities

- The sustainability of the social service can develop new micro-businesses.
- Organisation amongst the micro-business people can be consolidated to increase their competitiveness.
- Deeper knowledge of the problems and perspectives of the micro-businesses in Yucatán can be developed.
- The development within the university of the specialisation of consultancy to micro-businesses can favour the professionalism of business people and reduce improvisation.
- Consultancy on the matter can rationalise the growth of micro-businesses towards diversification in other economic categories.

Threats:

- The lack of follow-up in consultancy that the micro-businesses have already experienced could cause the closure or bankruptcy of businesses.
- The emergence of businesses with greater endowment of capital could cause the breakdown of those micro-businesses that are less developed.
- Public policy orientated towards micro-business support is very limited and has no specific links to the project, which could eventually lead to permanent exclusion from the sector.

Conclusions

It can be concluded that evaluation exercises of this nature necessarily require a higher level of organisation and logistical effort if they are to guarantee greater participation by the individuals involved. This can only be achieved through the understanding that the evaluation exercise is not an act of supervision, but fundamentally an event that should be carried out on a continuous basis to orientate, correct, broaden or even replicate the actions of the project.

The relevance of the projects evaluated is positive in relation to the link between theory and practice that the social service providers manage to achieve with the communities. The projects are developed in the places where they are required, given the conditions of poverty and marginalisation experienced by the beneficiaries. From this experience a lesson is learnt that goes way beyond what is learnt in the classroom, and that reaffirms in the social service providers a greater consciousness of their social environment. However, it is important to point out that the management of the projects is not ideal, given the problems of organisation, administration and follow-up of actions, not to mention the scarcity of resources available.

On the other hand, in the majority of cases, a wide discrepancy is observed between the objectives, aims and actions suggested in the project plans with respect to their real operation. This can result from the fact that the problems encountered cause the projects to gradually change and move away from what was originally suggested.

Among the social service providers there is great enthusiasm for participating in the projects, as well as a solid commitment to addressing the problems of the communities, despite the scarcity of resources and support. The enthusiasm observed by the social service providers is definitely one of the greatest strengths of the social service projects.

On behalf of the beneficiaries, it is necessary to point out that they do not only provide work and resources, but also organisation and a sense of co-operation and solidarity in the actions carried out within the projects. However, not all of the projects are sufficiently rooted in the community. Some seem to originate from academic initiatives rather than being initiated and driven by the actual beneficiaries. Although in most projects there is solidarity in the participation, the only possibility of empowerment lies in the direct function of the projects' original authorship.

In general terms, apart from the few exceptions already pointed out, the projects have been accepted and been able to take root amongst the communities despite the deficiencies in organisation, planning, follow-up, control and administration of resources. It should be recognised that the IES have involved themselves in the development of the projects, incorporating new disciplines with the aim of resolving the problems within communities in a more integral manner.

A small number of projects have developed links and collaborating relationships with other authorities such as non-governmental, producer and colonist organisations,

as well as municipalities and other authorities. Needless to say, for those who have developed these links, they provide an opportunity which can strengthen the project's activities, scope and impact.

Final reflections

Over the course of seven decades, social service has been consolidated as an institution of the Mexican State and a central strategy which contributes to the comprehensive development of the students, through activities geared towards making a positive social impact.

During the last decade, the analysis and elaboration of suggestions to improve social service have been promoted with increasing vigour, so that the domain of social service can now be considered by the young people as a real space for learning.

The result of the contributions made become relevant and significant in light of the need to transform social service into a fundamental activity in the integral development of students, the impulse of local development strategies to benefit more vulnerable communities, and the design of proposals associated with a policy that is both of and for the young people.

Social service depends upon human and social capital of a strategic nature, which has not been completely exploited by the Mexican State, as all of this accumulated talent has not been placed at the disposal of the economic, social and cultural needs of the region.

To lead and orientate the re-valuation of the social service towards a new path that clearly and efficiently involves institutions, students and government entities, implies the abandonment of the narrow, rigid, discontinuous, dispersed and short-term perspective, and requires the adoption of a long-term vision that guarantees the continuity of actions and of institutional permanence, which culminates in the planning of public policies to meet the most urgent needs of the country in terms of its local, regional and national dimensions.

The re-valuation of social service goes beyond the scope of the departments in charge of regulating this activity. Consequently, its transformation poses a series of demands on the entire higher education system, especially with regard to the participation of the IES in the definition of national problems and the design of social service programmes, which, through the collaboration of the public, social and private sectors, may have an influence on the problems that have been identified.

However, due to their socially and constitutionally assumed responsibility, the IES are committed to regulating, organising and operating a pertinent social service. It is also their responsibility to convert the service into an educational strategy, to instil in all citizens values that contribute to the overcoming of inequality and poverty in our country.

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Notes

1 Adela Cortina, *Viabilidad de la ética en el mundo actual,* Universidad Iberoamericana, Puebla. Abril de 2004, p. 24.

2 While evaluation can be understood as a measurement of achievements, results and/or impacts that are derived from the project's existence and were set as objectives to be achieved, the monitoring is related to the way a project is being implemented in comparison with the original plan. In this way the evaluation makes it possible to measure the relevance of the project, its effectiveness and impact in relation to its objectives, and monitoring measures whether the agreed timeline is being fulfilled and if the project's beneficiaries are receiving those elements that were planned, whether consumables, infrastructure, or services.

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- Elicegui, P and González, A (2002) *El rol docente y el trabajo en equipo a partir de proyectos educativos vinculados a la comunidad*;
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Visibility and Recognition of Student Solidarity:

The cases of Chile, Brazil and Argentina

PABLO JAVIE ELICEGUI, DANIELA EROLES AND PRISCILA CRUZ

SUMMARY

This chapter analyses the awards given to service-learning experiences as a strategy for the development of solidarity in the school environment. The awards are aimed at strengthening the public visibility, promotion and future replication of service-learning programmes, and the chapter explores the characteristics and particular scope of the public recognition processes that have taken place in Chile, Brazil and Argentina.

In Chile as well as in Argentina, the state is the main promoter and designer of service-learning actions, while in the case of Brazil, the central actor is a civil society organisation (non-governmental organisation). This chapter analyses the differences between the models.

Giving public visibility and promotion to social service and service-learning experiences, allows different solidarity services and practices in the educational environment to be recognised and systematised. It gives social service experiences the status of pedagogical practices and increases the institutionalisation of solidarity experiences by integrating them into institutional educational projects.

This approach values children and young people as today's critical and participatory actors, instead of favouring the traditional view that considers young people as the citizens of "tomorrow".

It also has the potential to help the community see educational institutions in a new light, to enable students to perceive the community differently, as a place where their knowledge is consolidated and becomes meaningful, and to encourage teachers to perceive young people as having the capacity to commit themselves to improving their conditions and those within marginalised communities.

This interaction not only enriches the school and its students as actors within the community project, but also enables the enrichment of the volunteerism spectrum. Generating visibility of this whole phenomenon has supported the building of bridges between educational institutions and civil society organisations present in the community.

Introduction

Over the past few years in Argentina, Brazil and Chile, governments and civil society have been developing initiatives orientated towards gaining public visibility and recognising the solidarity experiences that occur in the school environment.

Experiencias solidarias estudiantiles (student solidarity experiences) are systematic, organised actions carried out in and from schools, led by the students with the advice and support of teachers and school administrators.

In all three countries, these initiatives are accorded training and public recognition. What follows in this chapter is an account of the authors' experiences of these student solidarity initiatives in each of the three countries – Argentina, Brazil and Chile.

The chapter is divided into two sections. In the first part, and by way of introduction, we point out common aspects of the work young people carry out when engaged in these co-operative practices. The second part of the chapter explains the characteristics and scope of the public recognition that has taken place in Chile, Brazil and Argentina.

Although public recognition of these experiences takes place in all three countries, there are some notable differences. For instance, in Argentina and Brazil the recipient population is mainly children, adolescents and young people within the education system; while in Chile it is mainly high school students.[1]

In Argentina the experiences of educational solidarity that are most likely to receive awards are those that are formally incorporated into the school curriculum, while Chile and Brazil also recognise other expressions of solidarity within the school environment that are not integrated into the formal education system.

In Chile and Argentina, the state acts as the designer and promoter of service initiatives, while in Brazil the central actor is generally a civil society organisation (NGO).

The public recognition of co-operative practices linked to educational institutions has multiple effects. The young people who carry them out gain increasing knowledge of and commitment to needs within their environment. Within the actual educational institutions, new dynamics, conflicts and challenges occur. And, of course, the recipient communities are institutional actors of enormous consequence.

The implementation of co-operative educational experiences is a process that draws different actors together. There is no co-operative youth leadership without a community that shelters them and allows them entry, without an educational institution that provides the framework for a project, or without teachers who are committed to the education of young people and to solving community problems need to be tackled.

In this sense, a strategy like holding of a public recognition event or publicising the impact of a certain educational practice in the media brings a solidarity initiative under public scrutiny, and this ensures that the action does not remain restricted to the field of pedagogy. The complex world of social relationships between young people, institutions, the state and civil organisations is drawn into the spotlight. Furthermore, the problem, to which everyone is trying to find a solution, is also exposed.

When we talk about 'giving visibility' to a problem, there is the possibility that the community may see educational institutions in a new light; that students may perceive the community differently, as a place where their knowledge is consolidated and becomes more meaningful; and the fact that teachers may perceive young people as having the capacity to become involved in finding solutions to social problems or experiences of injustice.

If we add to this the possibility of making known and promoting a particular community project, we are also fostering the integration of more actors who can contribute according to their identity and their own spheres of interest.

In the pedagogical field, prizes and public recognition make it possible to recognise and systematise the diverse expressions of solidarity[2] that exist in the field of education, making it an experience that can be communicated to others who can then go on to replicate it. As a result of public recognition, many solidarity experiences became accepted as pedagogical practice.

Many experiences begin with the enthusiasm of a group of students, or of a particular teacher, or with a specific response to an emerging necessity (e.g. a natural disaster). Once recognised, the management of the actual institution, or the local authorities, measure the relevance of the work carried out and begin to support its development, looking for ways of integrating it within an institutional educational project and/or the communitarian-social intervention policies.

The awards enable the establishment and installation of a link between community practice, solidarity and the educational sphere. This favours the pedagogical relevance of solidarity actions, as well as the generation of conditions for their implementation and sustainability.

This recognition also fosters the formation of networks and alliances between different institutions, taking away from schools a responsibility for neighbourhood social work and causing them to focus on their pedagogic function. However, they do not espouse an 'isolated' pedagogy, but rather a critical one that is co-ordinated with other institutions – such as civil society volunteer organisations, governmental organisations and foundations – around common projects or issues that generate shared projects, sometimes through similarities and the closeness of the communitarian-social context, or simply due to common interests with respect to the initiatives that have been implemented.

This interaction not only enriches the school and its students as actors of the community project, but also enriches the volunteerism spectrum. Generating visibility on this whole phenomenon has allowed for the increasing building of bridges, so that educational institutions have ongoing contact with civil society organisations in the community. It has also bolstered the development of school volunteerism and extracurricular youth volunteerism, especially among young people who end their school cycle and remain in contact with the voluntary organisations.

Lastly, we believe that it is worth insisting on the opportunities afforded by these projects to modify the community's perception of young people. As a result, children and young people are valued as 'today's' citizens, as critical and participatory actors. Solidarity projects presume a healthy break with tradition, which tends to consider young people as 'tomorrow's' citizens.

Solidarity Schools Presidential Award in Argentina

The beginnings in broad strokes

It is a challenge to write about the *Premio Presidencial Escuelas Solidarias* (Solidarity Schools Presidential Award) in Argentina because it is necessary to define various criteria in order to deal with it. We will consider the award from two perspectives: in the first place, as a strategy implemented through the National Ministry of Education[3] and, secondly, with regard to the visibility and the public recognition that this strategy has promoted.

In the year 2000, a new democratic government was inaugurated in Argentina. Through the Ministry of Education, the new administration created the *Programa Nacional Escuela y Comunidad* (National School and Community Programme). The two central objectives of the programme were to spread and promote service-learning, and to co-ordinate the educational efforts of civil society. The Solidarity Schools Presidential Award was born as one of the programme's first initiatives, and was framed within its objectives.

The first surprise came with the number of experiences presented in response to the invitation for submissions. Some 3 000 experiences were submitted by the whole education system, far exceeding the most optimistic expectations. Both the prominence given by the media and the ministry's handling of the event were important factors in the success of this official initiative.

However, we tend to agree, intuitively, with the opinion expressed by Wade Brynelson with regard to the point of support and development of service-learning: it grows from the bottom upwards.[4]

In Argentina, a great number of educational institutions were already involved in service-learning before the ministry coined the term and inaugurated the Presidential Award[5]. The award in itself referred to a practice already recognised by a great number of actors in the educational system. The invitation to educational institutions to present their solidarity education projects made sense, because it acknowledged a practice already present in schools and institutions of higher education.

Some information on the award

Let us first outline the objectives mentioned in the invitation for submissions to the Solidarity Schools Presidential Award[6].

On the one hand, the Award aims at "recognising those educational institutions that integrate most effectively the academic learning of the students with community service". The said "recognition" also aims to acknowledge "good practices" of service-learning in order to stimulate and strengthen related methodology within the educational system.

The objective "Favouring co-ordination between the school and the various civil society organisations" is meant to highlight and promote the way educational

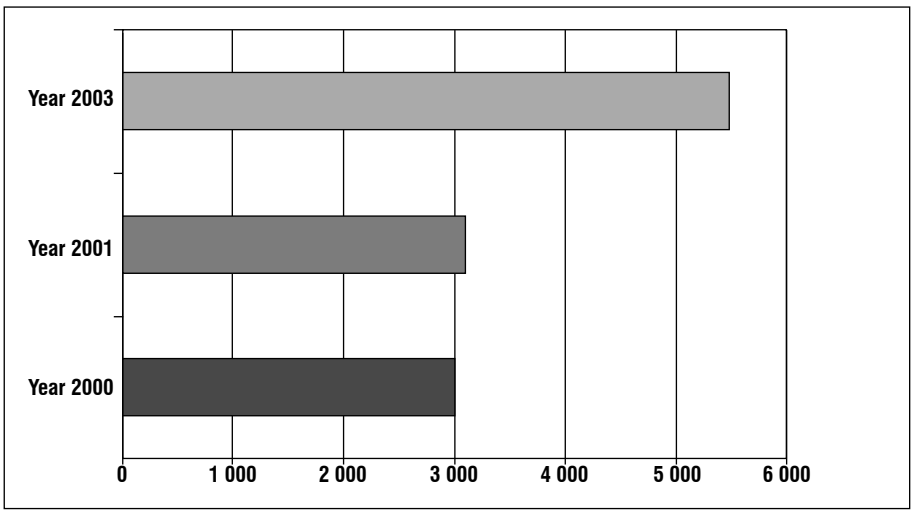
institutions operate. It moves away from a closed institutional model to organise projects with other organisations and social actors.

It aims, also, at "stimulating the spreading of a culture characterised by participation, solidarity and citizen commitment." This is linked to a distinctive aspect of the presentation requirements: in addition to being solidarity projects carried out by students, the experiences had to be ongoing at the time of the presentation.

Given the quality and quantity of the projects submitted, the task of evaluating them was quite difficult. The main criteria were the following: the students should take a leading role throughout the project; the project should make a significant impact on a community's quality of life; learning should be clearly linked with the solidarity action; and there should be evidence of originality and the possibility of replication.

Let us look now at some data showing the impact that the prize has had and the recognition it has received over the past few years.[7]

From the information compiled by the *Programa Nacional Educación Solidaria* (National Solidarity Education Programme), we know that by the year 2001 approximately 4 400 institutions had presented projects, which involved more than 10 per cent of the education services of the country. The programme's database at that time included around 6 100 experiences that were presented.[8] The prize and the programme were discontinued after a year, but the event was re-launched in the year 2003 and 5 500 experiences were presented. This provides clear evidence that, in spite of the country having gone through one of its worst institutional crises, schools, institutes and universities maintained their links with communities and even increased them, developing social and solidarity projects during this difficult time. [9]



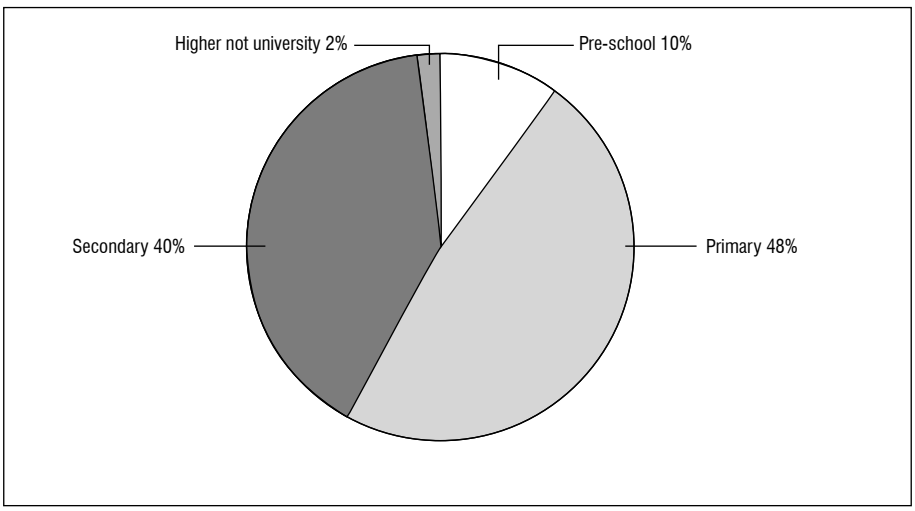
Source: Programa Nacional Educación Solidaria

Projects were received from all the provinces in the country. This is significant because it made it clear that Argentinean regional, political, social and cultural diversity was not an obstacle to educational institutions in implementing solidarity education projects.

In addition, figures showed that the whole education system was involved, disproving some perceived prejudices regarding the institutional profile of the participants. From the investigation carried out by CLAYSS (Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario), it became clear that the type of management (public or private), the environment (rural or urban), the type and level of education and the variations in the institutional matriculation were not impediments to the development of service-learning projects. Let us take, for instance, one significant fact that emerges about the types of participating schools: in relative terms, almost as many state-managed institutions participated (10,7 per cent) as did privately managed institutions (9,3 per cent).

If we examine the projects presented according to the education level of participants, the data show that all education levels in the country were involved[10]. Education level, therefore, was not an excluding factor, either in the implementation of solidarity educational experiences, or in determining their quality, as demonstrated by the wide range of institutions that received awards. It is also worth pointing out that institutions situated in rural and urban environments submitted projects that dealt with problems and populations that were very varied. Projects were also submitted by many schools of special education, artistic foundations and vocational training institutions.

Number of projects by education level



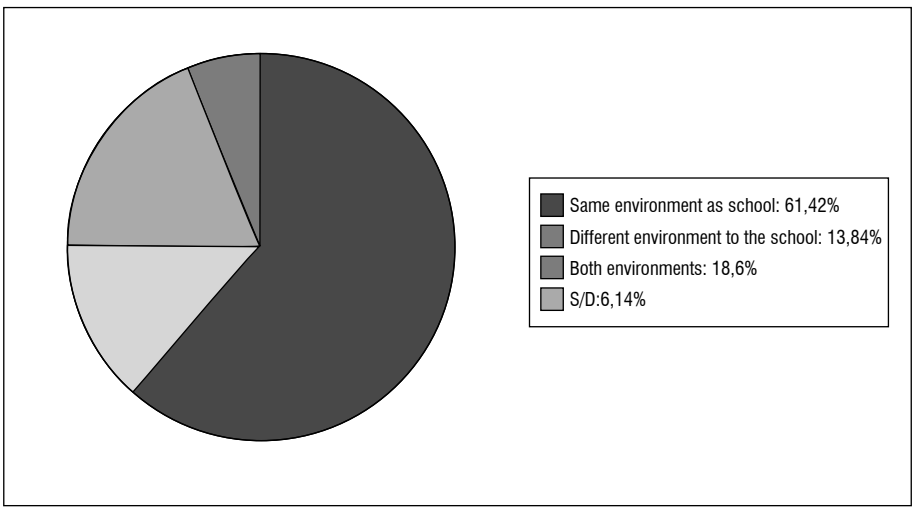
Source: Programa Nacional Educación Solidaria

For the purposes of this chapter, it is interesting to highlight two other facts. An analysis of the institutional alliance with *Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil* (Civil Society Organisations) (NGO) shows that, of all the experiences presented for the award, 67,77 per cent maintained between one and three links with social organisations. This indicates an interesting tendency on the part of educational institutions in developing communitarian social projects. As mentioned previously, educational institutions tend to integrate community actors with different rationales and aims to their own. Thus, the school does not begin implementing projects in isolation from other community actors.

This is also evidence of the commitment of all actors involved in mobilising and obtaining resources, which are sometimes scarce or non-existent, by very different means, these being necessary in implementing service projects for the community. A great many experiences are driven by the efforts of a group in action, combined with the support of government organisations and non-governmental organisations, the role of the school co-operatives, and the active, voluntary participation of principals, teachers, students, parents and neighbours.

What about visibility?

The other important aspect is that institutions are linked mostly by problems within their own communities. This can lend weight to several theories, which possibly contradict one another. In this case, rather than formulating complex explanatory theories, we will close the section with a few reflections arising from this phenomenon.



Source: Programa Nacional Educación Solidaria

As mentioned above, most of the projects considered enter the field with the resources they have available, and with the community actors involved, in order to attend to varied and complex social issues. However, this picture is not complete without pointing out that Argentinean experiences are mostly focused on their immediate surroundings. This closeness enables us to stop and consider the question of visibility in a special way.

How is *this* institution viewed by the different actors in the intervention? Referring to visibility means entering the field of perspective. The award places us in front of institutions capable of transforming the social environment's view of them. We would suggest that the change of view begins with the possibility – provided by the solidarity education projects to the teachers' body – of seeing the students as actors who are capable of reflecting critically on reality, and carrying out transformations within it.

Many teachers' testimonies point in this direction. Equally, the expressions of many students reflect how self-assessment of their abilities and competencies can change. The change of view as an aspect of *visibility* also means, in this sense, the opportunity to feature in a different way within the institution.

Consequently, it gives rise to a change in the community's perception with respect to an institution's people, time and motivation when responding to the local needs.

The account of the experiences presented to the Solidarity Schools Presidential Award tells us of communities that can, therefore, view their young people in a different way. At the same time, it refers to pupils who attend institutions that promote community action as part of their pedagogical activity. They are young people who look at the community as a place, *their* place, worth working for and committing themselves to. It is a commitment that, far from wearing out, can be renewed over the years in different forms, for different reasons and through different organisations.

The Presidential Award is a way of making these practices known, giving visibility to their actors and aiming for their multiplication. It is a way of showing the active and critical commitment of educational institutions and thousands of young people, with a better world as their goal.

Educational volunteerism: Promotion of educational volunteerism in Brazil

There are many reasons to stimulate the promotion of students' volunteerism starting at school.

Personal and social experiences lived out at a young age are crucial for shaping one's life projects, one's political and ideological viewpoints and even one's professional and academic career. Young people need to be valued and seen as part of the solution rather than as a problem, because they are capable of fostering transformations with new ideas and enormous energy.

The struggle for the protection of the environment, for hunger reduction and for quality teaching are instances in which young people's participation has been vital in Brazil.

According to the literature related to volunteerism[11], people who participate in voluntary actions during their youth tend to maintain, throughout their lives, levels of social commitment and political involvement that are higher than those of people who never had those experiences. It is also held that volunteerism is an effective preparation for the world of work and for academic pursuits.

Volunteerism facilitates the discovery of talents and the development of various types of learning such as diagnosis and analysis of reality, teamwork and communitarian organisation, communication skills, resource management, values (particularly solidarity and justice) and citizenship.

Selo Escola Solidaria (Solidarity School Seal)

With its continental dimensions and great socio-economic inequalities, Brazil presents a challenge for administrators in the most varied fields. In education the task is, firstly, to create the means for the universalisation of education, particularly where it has already been reached at a fundamental level, while also trying to ensure its quality.

At the same time, it is necessary to reverse the tendency of young people not to see the educational institution as a partner or companion (*parceira*, even though it is, besides the family, the main personal and social influence on the students).

The Faça Parte Institute is a social organisation whose objective is to consolidate the culture of volunteerism in schools. Believing in the transformative power of young people, and in the view that volunteer work reinforces the school's role as a centre of citizenship, culture and encounter – making it a place in which democratic interaction takes place – Faça Parte organised the *Selo Escola Solidaria* (Solidarity School Seal) for the first time in 2003. This came as a result of its association with the MEC (Ministry of Education), the CONSED (National Council of Education State Secretaries), the UNDIME (National Union of Municipal Education Directors) and UNESCO (United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture).

The objective of this Biennial Seal is to identify, spread and facilitate the multiplication of educational volunteerism initiatives in Brazil's schools.

The Solidarity School Seal does not aim to classify schools by rating their initiatives, because it considers all initiatives to be valid. Due to Brazilian social and cultural diversity, it would be impossible to choose categories without careful consideration of the context in which each is located. As the Faça Parte Institute believes in the great value of each action in its community, it certifies both the schools that carry out isolated and particular actions, and those that carry out more elaborate projects with the participation of many people, or which transcends the boundaries of the school community.

However, both evaluation and certification require taking into account objective criteria regarding the process and the result, such as whether or not the construction stages of a project were completed, whether or not the students played a *leading* role in the project, whether or not some community actors were involved, whether or not there was a real effort to involve the community, and so on. The real impact of the project, both in the school and in the community, is also assessed.

The first Solidarity School Seal was widely supported: entries came from more than

10 500 schools of the Brazilian States and the Federal District. From this total, more than 8 700 were recognised, representing a range of public and private schools, large and small institutions, kindergartens, primary, secondary and technical schools.

Two years later, more than 14 300 teaching institutions submitted their initiatives for the second Solidarity School Seal, representing an increase of more than 35 per cent – a percentage that, according to estimates, is expected to be maintained in respect of the number of certified schools.

It was only possible to get to know and certify the solidarity schools thanks to their reports. Through these texts, it was possible to identify actions which demonstrate the social commitment of the students and the pedagogical relevance of the works carried out. They focused on areas such as social assistance, campaigns and donations, education, sports, culture, care of the environment, school infrastructure and health.

The verification of a rich and heterogeneous panorama of educational volunteerism in Brazil inspired, in 2004, the publication of the book *Casos e Contos – Viagem por um Brasil Solidario (Cases and Stories – A Journey through Caring Brazil)*. By pointing out the relevance of 100 educational volunteerism projects reported in the 2003 Seal, this compilation is intended to stimulate and inspire other schools in Brazil to incorporate socially responsible practices into their programmes.

More than a certification, the Solidarity School Seal is the symbol of a recognition process for schools, their students and teachers. Brazilian schools have been doing their part and we, as civil society, must support them in their mission.

Social practices in schools

In the contemporary world, the school is increasingly becoming the object of study, investigation, criticism, proposals and projects, which do not always take into consideration the views and desires of those not directly involved in schools.

The democratisation of schools and the universality of access to schools are consequences of the recognition by society of the importance of these institutions for the development of countries to keep pace with advances in the modern world.

In 1988, the Brazilian Constitution acknowledged the right of all to education, and the duty of the state and the family regarding this right. The Law of Directives and Bases of National Education (LDB) of 1996 placed primary teaching in the category of Subjective Public Right, that is, a right of the individual and a common point of interest for the community.

Consequently, the state and the family have rights and duties concerning the school education of children and adolescents. Society is also called on to promote and stimulate education, aiming at the full development of individuals and their preparation for the exercise of citizenship and qualification for work.

The LDB establishes that schools must have a link with the world of work and social practices. It is expected that, in this way, school education will prepare the student for life and be inspired by principles of freedom and ideals of human solidarity. Such principles and values are universal and must guide the educational action of schools, social organisations, families and other sectors that want to collaborate with

education.

Values such as multiculturalism, solidarity, peace building and respect for cultural, ethnic, social, religious and any other kind of diversity are essential for any educational proposal that claims to be democratic.

The possibilities of implementing projects in schools are countless, but school communities need to know which projects are aligned with their functions and needs. The fact that schools carry out social actions throughout the country, in different situations, proves that educational volunteerism is possible. Commitment and the will to act are all that is required.

Schools that are certified by the Seal make up a solidarity network with the determination to take the cause forward, increasing and strengthening the practice of educational volunteerism in their environment. They show the transforming power they possess by assuming the commitment to offer quality education based on the ideals of solidarity, citizenship and participation, stimulating the participation of their students in social projects of pedagogical relevance.

Partnerships and alliances

Alliances (parcerías) in Brazil

- MEC (Ministry of Education)
- CONSED (A council that brings together the 27 State Secretaries of Education)
- UNIDME (Association representing the 5 560 Municipal Secretaries of Education)
- UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation).

Solidarity Schools Network in Brazil

- 2003: 8 700 schools (serving 1,5-million students)
- 2005: 12 800 schools (serving 2,2-million students).

Network of schools registered in the Friends of the School Project

- 27 000 schools in 2004
- projection of 40 000 schools in 2006.

Solidarity Schools Network of MERCOSUR

- Schools in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay
- The first meeting took place in Buenos Aires in October 2005
- The second meeting took place in Rio de Janeiro in October 2006.

Solidarity Schools Panamerican Network

- Schools from Alaska to Patagonia.

Recognition of student solidarity in Chile

Solidarity School Bicentenary Award

> "*...It is a must for all Chileans, especially the young people of this country* to dream, create, imagine, innovate and discover the new spaces that the country has started to create for all"[12]

In the year 2010, Chile will celebrate 200 years as a republic. With the desire to celebrate this anniversary as "a country which is fully and justly developed and integrated in our diversity" [13], President Lagos invited a group of distinguished public figures to assume the leadership of this project. The Bicentenary Commission, through various activities, stimulates the participation of citizens and co-ordinates the efforts that all the sectors of society are engaged in within the framework of this celebration.

In this context, the Bicentenary Commission and the Ministry of Education combined their efforts to create the *Premio Bicentenario Escuela Solidaria* (Solidarity School Bicentenary Award). This award contributes to the formation of a culture of both solidarity and participation, through the recognition of solidarity practices carried out by the students of the country, both within the schools and towards the community.

Origin: The High School for All Programme experience

The recognition of solidarity practices in the school environment originates from the *Programa Liceo Para Todos* (High School For All Programme)[14], spearheaded by the Ministry of Education. This programme offers training and advisory services to school establishments that undertake solidarity pedagogical projects involving service-learning and tutorship of students by other students. In the years 2002 and 2003, the competition entitled "High School For All: Service-Learning and Tutorship Between Equals" was carried out, with the objective of spreading and giving recognition to these pedagogic practices. From this experience, and with the objective of expanding this recognition to the whole school system, the creation of the Solidarity School Bicentenary Award was proposed.

The Solidarity School Bicentenary Award

Objectives

The central objective is to give visibility and public recognition to solidarity practices that students in our country carry out within and outside their schools. In addition, our aim is to:

- Foment the practice of solidarity as part of the school curriculum;
- Link the values of solidarity and democracy; and
- Systematise experiences in order to facilitate their propagation and replication.

Participants

In the years 2004 and 2005 only the middle-school education establishments of the country were invited to participate. It is hoped that, progressively, all levels of the school system would be incorporated.

Characteristics of the experiences

The experiences of solidarity in the school environment are varied, but they have some characteristics in common:

- They are systematic: they develop timeously, have clear objectives and a specific form of organisation.
- They are organised and carried out by the students, who assume specific roles and tasks in their design, implementation and evaluation.
- They intend to educate: their explicit objective is to develop in the students attitudes of solidarity, responsibility and social commitment.
- They count on institutional support and commitment: they form part of the institutional project; the school community knows, orientates and supports the development of solidarity practice.

Awarding categories

Recognising the diversity of expressions of solidarity in the school environment, the following three categories were established:

- Service-learning: pedagogical experiences of community intervention in which the students deepen, apply and verify the knowledge, skills and attitudes that come from school learning.

- Solidarity within the educational community: experiences of service that benefit the educational community as a whole or some of its members, such as tutorship between peers, and support networks.
- Solidarity with the local community: experiences of service to the local community or to a social group, organisation or institution external to the school, not integrated in the regular curriculum.

The first version of the competition, 2004[15]

In the first version of the competition, 300 experiences were submitted. They manifested the diversity of solidarity practices that the students perform at school, such as technological training and transfer, recovery of the local cultural heritage, teaching support, support to institutions or specific social groups, student tutorships and care for the environment. Students and teachers of the 30 finalist schools participated in a seminar to exchange experiences and explore the subject of the development of solidarity educational practices. It provided an opportunity to share the wealth of diversity that exists in schools of different social, cultural and geographical contexts, and to share their perceptions of having the common task of building a fairer country for all.

Building a fairer and more democratic country in growing solidarity

Finally, we conclude this presentation of our country's experience by pointing to the main lessons we learnt from the work done within the High School For All Programme and the Solidarity School Bicentenary Award, in constructing a country growing in justice, solidarity and democracy.

The school-community reunion

The relationship between the school and the community is not always close or conflict free. In many situations, the school feels threatened by the community that questions its role as educator and demands all sorts of answers to its problems. The community perceives the school as removed from its needs and is judgmental of parents who are accused of not fulfilling their parental responsibilities adequately.

Solidarity educational experiences contribute to the renewal of the school-community bond. Schools rediscover themselves as part of their community, assume an active and responsible attitude towards community needs, and this gives schools new meaning as places of learning. The community reunites with an open and closely linked school that attends to its needs and puts knowledge at its service. In turn, as a result of these solidarity actions, support networks are constructed between the community organisations, the local authorities and schools.

A new perception of young people

The relationship between the adult world and the world of the youth is not an easy one. Adults often see young people as rebellious and indifferent. Young people complain about the lack of understanding on the part of adults, as well as their authoritarianism and lack of concern. Through the experiences of solidarity educational practices, this relationship is transformed. Adults in the school and the community discover that young people are capable of committing themselves to their communities and contributing to their development. Young people, in turn, meet adults who can be trusted, who guide and support them, and, above all, listen, acknowledge, and value them.

Youth social leadership and civic participation

Lastly, a central lesson of the solidarity educational practices has to do with the formation and leadership role of young people as citizens.

From a traditional and limited view of citizenship, exclusively associated with election processes, it is the role of the school to hand over the basic political alphabet for the future integration of youth into civic life.

Within the solidarity educational practices, a new conception of citizenship is promoted and generated which integrates the comprehension of social reality (including political institutions) with leadership and participation in the construction and transformation of that reality. Being a citizen is something that is learnt, and therefore it can be taught, not only through speech and in theoretical terms, but with a balance between established knowledge and the experience of citizenship relationships and actions at school, in the family and in the community.

Notes

1 Chile's experience could expand its spectrum of recipients in the short term to include children.

2 The characteristics of different systematised experiences are described in the sections below that feature each country.

3 In this chapter we will take into account particularly the first three Presidential Awards, in which all educational levels of the country participated. However, it must be kept in mind that in 2004 the Solidarity Practices Presidential Award in Higher Education received more than 300 experiences carried out by universities and teacher training colleges.

4 Cf. Brynelson, Wade, Ministry of Education, Minutes of the Second International Seminar "Education and Community Service", *Service-learning in the educational system: the case of the State of California, United States*, p. 40.

5 The investigation carried out by Tapia, Nieves, González, Alba, Elicegui, Pablo: *K-12 Service-Learning in Argentina*, available athttp://gwbweb.wustl.edu/csd/service/SRGP_CLAYSS.htm expands statistical data in respect of the first years of solidarity education experiences. Even if experiences that began in the 1930s are acknowledged, records show sustained growth at the beginning of the 1990s, that is, 10 years before the first invitation to participate in the Presidential Award.

[6] The Form and the Basis for the presentation of *Experiencias Educativas Solidarias* can be found at www.me.gov.ar/edusol

[7] These data can be compared and expanded on by consulting the web page of the Solidarity Education National Programme of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology: www.me.gov.ar/edusol, as well as the above mentioned investigation: Tapia, Nieves, González, Alba, Elicegui, Pablo: *K-12 Service-Learning in Argentina* Schools, at http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/csd/service/SRGP_CLAYSS.htm

[8] At present, the database of the *Programa Nacional Educación Solidaria* includes 11 500 projects of solidarity educational experiences based on the Award.

[9] The number of experiences presented made it possible to begin implementing, in the year 2004, the "*Premio Presidencial Prácticas Solidarias en la Educación Supeior*" (Solidarity Practices in Higher Education Presidential Award) aimed exclusively at universities and other higher education institutions. In this way, the Presidential Award for Higher Education and for Basic Education have been differentiated and alternated annually. In 2005, the invitation for submissions was to Solidarity Schools, and in 2006 the invitation to submit was to be addressed to institutions of higher education.

[10] For more data please consult appendices to the investigation by Tapia, Nieves, González, Alba, Elicegui, Pablo:*K-12 Service-Learning in Argentina Schools*, at http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/csd/service/SRGP_CLAYSS.htm. In turn, 4 000 solidarity educational experiences carried out in schools of all levels and characteristics were submitted for the 2005 edition of the Award. Almost half of them were presented by secondary schools, but the participation of primary level EGB 1 and 2 (5 to 11-year-old pupils) was higher than in previous years, as well as that of special and adult schools.

[11] cf. Articles on volunteerism, civic service and service-learning in Service Enquiry 1/Servicio Cívico y Voluntariado 1 at www.service-enquiry.org.za and Minutes of the Service-Learning International Seminars at www.me.gov.ar/edusol.

[12] Supreme Decree 176, which created the Bicentenary Commission, year 2000.

[13] Idem.

[14] High School For All is a focused programme that works with secondary education establishments attended by young people with the highest social and educational vulnerability in the country. It contributes to the completion of secondary school by young people, providing access to quality education. More information at www.mineduc.cl.

[15] More information on the Solidarity School Bicentenary Award and winning projects of 2004 at www.bicentenario.gov.cl.

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Conclusion:
Solidarity can be learnt at school

MILÚ VILLELA

Few activities have the power to improve the quality of education, transform a school into an environment of mutually supportive co-existence, and prepare students for civic participation, all at the same time. However, educational volunteerism can do this. It has been the mission of Faça Parte – Instituto Brasil Voluntario, since its inception in 2001, to consolidate this culture in Brazil and inspire young people to serve as an instrument for the construction of a more just country.

In order to fulfil an educational role, volunteerism must combine school-based recruitment with social responsibility and commitment. The connection between academic knowledge and volunteer action is more important than carrying out the action itself. Specialists in the field believe that educational volunteerism provides those who practise it with six types of benefits.

The first benefit is cognitive. By doing voluntary work, young people learn more, and learn better. From the pedagogical point of view, volunteerism can enrich transversal themes, contributing to the comprehension of the content of various disciplines by combining theory with relevant and humanising practice.

For instance, by involving a young person in tasks such as doing the accounts for a nursery school, writing letters for illiterate workers, organising a campaign for the rational use of energy, or by finding out about a particular historical period through the accounts of the elderly, the practice of volunteerism consolidates knowledge of mathematics, practical language, the sciences and history.

North American research testifies to the fact that teaching, doing and discussing the volunteer activities enables young people to grasp concepts and is far more effective than traditional practices alone. Educational volunteerism renews schooling, not only by reinforcing its role as a space for civic formation, but also by incorporating some of its premises, such as the orientation towards knowledge that is related to real life and the nurturing of critical, autonomous and creative spirits.

The second benefit relates to the civic sphere. Voluntary work calls for community participation, awakening an awareness of the duty we all owe to our society, as well as instilling a sense of belonging to the community. By becoming involved in the problems of their own area, young people reflect, analyse and engage in finding solutions to these challenges. The volunteer therefore becomes a citizen who is aware of his or her responsibilities and is inclined to change what must be changed.

The third benefit lies in the realm of ethics. Volunteerism is a fertile ground for instilling important values, such as solidarity. The commitments people make to each other and to the group do not take place only at the cognitive level. They are fundamental to the human spirit and can be shaped only through the personal experience of planning and performing actions.

One of the most interesting characteristics of volunteer work is that it transforms the one who gives as much as the one who receives, bringing about mutual growth. Contrary to an individualistic type of logic, it teaches both parties to value others, recognise oneself in others, tackle differences and develop healthier relationships. Volunteerism benefits every community and every country.

The fourth and fifth benefits relate to professional and personal achievements. There is evidence that in our times, in which social responsibility is a cult, volunteer work is starting to provide a comparative advantage. Many companies have adopted it as a consideration in their selection processes as someone who is ready to devote their time and knowledge to a social organisation has already learnt to serve. Doing this, willingly and on principle, is the type of behaviour that can make a significant difference in the services market.

Volunteers are, by nature, special people who work for a cause and are passionate about what they do. As they are accustomed to a scarcity of resources, they know how to do more with less, translate ideas into actions, and build bridges instead of focusing on chasms. Being self-motivated and having initiative, they tend to enjoy work and, as they cherish contact with people, have a great capacity for leadership.

The sixth benefit has to do with the social dimension. Educational volunteerism expands the school walls, opening them democratically to the people and organisations around them. The culture of peace that volunteerism spreads, the respect it commands, and especially the associative spirit it fosters, all generate a climate of greater confidence within a community, producing better relationships and more social capital. Today we observe that there is a strong connection between good schools and communities with closer links among different groups.

In order to identify, recognise and profile volunteerism experiences in Brazilian schools, Faça Parte – Instituto Brasil Solidario created the Solidarity School Mark (Selo Escola Solidária) in 2003. Out of 93 000 schools invited to participate in the initiative, more than 20 000 institutions have already been recognised for their educational volunteerism projects. Educational volunteerism shows that solidarity can be learnt at school.