



HANDBOOK: Youth Volunteering as a Pathway to Employment

A publication of the International Association for
Volunteer Effort (IAVE)



International
Association for
Volunteer
Effort



BACKGROUND

Founded in 1970, the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) is a 40+ years old global membership organization whose sole mission is to promote volunteering. To help inform and fulfill this mission, IAVE leverages the input of their individual members and corporate members.

IAVE believes that volunteering is a key way to empower youth to develop a lifelong habit of caring and serving.

As participants in IAVE's 2014 World Youth Volunteer Conference wrote in their concluding statement:

“Volunteering is a powerful tool that builds leadership among youth, helping develop compassionate agents of change active in the present and working for a better future.”



International Association for Volunteer Effort

THE 22ND IAVE WORLD VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE



In 2012 the planning for the 22nd IAVE World Volunteer Conference, was seen as the opportunity to bring together the public and private sectors as well as representatives from various major civil society groups, in an organized way to generate a discussion about the interface of volunteering and the challenge of youth and employment.

The Dialogue on Youth Volunteering and Employment: Toward a Global Agenda for Action

The discussion had in London lead to the report “The Dialogue on Youth, Volunteering and Employment”, sponsored by a grant from Telefónica.

The report is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

From the threads of discussion at the London Dialogue and from the research that preceded and followed it, there is the basis to begin to articulate a global agenda for future action regarding both youth volunteering and business engagement related to youth unemployment.

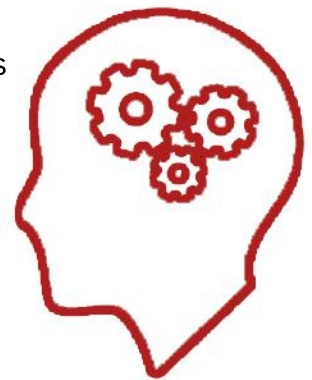


HERE ARE KEY ELEMENTS OF WHAT THAT AGENDA MIGHT INCLUDE:

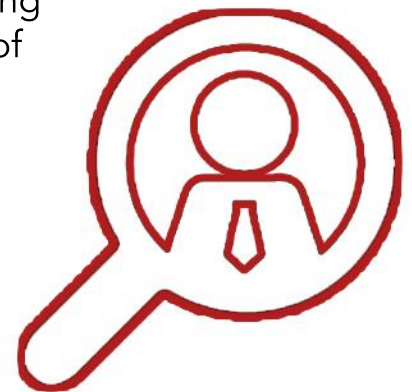
1 **Advocates for youth volunteering must work together to make their case to those who have as their primary focus the problem of youth unemployment.** This will require global leadership and global cooperation. Perhaps it is time for a “global summit” on youth volunteering in response to youth unemployment. There is a need to localize global volunteer efforts towards youth employment.



2 **New knowledge about the relationship of youth volunteering to employment must be developed.** It must go beyond collection of program examples to analysis of what is working, what is not and why. It needs to focus most heavily on developing economies and on indigenous models.



3 **Greater knowledge is needed about how business mobilizes its employee volunteers in ways that have direct and significant impact on youth unemployment.** The greatest attention needs to be given to non-global enterprises – regional, national and local businesses. A threshold base of knowledge about what is now being done needs to be developed, followed by analysis of what works and what does not.



4

The existing infrastructure that promotes and supports volunteering – primarily those national and local leadership organizations for volunteering, known generically and specifically as “volunteer centers” – must be drawn into active participation.

Where they exist, their capacity to participate must be strengthened; where they do not, there must be a determined effort to develop them in ways that can be locally and nationally sustained. They can have a significant impact on both the quantity and quality of youth volunteering as it relates to employment and also can serve as primary resources to engage indigenous regional, national and local businesses.



5

There must be a coordinated two part global campaign to help youth, NGOs and employers to make the connection between volunteering and preparation for employment.

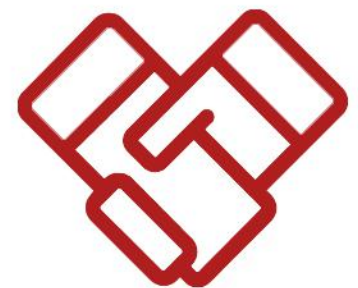
For youth, this must include tools to help them build their own “volunteer portfolio” that becomes a living record of work done, skills learned and demonstrated and documentation of achievement from the organizations they serve. For NGOs, there must be exemplars for how to document and report on what youth volunteers have done, learned and achieved. With employers, there must be strong advocacy about the legitimacy of volunteering as a way for youth to build their work experience and skills, as well as about practical approaches about including volunteer experience on job applications and examples of how to consider that experience in hiring.



6

Global companies that recognize the critical importance of addressing youth unemployment must remain heavily and directly involved.

Programmatically they can both expand and strengthen their own projects and work together to figure out how they can both respond to their own branding needs and learn from and build on one another’s work. Competitive instincts need to be put aside in favor of magnified impact on a problem that is of critical importance to their future success. They also must remain in global leadership roles – as advocates, as investors and as active participants in refining, agreeing on and implementing a global agenda for action that will bring to scale the proven impact of youth volunteering and business engagement on what Pope Francis has called one of “the most serious of the evils that effect the world these days” – youth unemployment. While thinking globally, they also need to localize their efforts on youth employment through their local offices throughout the world.



In addition to the dialogue report, and keeping into consideration the elements just mentioned, it was determined that the creation of a handbook was needed. The result is the IAVE Youth Volunteering and Employment Handbook.

THE PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook is a resource designed to inform and educate youth volunteers, organizations that engage youth volunteers and corporations, around the added value and acquired skills youth obtain in volunteering.

More importantly this handbook is to collectively raise the importance of youth volunteering as a way to learn skills, increase a young persons' network of contacts and encourage youth to gain the reality from different perspectives.





THE CRITICAL **ISSUE** FACING YOUTHS

IAVE's published report cites the alarming rate of youth unemployment worldwide.

To address this issue, IAVE, through its mission of promoting volunteering, has identified promising practices that will assist youth volunteers, NGOs and corporations on looking at youth volunteering as a viable step towards youth employment.

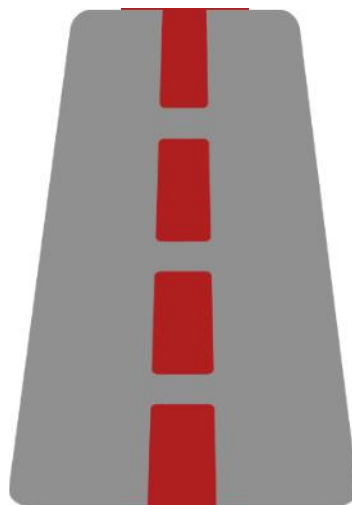
U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis suggested that volunteering can help put citizens back to work, especially for the segment of Americans that have been unemployed for long periods of time:

“...volunteerism can be a way to help unemployed workers expand their network of contacts, improve their résumés, and make a positive impression in a competitive job market. So at the Department of Labor, we’re promoting volunteerism as one more strategy to help our long-term unemployed. In a complex 21st century economy that demands new skills of American workers, volunteerism is not a substitute for job training. But it can be an important complement. And it can be a way to give a leg up to job-seekers who’ve decided that enrolling in a training program is not the right choice for them at this time... The truth is – volunteering may actually expose job seekers to new job opportunities.”

Hilda L. Solis
U.S. Secretary of Labor (2012)



VOLUNTEERING AS



A PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT

A study from the [Corporation for National and Community Service](#) (CNCS) reports on employment outcomes for those with volunteer experience. CNCS found that volunteers are **27%** more likely to secure a job than non-volunteers regardless of a person's gender, age, ethnicity, geographical area, or the job market conditions.



The report also states that volunteers without a high school diploma increase their likelihood of finding a job by **51%**



And volunteers who live in rural areas increase their likelihood of finding employment by **55%**



Lastly, the report states that volunteers have **22%** higher odds of finding employment after being out of work than non-volunteers.

"This research suggests that people with limited skills or social connections - particularly those without a high school education - may see an extra benefit to volunteering as a way to open doors and level the playing field,"

Dr. Christopher Spera

Former Director of Evaluation and Research at CNCS



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

What are the skills learned when volunteering?

There is a whole group of skills one can gain and improve while volunteering, but listing them is not an easy task. Research conducted by the Department of Education and Skills of UK's National Youth Agency defines the skills that a youth volunteer can learn in and categorizes them into three groups:

PERSONAL SKILLS



INTERPERSONAL SKILLS



UNDERSTANDING OF CONTEMPORARY ISSUES



PERSONAL SKILLS

A range of personal skills, attitudes and knowledge related to an individuals' sense of their own identity and their ability to manage themselves include:



Self-Confidence



Communication Skills



Self-awareness



Self-management



Planning



Taking responsibility



Improving own learning



Problem solving & decision-making

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

A range of interpersonal skills, attitudes and knowledge relating to working with other people include:



Teamwork



Managing Relationships



Active listening skills



Leadership



Negotiation

UNDERSTANDING OF CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

A range of skills, knowledge and attitudes relating to individuals being able to act more effectively in the wider world include:



Understanding oneself



Understanding society



Understanding diversity



Rights & responsibilities



Preparation for work



Financial understanding

WHAT RESULTED: THE HANDBOOK

As a result of the London Discussion and the information discovered in research, three units have been developed to assist specific audiences in looking at youth volunteering as a pathway to employment.

The units developed include one for youth, one for NGOs, and finally one for corporations.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We appreciate any comments or thoughts you may have on any of the information contained in this unit or any of the others.

Please forward your comments to:

info@iave.org

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