

2-26-1988

## Issues and Action in The Streams of Service

Frank J. Slobig

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/slceslgen>

 Part of the [Service Learning Commons](#)

Please take our feedback survey at: [https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE](https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE)

---

### Recommended Citation

Slobig, Frank J., "Issues and Action in The Streams of Service" (1988). *Service Learning, General*. 58.  
<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/slceslgen/58>

This Conference Proceeding is brought to you for free and open access by the Service Learning at DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Service Learning, General by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact [unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu](mailto:unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu).

National Information Center  
for Service Learning  
1954 Buford Ave, Room R290  
St. Paul, MN 55108-6197

**"Issues and Action in The Streams of Service"**

Address by

**Frank J. Slobig**

at

*Youth Service America/Brown University*

Leadership Conference

A Youth Service Agenda for 1988

Providence, Rhode Island

February 26, 1988

NSLC  
c/o ETR Associates  
4 Carbonero Way  
Scotts Valley, CA 95066

1319 F Street, NW  
Suite 900  
Washington, DC  
20004  
202/783-8855

## Issues & Action in The Streams of Service

The landscape across the country is sporadically spotted with an increasing number of locations where young people are engaged in sustained significant service. They are involved in part-time school-based programs in junior and senior high schools, in campus-based collegiate programs and in full-time corps.

Let's first examine the landscape of full time corps. We know the most about these programs in part because there are fewer of them, but also because they have had the benefit of developmental assistance and evaluative scrutiny from organizations such as the Human Environment Center, Public/Private Ventures as well as our own. Most of the programs also belong to NASCC -- the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps -- which strives to increase the number of full-time corps, expand existing ones and perfect their quality and performance. Many of the leaders of that organization representing significant state and local programs from coast to coast are with us at this conference.

Five years ago there were but a handful of full-time corps. Today there are nearly 50. They range greatly in size and significance. Some are year round. Others are summer only. The 11 year old California Conservation Corps whose annual budget of \$48 million supports 2200 full-time slots has a funding level more than twice the size of the federally

supported VISTA program. Remember, VISTA. It really does still exist, although a shadow of a once larger effort. At the other end of the spectrum of year round programs lies the tiny A-Team in Anne Arundel County, Maryland with a budget of \$200,000 to support 20-25 slots.

Similar contrasts exist in the summer youth corps. Governor Blanchard's Michigan Youth Corps stands apart as the most substantially funded summer effort at \$25 million and involves nearly 30,000 young people - levels roughly equal to the federal Summer Youth Employment Program effort in the state. By contrast the tiny New Hampshire Conservation Corps with a budget of \$25,000 only has ten slots.

With the exception of the City Volunteer Corps, New York City's national service demonstration project, The Washington State Service Corps, Michigan's big summer youth corps and promising efforts by some of the other corps to diversify into human services, almost all the corps activity is concentrated in the conservation area. That's the basic lay of the land in the youth corps world. Stretching the numbers somewhat, assuming about 4 months average participation in a full-time corps slot, maybe 60,000 young people have some experience each year in a youth corps.

What is the potential for expanding? There are nearly 20 million young people 16-24 not attending school full-time who could be viewed as the eligible universe for participation in full-time corps programs. So less than 1/3 of 1% of those who might participate, in fact, do. Why is that?

Well, more than half the states don't have any programs. Very few urban areas have programs. Many programs restrict eligibility in one way or another - by income status, requiring entrants to have been unemployed for a period of time, limited age ranges, or establishing other technical eligibility criteria. But the largest single obstacle to more full-time opportunities is budgetary - the high unit cost of the programs. Where programs don't exist it is a struggle to convince political and civic leaders that corps programs are worth the cost and that there are compelling tradeoffs for spending large sums of money for this program approach approach versus another. Witness the two year struggle that Public/Private Ventures has endured to convince the powers that be in Philadelphia to commit the necessary resources to mount a program that will gradually grow from two ten member crews to perhaps 100 participants. Witness also the budget justification struggle that the City Volunteer Corps went through to justify continuing at a reduced funding level. Another is the effort to create a Youth Service Corps in Minnesota, where the climate is favorable but resistance to funding has yet to be overcome.

On the other hand where political will and visible leadership are present, such as in San Francisco or in the state of Michigan, the prominence of the program on the political agenda of the chief elected official more than offsets questions of cost. The most expensive corps of all, the California Conservation Corps, became so popular that Gov. Deukmejian made it a permanent state agency. We all can learn a lesson from California about the value and importance of selling a strong positive image of a program to the

general public and the state legislature. The CCC's budget request for next year is for \$58 million, a ten million increase.

So the fundamental challenge seems to be to identify, educate, and support public officials who are interested and in a position to make a difference. The question then is what alliances or coalitions would best foster more rapid development of this process?

Given the preponderance of programs at the state level does it make more sense to concentrate on selected governors and/or work through the National Governors Association? Could a coalition of governors of existing state programs be put together to influence others? Or are the real state powers in the legislature like State Senator Garamendi in California? Or are the political forces so different from state to state that a generalizable strategy is unlikely?

The need is great in the cities as are the numbers of young people who could benefit from a youth corps experience, yet the number of actual urban programs is very limited. The City Volunteer Corps in New York was established with one of its goals being to influence similar service corps development in other areas. CVC has clearly left its mark on other existing programs that have adopted some of its practices. It also influenced the design of the Youth Volunteer Corps of Greater Kansas City. But now into its fourth year of operation CVC cannot point to any real clones around the country. The closest to it perhaps would be the conceptual design of City

Year, a Boston plan, about which we will hear more this afternoon, that hopes to come alive as a program this spring.

The specification in California state law of community conservation corps and the dedicated revenue from a bottle bill to support and/or establish programs in cities of 250,000 or more will result in a network of seven urban conservation corps. The existing programs in four cities - San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento, and Los Angeles should be able to expand. A new program has begun in San Jose. San Diego and Long Beach should follow.

So another urban strategy is to build off existing state programs where the political base is strong, particularly if there is a clever way like the California bottle bill to provide substantial funding for the programs. Such an approach might be worth exploring in Ohio with its significant numbers of urban areas and in others states. The involvement of state officials in Pennsylvania supporting urban corps development in 2 or 3 locations beyond Philadelphia and the use of state money to leverage additional resources is a variation on that theme.

There will be discussion later in the full time corps workshop about Judge Tony Kline and Mort Raphael's efforts to mobilize, a consortium of foundations to push urban corps development, identify a set of promising urban sites, and coordinate resources to guide these sites through the process of corps development.

An approach that we at Youth Service America advocate is what we have characterized as "mission oriented." Our sense is that the conservation corps have enjoyed substantial support, because they have a very clear tangible focus. We think it is possible to pick out other well defined missions that would attract both constituent and financial support. We have picked out services to educationally at-risk children and service to the elderly as two such areas of distinct need. The Wallace Fund is providing support to us to identify promising educational service programs and stimulate more. We are seeking comparable support for the elderly services initiative. We applaud the efforts of the City Volunteer Corps in this area and the work of the East Bay Conservation Corps in developing its elderly services team. Its experience should pave the way for other conservation corps to diversify and provide a broader range of options for young people.

Another example is what Youth Service America board member Dorothy Stoneman is trying to do. Based on the very successful housing rehabilitation work that the Youth Action Program has done in East Harlem, she is proposing a \$100 million federal initiative to address homelessness by funding the efforts of young people around the country to rehabilitate abandoned housing. The bottom line question is can a set of new, well defined missions attract funds to develop new youth corps initiatives?

Now let's turn to campus based service. We have the Newsweek's Greed is Dead cover story of several weeks ago, contrasting with the more recent publication of the annual UCLA survey of entering freshman, which

suggests that the spirit of Ivan Boesky is alive and well as a dominant influence on college campuses. Campus service proponents speak of a powerful counter trend -- the enormous untapped reservoir of good will and idealism that exists among college students, waiting to be channeled into productive use.

Activity is high and appears to be rising on campus among students involved in community service. Student service organizations go back decades or even generations, but the recent growth has been sparked by two complementary currents of influence. The Campus Compact, an organization of now 142 college and university presidents, enlists the support and commitment of the campus chief administrator to promote expanded opportunities for service, to provide recognition, incentives, and rewards for student service, and to support a common legislative agenda. Our host Howard Swearer has been one of the principal architects and advocates of the Compact, whose staff is based here at Brown under the leadership of Susan Stroud. As a project of the Education Commission of the States, the Compact enjoys an influential association with governors and key state education officials. With a growing membership this body already has significant influence. With a more persistent push to expand its membership it could have enormous clout. There are some 3000 4 year colleges across the country. Years ago Saul Alinsky told a group of fledgling organizers, myself among them, that if you could ever fully mobilize 6% of any group you'd have a revolution on your hands. If there is any truth to that, the present membership of the Compact is reaching revolutionary potential within the setting of higher education.

On the student side of the equation another vigorous, dynamic force has been spreading its gospel of student service from campus to campus. The Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL) started with a trek by Wayne Meisel in 1983 visiting campuses from Maine to Washington. Today there are COOL contacts on nearly 400 campuses from coast to coast. Thousands of students have been recruited through the enthusiasm of COOL's youthful organizers and "Green Deans", recent graduates who have stayed on as community service coordinators after graduation to expand and improve programs in which they themselves had been involved as students.

COOL has reached the point in "building a movement" where it is moving towards a regional and state structure. Minnesota COOL, has been a successful precedent of a statewide organizing effort. It's staff organizer has been funded in part through a federal grant from ACTION to the National Youth Leadership Council. Similar "Road Warriors" are envisioned in a number of states in the next year. In moving towards more structure COOL hopes to designate state COOL coordinators in as many states as possible. They hope that some of these will follow on the heels of M-COOL's Mark Langseth and become full time COOL field organizers.

COOL and the Compact share the goal of engaging as many college students as possible in significant service. They have approached the common goal from different points of departure and frequently with different approaches. The Issues in Action literacy manual and series of joint conferences are tangible evidence of how COOL and the Compact have

worked together. In 1988 this should play itself out in many more cooperative ventures. Both COOL and the Compact seek to establish state wide efforts. We hope they compare notes and join forces to maximize their efforts in selected states.

When we look at the map, we can see several states where both COOL and the COMPACT have substantial connections. A number of them may be ripe for establishing statewide coalitions. What will evolve? Separate, parallel, and perhaps unconnected statewide Compacts and COOL networks, or coordinated organizing where the collective efforts of both organizations can develop strong leadership and vibrant programs? Our bias is clearly toward the latter. COOL and the COMPACT might benefit from analyzing the distribution of their respective memberships. There are examples of states where COOL has contacts and there is campus programming, yet there is no COMPACT member in the state. Conversely, there are colleges and universities where the head is a COMPACT member, yet COOL has no established contacts on campus. Doesn't the substantial network that COOL has established in Minnesota make it more likely and desirable that a statewide compact would develop? Will the decision of the Pennsylvania Higher Education Association to establish a statewide COMPACT facilitate a concentrated student oriented organizing effort by COOL?

Yet a third approach is playing itself out in California with a coalition building effort that is outside the COOL and COMPACT networks but has involved both of them. The California coalition for campus based service

that Bob Choate has put together, that now calls itself Operation Civic Service has had both a program and legislative focus. It has expanded the constituency supporting student service to include agencies and organizations that would be its beneficiaries. It helped get the Human Corps bill passed, that Assemblyman Vasconcellos spearheaded through the legislature. That legislation, despite the Governor's line item veto of the small budget requested, has the potential for systemic change within the state system of higher education, as well as in the quantity and quality of service provided by the students.

So the challenge in the collegiate arena is how to maintain and build the momentum from what has been a generally steady and even sometimes rapid development. Statewide organizing efforts appear to be in the cards for both COOL and the Compact. Let's lend our support to moving ahead together rather than separately. Governor Perpich and The Education Commission of the States mobilizing effort around the needs of educationally at-risk children will provide another great opportunity to involve more students, focus their efforts, and develop institutional commitments to and relationships with public schools around the country and with children in need. We feel very strongly that youth serving the young should be high on the agenda of all of the states and local education agencies. It is an area of service to which Youth Service America is committed, and in which we will play an increasingly more active role.

The mobilization of large numbers of students addressing a distinct

problem in a concerted manner also makes measurement of impact and level of effort possible. If we can demonstrate that these programs make a valuable contribution in solving specific problems, it will help to convince skeptical policymakers of their worth.

The collegiate service stream is teaming with legislative initiatives from the Vasconcellos Human Corps bill that already passed in California to numerous others at the federal and state level. A common denominator of many of them is the notion of reciprocity - a quid pro quo-tuition assistance in exchange for service. Rhode Island's Senator Claiborne Pell has introduced one such approach. Minnesota Governor Perpich's youth service initiative embraces the notion. In Massachusetts a grandson of FDR, Mark Roosevelt, has introduced an approach that would give four years of full college support in exchange for 2 years of service. Even conservative columnist William Buckley has suggested that, if the most prestigious colleges and universities put a premium on service as a condition for entrance, service would become "de rigeur".

Finally, let's turn to the pre-collegiate school based service stream. Here the picture is diffused and blurred. It is also the area ripest for development. There may be more active service programs than we realize. There simply is inadequate information about what exists. From surveys done in the past by the National Association of Independent Schools and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching we estimate that in perhaps 10% of the schools across the country there is some sustained,

cohesive youth community service programming worthy of being identified as such. But we have only the most rudimentary road map of where they might be.

We can point to the Youth Community Service program in 22 Los Angeles High Schools and the intensive and effective work that the Constitutional Rights Foundation has done in developing that model program. We can talk about the Thomas Jefferson Forum high school service program in the Boston area and its next stage expansion into other parts of Massachusetts. We can point to John Briscoe in Pennsylvania and Kathleen Kennedy Townsend in Maryland as examples of full time youth service coordinators at the state level. Should we be pushing all states to make similar staff commitments?

At the middle and junior high level we can provide information on how the Adolescent Helper Program engages students in New York City in significant service. We can note the service requirements in the Atlanta and Detroit high schools and we can identify and describe interesting, potentially replicable programs in numerous other locations. But no decent data base yet exists on even the most basic information beyond a small number of programs. With Clark Foundation support Youth Service America will begin to fill in the blanks on the middle and junior high school front and we have proposals to a number of foundations to begin a National Support Project on the high school front as well.

The Council of Chief State School Officers has recently hired Barbara Gomez, who is here with us, to staff a Ford Foundation funded project to promote greater state level commitment to school based service. The Chiefs will be holding three regional conferences in April, May & June in Baltimore, Los Angeles, and St. Paul. If all goes well, four person teams from 30 states will be educated, energized and motivated to go back home and develop plans and strategies for initiating or expanding state efforts in making service an expected part of the educational experience. But state efforts can be constrained to a greater or lesser degree by the politics of relations with local school boards.

With the exception of those school systems or individual schools where service is required, the key determinants of whether a service program will exist in a school and how good it is are the school administrator and the community service coordinator. The other critical factor is money. Creative legislative approaches are needed such as the Minnesota Youth Development Act's dedicated add-on levy or the seed grant approach that both Pennsylvania and Minnesota are proposing. Match requirements or enhancers ought to be explored to leverage other funding support, particularly from the private sector. Corporate and small or community foundation support is very important in expanding the constituency for youth service as well as broadening the base of financial support.

It is fair to say that in the high school service stream as in the collegiate one there are excellent, low cost models for school based service.

What we need are strategies and funding to take promising tested programs like Princeton High School's Learning in the Community or Oak Park/River Forest's Pollution Control Center and to spread them throughout the school systems of this country.

Our goal at Youth Service America is to significantly expand the opportunities that young people have to serve, beginning in elementary school and continuing throughout their total educational experience. The jewel in the crown of service would be opportunities to serve full time in an increasing array of service options. Let me say a few words about the strategies we are pursuing to multiply the number of youth service programs at all levels, to build a broad base of constituent support, and to coordinate efforts across the service streams.

First, recognizing that a shared vision of service and a common language are important we have begun to build a network of professional affiliates to strengthen and formalize a closer working relationship among programs from all of the service streams that spring from different institutional origins. They help us to evolve a comprehensive policy framework, serve as technical assistance providers, and provide us with local program roots that strengthen our credibility as national drum major for change. Conversely the relationship provides visibility to the local programs as part of a national vision of service. To date we have nine affiliates: Youth Service Charleston, The Thomas Jefferson Forum in Boston, The Constitutional Rights Foundation's Youth Community Service Program in Los Angeles, the

San Francisco Conservation Corps, the East Bay Conservation Corps and the Encampment for Citizenship, both in Oakland, the City Volunteer Corps in New York, Princeton, New Jersey High School's Learning in the Community Program, and the Human Environment Center in Washington DC. Our goal is to have 75 affiliates by July of 1989, that reflect a diverse and geographically dispersed representation of all the service streams.

Second, Youth Service America has a goal of developing an expanded constituency of funders for the youth service movement and raising an increased pool of funds to use as seed money for new programs and program replication. We have made the commitment that up to 50% of the funds raised through our Founders' Club and Charter Supporters will be devoted to support local program initiatives. We will be providing \$10,000 over the next two years to Youth Service Charleston to support youth service to the elderly and to educationally at-risk children, and the development of middle and junior high school service programs. We have also made a commitment of \$2,500 to assist the City Year planning effort in Boston, which you will hear more about later. Ideally, we would like to raise a substantial pool of funds from wealthy individuals, small contributors, corporations and foundations to be able to assist numerous other fledgling efforts in all the service streams.

Third, we will seek ways in which we can enfranchise talented program developers as field organizers to expand and replicate promising program models. We have negotiated the first such arrangement with David

Bathey of Kansas City who will be joining our staff as a Kansas City based project director to replicate the Youth Volunteer Corps model in other cities. We are exploring a similar arrangement with the director of a very successful east coast public high school service program. We plan to be eminently pragmatic in such arrangements and are open to a variety of approaches which will help spread the service movement and expand opportunities for young people.

Fourth, we are committed to the mission oriented approach I spoke of earlier. In advancing service programs that address the educationally at-risk young student we will make copies available of our publication Youth Serving The Young for extensive distribution to any states eager to mount such programs. We would urge Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Ohio to lead the way by putting it into the hands of school administrators, education policy makers, professional associations and community service coordinators across the state. We would further hope that Governor Perpich and the Education Commission of the States would use the publication extensively in the campaign to mobilize a million high school and college students to tutor educationally at-risk youngsters.

Fifth, we understand how important it is to build broad positive public awareness and support for youth service programs. In that vein Youth Service America and COOL have begun to plan a fall project in which we hope to involve service programs from coast to coast in all the streams of service. A date probably in October will be designated a "Day in the Life of

Youth Service." Whatever is happening that day across the country will be photographed, filmed, recorded, reported and captured in as many graphic ways as possible. A variety of products are envisioned and substantial corporate interest and support is anticipated. We will be sharing more about this with you in the near future.

Let me end with a charge to the working sessions. We urge you to focus your discussion on the most important issues in each of the streams of service. Ideally, we would like to have come out of each work group specific, collaborative recommendations that become part of an action agenda for 1988. These will be incorporated into a conference report that will be sent to opinion leaders, policy makers and potential supporters of youth service, including foundation and corporation executives. We ask you to be realistic and pragmatic in defining the obstacles to be faced and the collaborative next steps that will help multiply service opportunities particularly in Pennsylvania, Minnesota, California, Massachusetts, Ohio, and the other states represented here.