

PART ONE

Service and Volunteerism in the Global Context

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Civic Service Worldwide

A preliminary assessment

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SUMMARY

This chapter summarises the results of a research project of the Global Service Institute. The Center for Social Development (CSD) at Washington University in St. Louis and Innovations in Civic Participation in Washington, DC, created the Global Service Institute (GSI) in March 2001. The goal of GSI's research agenda is to increase the knowledge base and understanding of civic service. This study assessed civic service programmes around the world with the aim of identifying a range of service programmes, and documenting their purposes, activities, servers, and operations.¹ In order to assess the scope of this phenomenon and to identify areas for future research, this chapter provides an empirical description of existing programmes.

The focus was on formal, organised programmes that require intensive commitments of time on the part of the server, e.g. full-time for one month. Searching all countries and using information from publications and the Internet, a sample of 210 programmes in 57 countries was identified and surveyed.

The majority of programmes are based in North America, Europe and Central Asia. In this sample, international service is the most common form of service, followed by national service. On average, the programmes in the sample have been in existence for 21 years. Service roles are intensive and of a sustained duration (7.3 months on average).

Findings suggest that the presence of formal, institutionalised service programmes may be positively associated with the status of the voluntary sector as well as the general level of economic development.

Scholarship may be lagging behind practice because the field is relatively young. Implications are discussed for future research, including assessment of the effects of international service programmes on the people and cultures served, and determination of the long-term effects of service on the servers.

This is the first attempt to assess civic service worldwide. It should be viewed as a very preliminary assessment, with many oversights and shortcomings. Nonetheless, it may be valuable in identifying some key patterns, and in providing an impetus and springboard for further research.

Introduction

Volunteerism as a societal norm can take many forms, from informal support networks in a village to intensive commitments of time through formal programmes (Salamon & Sokolowski 2001). Along this continuum of volunteer behaviour, relatively little is known about structured, organised volunteering in the form of civic service (Clohesy 1999, Grantmaker Forum on Community and National Service 2000, Sherraden & Eberly 1990).

Civic service as a social phenomenon is relatively weak in conceptualisation, rigorous research, and cross-national comparison (Grantmaker Forum on Community and National Service 2000, Perry & Imperial 2001, Rymph & Wilson 2001). No previous study has attempted to examine the scope, forms, and dimensions of this phenomenon worldwide. This chapter presents findings from a global assessment of civic service programmes. It is only a first step in our research on this topic, but these findings may begin to illuminate the prevalence and nature of service around the world.

Defining and measuring civic service

Discussion of service evokes consideration of who is and is not a volunteer. The debate usually turns on the issues of stipends and compulsion. Some scholars have argued that compensated or required service is not volunteerism (Brown 1999, Carson 1999, Cnaan, Handy & Wadsworth 1996). Hence, we use the term 'service' instead of volunteering.² Across types of civic service programmes, the individual performs an action that is presumably of benefit to some group or cause; the action is performed in the spirit of improving living conditions or general welfare (Menon, Moore & Sherraden 2002).

In reality, both compensation and compulsion are continua. Civic service may have some elements of both. For example, there may be a token monetary award to cover basic living expenses or to offset expenses incurred for service performance, or service may be 'required' for the award of educational credit.

Civic service is also different from occasional or episodic volunteering because it requires intensive commitment and takes programmatic form. Civic service can be defined as 'an organised period of substantial engagement and contribution to the local, national, or world community, recognised and valued by society, with minimal monetary compensation to the participant.'¹ (Sherraden 2001a: 2).³ Service programmes can be local, national, international, or transnational in scope, and targeted toward servers who are young, older, of faith, or in school. For example, there can be national youth service programmes and international faith-based programmes.

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Using this definition of civic service, it is possible to identify institutional dimensions along which the service role may vary (Sherraden 2001a). In this view, service represents an *institution* that establishes expectations and structures the service role, including the provision of access, incentives, information, and facilitation for service performance. The service role is similar to a job position as defined by the labour market, where there are expectations of the worker. Service is carried out through a programme or organisation that has defined a service role, which an individual then 'fills'. Role expectations could relate to eligibility requirements, or to the nature and length of the experience. The service experience is likely to be intense and of long duration. It is scheduled and definite. These aspects of the service role address the expectations and accessibility of the service institution.

Incentives may also be provided for participation, including development of skills or receipt of educational credit, for example. Service is distinguishable from employment, because any monetary award for service is not equivalent to market wages. Civic service roles may also be compensated by such benefits as stipends, awards, and educational scholarships. The service institution may provide information and facilitation or support via training, supervision, reflection sessions, and mentoring. There may be other important forms of incentives or compensation for service, such as personal satisfaction and social connections.

For any given country or culture, service policies and programmes are created for different reasons, and they can produce multiple and varied effects. Service is recognised as a programme strategy that may have the dual purpose of benefiting the servers as well as the served (Sherraden & Eberly 1982, Wheeler, Gorey & Greenblatt 1998). It can be thought of as a 'strong policy' due to the wide range of its effects (Sherraden 2001b). Service may connect servers to goals and activities that improve the environment, physical infrastructure, organisations, communities, and/or individuals.

Methods and limitations

Civic service is increasingly identified as a distinct programme and policy approach worldwide. Systematic knowledge regarding the field will contribute to global

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understanding of service forms and their differing effects, thereby helping to establish effective service strategies. What forms do civic service programmes take worldwide? Who serves, and what do they do? What is the nature of the service role? With the intention of identifying the scope, forms, and dimensions of the civic service field, we provide an empirical description of a sample of service programmes worldwide.

The research team identified and collected information about civic service programmes using definitional criteria, a structured database, and systematic collection procedures.⁴ Searching by every country and using information from publications and the Internet, a sample of 210 service programmes was identified.

Every effort was made to track down leads on civic service programmes, working in different languages, over a six-month period from July to December 2001. The research team has reading knowledge of eight languages; nevertheless, language was a barrier for data collection, and programme representation is not comprehensive. Relying on programme information conveyed via web sites also has inherent biases due to the financial and technological resources required for Internet access. Given our restrictive definition, this sample quite likely represents a majority of international and national service programmes, but we do not claim that it is an exhaustive catalogue of all civic service programmes.

Programme data were entered into an electronic survey instrument. Following this step, data were sent to the service programmes via fax and email for clarification and to fill in missing values. Sixty-six programmes (32 per cent of the sample) responded with confirmations, specifications, and/or corrections.⁵ We are careful to note where data are missing. Results are presented as a percentage of the overall sample.

Findings

In this short space, we summarise key findings to provide an overview of civic service programmes around the world (see McBride et al. 2003, for the complete report).

Types and prevalence

The total number of civic service programmes in the sample is 210, based in 57 countries around the world.⁶ Thirty-three per cent of the programmes are based in North America, followed by 27 per cent in Europe and Central Asia, twelve per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa, ten per cent in East Asia and the Pacific, nine per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean, five per cent in the Middle East and North Africa, and four per cent in South Asia (Table 1). In terms of specific country representation, the United States has the most programmes in the sample with 51, and Canada follows with 14 programmes. Germany and Hungary are represented with ten programmes each; South Africa and the United Kingdom with eight; and Australia and India with seven.

Programmes can be classified by scope of organisation and activity. Service forms and their representation are transnational (21), international (103), national (73), and local (13).⁷ International service is the most common service type, representing 49 per cent of the programmes. National service programmes comprise 35 per cent of the sample. Eighty-six youth service programmes are represented, and 34 of these are national youth service programmes.

TABLE 1 Forms of service by regions of the world

	North America (69)	Europe and Central Asia	Latin America (20)	Sub-Saharan Africa (25)	East Asia and the Pacific (11)	Middle East and North Africa	South Asia (8)
	(56)			(21)			
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Transnational	12	22	0	4	0	0	0
International	61	41	90	24	57	0	25
National	26	23	10	68	38	100	50
Local	1	14	0	4	5	0	25

Source: McBride et al. (2003)

The service programmes range in age from one year to 103 years. The Labourer-Teacher Volunteer Literacy Programme operated by Frontier College in Canada is the oldest programme in the sample at 103 years, followed by the International Federation of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies at 83 years. On average, the programmes in the sample have been in existence for 21 years and the median is about 14 years. In the case of 21 programmes in the sample, the length of time in existence is unknown.

Programmes can be characterised by the voluntary versus compulsory nature of service. In this sample, 92 per cent of the programmes are voluntary, and four per cent are compulsory. For five programmes, the voluntary or compulsory nature of the service is unknown. The compulsory programmes tend to be national youth service programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa.

Goals, areas of service, and the served

The most frequent goals are those focusing on the server. 'Increasing the server's motivation to volunteer' is the most prevalent goal in the sample, articulated by 81 per cent of the programmes. This goal is either the most frequent or the second most frequent across all the types of service. The goal of 'increasing the server's skill acquisition' is the next most prevalent at 76 per cent. This is the most frequent goal for national service (88 per cent) and local service (85 per cent). 'Increasing the server's social skills' is a goal of 68 per cent of the sample (see Table 2).

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Among the goals for impact on the group served, the most prevalent goal is 'promoting cultural understanding' (66 per cent). This is a goal for 76 per cent of the transnational and 77 per cent of the international programmes. Second is 'creating or improving public facilities' (55 per cent), and third is impacting on the environment or 'promoting sustainable land use' (50 per cent).

Across the 210 programmes, 81 per cent perform human and social services, and 80 per cent engage in educational activities. Community development and personal development activities are the next most frequent, both at 77 and 76 per cent respectively, followed by environmental protection at 67 per cent, cultural integration at 60 per cent, and health at 59 per cent. Next most frequent are employment and economic development (51 per cent), infrastructure development (50 per cent), cultural heritage and the arts (46 per cent), peace and human rights (45 per cent), and emergency response (21 per cent).

TABLE 2 Programme goals and areas of service by forms of service*

	Transnational (21)	International (103)	National (73)	Local (13)
	%	%	%	%
Goals				
Increase server's motivation to volunteer	81	82	81	77
Increase server's skill acquisition	76	67	88	85
Increase server's social skills	86	63	73	54
Increase server's confidence and self-esteem	81	59	63	46
Influence and expand server's career choices	62	46	49	15
Improve wellbeing and health	38	50	44	54
Promote cultural understanding	76	77	52	46
Increase employment rate	38	24	47	8
Create/improve public facilities	62	54	58	31
Promote sustainable land use	48	56	47	15
Areas of Service				
Human and social services	91	80	82	77
Health services	48	61	62	46
Emergency response	24	16	32	8
Personal development	86	68	85	69
Education	86	85	71	77
Economic development	52	48	60	15
Community development	81	75	82	54
Infrastructure development	62	52	51	15
Environmental protection	76	73	62	31
Cultural heritage/arts	62	41	48	46
Cultural integration	86	59	58	31
Peace/human rights	38	47	47	31

Source: McBride et al. (2003)

* For definitions, please see the complete global assessment report at <http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/csd/gsi>.

The most prevalent activity of transnational, international, and local service programmes is education (77 per cent or more of each type), while 71 per cent of national service programmes work on education. Community development is pursued by international and national service programmes (75 and 82 per cent, respectively). Eighty-six per cent of the transnational programmes engage in cultural integration. Environmental protection is a top activity of transnational and international service programmes (76 and 73 per cent, respectively).

Turning to the age of service beneficiaries, 64 per cent of all programmes serve children and 71 per cent serve youth. Adults are targeted by 61 per cent of the programmes. Forty-nine per cent serve seniors, defined as 60 years of age and above.

The service role

Across all programmes, youth serve more than any other group. Seventy-seven per cent of the programmes in the sample engage youth as servers. Ten per cent include children as servers. Sixty-nine per cent have adults who serve, and 33 per cent have seniors who serve. Other servers indicated by the programmes include people with physical disabilities, those of low income, and college students. Almost all programmes accept both men and women as servers.

The most common eligibility criterion is age. Seventy-four per cent of the programmes have a specific age requirement, which may be a minimum and/or a maximum age for participation. Thirty-one per cent of the programmes require the server to have specific skills in order to participate. Fifty-one per cent of the international service programmes require servers to have specific skills, followed by 24 per cent of the transnational programmes. Twenty-eight per cent of the programmes require servers to be from specific geographical areas.

Across the forms of service, transnational programmes are more likely to require servers to be from specific geographical areas (52 per cent). Nineteen per cent of programmes require that participants be enrolled in school or returning to school in order to participate. This is required by national service programmes more than any other form of service (23 per cent). Eighteen per cent of the programmes require some level of language proficiency; this criterion is primarily connected to transnational and international service programmes. Several international service programmes indicate that they provide language training for the servers prior to or as part of the service experience. Income, organisational affiliation, religion, race, and gender are criteria for a small percentage of programmes. Eleven programmes had no stated eligibility criteria.

Somewhat surprisingly, 33 per cent of the 210 programmes require that the server pay either some portion or the entire cost of the service experience. Costs may include airfare, room and board, or in some instances, contributions to support the overall costs of operating the programme. The amounts required range greatly.

Transnational and international service experiences are more likely to cost the server. In the extreme, some of these service experiences can be considered 'service vacations' or 'volunteer eco-tourism'.

Intensity refers to the number of hours the server is required to commit to the programme in a given week. Eighty-one per cent of the programmes require servers to commit to the service experience on a full-time basis, which is equivalent to about 40 hours per week. This is more prevalent among international (91 per cent) and national service programmes (73 per cent). Some programmes are flexible, and allow servers to select their choice of time commitment. Nine per cent of the programmes require part-time service, and seven per cent allow both full and part-time commitments. Intensity is unknown for three per cent of the programmes in the sample.

Across the sample, the average amount of time that a participant serves is 7.3 months. The range is one week to more than three years.⁸ National service programmes require the longest average time commitment at ten months, followed by local service at eight months, international service at about seven months, and transnational service at a little over four months. Eighteen programmes indicate that the absolute minimum amount of time one can serve is one year, whereas 23 programmes have a maximum service length of one year; 13 programmes require two years; and twelve programmes require a maximum commitment of six months. Average length of service participation is not known for 80 programmes.

Incentives, information and facilitation

Twelve per cent of the programmes in the sample offer academic credit in exchange for service participation. Eight per cent offer scholarships. Seven per cent offer grants and other types of monetary awards. Twenty-two per cent of the programmes give the participant some type of award, certificate, or community recognition. National service programmes are the most likely to offer incentives and awards (Table 3).

Sixty-six per cent of the programmes in the sample provide training to the participants, 70 per cent offer supervision, 49 per cent offer reflection sessions, and 41 per cent offer some form of mentoring. Training is most prevalent among transnational and national service programmes (71 and 70 per cent, respectively). Supervision is more available in national service programmes (77 per cent) than any other type. Reflection sessions are offered in 62 per cent of the transnational service programmes, followed by 51 per cent of international service programmes.

Fifty-three per cent of the programmes provide support for housing. Transnational and international service programmes are more likely to provide housing stipends or subsidies (62 and 70 per cent, respectively). Transportation stipends and assistance is offered by 32 per cent of the programmes, with

TABLE 3 Service incentives, information, facilitation and compensation by forms of service

	Transnational (21)	International (103)	National (73)	Local (13)
	%	%	%	%
Incentives				
Academic credit	14	13	14	0
Scholarship	0	6	14	0
Grants	5	2	16	0
Community awards/certificates	14	21	25	15
Information and Facilitation				
Supervision	76	67	77	46
Training	71	62	70	69
Reflection sessions	62	51	45	46
Mentoring	33	36	52	31
Compensation				
Housing	62	70	34	8
Transportation	29	37	26	31
Stipend/allowance	14	25	37	23
Healthcare	48	31	25	0
Day care stipend	0	3	8	0

Source: McBride et al. (2003)

transnational and international service programmes more prominently represented. Twenty-eight per cent of the programmes in the sample provide the server with a stipend or living allowance, which is most prevalent among national service programmes (37 per cent). Twenty-nine per cent of the programmes pay for health care costs or insurance. Transnational and international service programmes are more likely to support health care (48 and 31 per cent).

Administration

Of the 210 programmes, 75 per cent are administered by NGOs and 22 per cent by government agencies. Ninety-five per cent of the transnational service programmes and 92 per cent of the international service programmes are administered by NGOs, whereas 52 per cent of the national service programmes are administered by government agencies. Of all the programmes in the sample, 24 per cent (50 programmes) report some programme evaluation. For the most part, the purpose and methods of the evaluations are not known.

Discussion and implications

Formal civic service programmes are found in every major region of the world. However, the bulk of civic service programmes are found in North America, Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa. This finding could be due to bias in our research methods and/or our focus on formal civic service programmes, but the differences in measured geographic prevalence may, to some extent, reflect actual differences.

Research suggests that the presence of volunteer programmes may be positively associated with the status of the voluntary sector as well as the level of economic development (Anheier & Salamon 1999). Perhaps the status of volunteering – in all its forms – is more advanced in certain regions of the world. Formal volunteer roles may be less common in some countries, where the concept of organised, intensive volunteering is still emerging (Salamon & Sokolowski 2001).

A typology of civic service emerges from this global assessment.⁹ Results suggest that national service programmes approach the service role more developmentally; they are less likely to require skills or specific knowledge for service (only ten per cent). National service focuses on the personal development of the server while simultaneously providing services to the community and/or the nation. Most national service programmes are focused on youth as servers, and incentives and support are commonly provided. Among the programmes in this study, the national service role is of the longest duration.

International service is the most prevalent service type. In contrast to national service programmes, transnational and international service programmes tend to focus on benefits for those who are served and their communities. The service role is more specialised. International service is likely to require that the server must have specific knowledge or skills, including language. In addition to increasing the server's motivation to volunteer again, transnational and international service programmes focus on promoting cultural understanding; they are designed to bring people of different nations and cultures together. They provide language and practical training to the server. Transnational exchange programmes are more likely to engage in 'praxis' with the servers, whereby they reflect on their service experience in a structured setting. Transnational and international service are likely to reimburse servers for travel and housing expenses, but they are also more likely to charge servers for the experience. Both types of service roles are full-time and of long duration, with international service roles requiring greater commitment.

Local service is likely to be under-represented in this sample, which may be an artefact of research methods and because local service programmes are less visible and less widely supported. It remains to be determined whether intensive, formal service roles are less likely to be developed and implemented at the local level. More local service programmes are found in Europe and Central Asia than any other regions. In this study, AmeriCorps in the United States and other highly decentralised

The bulk of civic service programmes are found in North America, Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa

service programmes are counted as a single programme, but they could be interpreted as an association of many local programmes. Findings suggest that local service programmes are developed to meet specific community needs.

In general, programmes based in developing countries tend to emphasise the impact of service on beneficiaries versus the impact on servers. In contrast, service programmes in developed nations tend to emphasise the impacts of the service experience on the servers. However, little is actually known about the beneficiaries of service. In this study, scant information was available through staff reports or published materials. Moreover, there are few rigorous studies of international service, and of the few, most are of programmes sponsored by organisations in the United States (Cohn & Wood 1985, Purvis 1993, Starr 1994). Given the prevalence of international service and the potential for negative effects (Brav, Moore & Sherraden 2002), future research should assess the effects of international service on the peoples, nations, and cultures served.

Given the overall ageing of the world's population, it is curious that more programmes do not have senior servers. However, the fact that 40 per cent of the service programmes do not set upper age limits is promising, suggesting that greater inclusion of seniors may be a matter of time and repositioning of service programmes.

Some programmes stress inclusion, whereby those who are low-income or physically disabled are encouraged to serve. Looking forward, this is likely to become a major issue. If service is primarily for economic elites or the most able-bodied, it cannot become an expression of national or global citizenship. How can service incentives and supports increase access to the service role for everyone in the population?

The voluntary sector (third or non-governmental sector) is clearly driving the development of civic service, but the state often plays an important role in funding. How does the voluntary sector relate to the state in service initiatives? What are the ideal characteristics of these partnerships? What theory and research on voluntary sector/state relationships can best inform this inquiry?

Not all programmes express operations in terms of goals, activities, and outcomes. This raises questions about how well the programmes have been conceptualised, and whether they can be accountable through research.

Greater specification of service goals and desired outcomes is often needed.

Programmes based in developing countries tend to emphasise the impact of service on beneficiaries; service programmes in developed nations tend to emphasise the impacts of the service experience on the servers

The findings on programme age suggest that service is a fairly new phenomenon, and may be an emerging societal institution. Scholarship on the topic is limited in part because the field is relatively new. There is a shortage of theoretically-driven, outcome-based research that examines the specific effects of service. Social scientists are trailing behind policy and practice in understanding what service is and whether, or in what circumstances, outcomes are being achieved. In the absence of a strong knowledge base, service cannot reach its practical potential, and will be politically vulnerable. Methods for measuring and assessing service implementation and impacts will be essential if the field is to continue to grow.

Given the prevalence of international service and the potential for negative effects, future research should assess the effects of international service on the peoples, nations, and cultures served

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Notes

- ¹ This chapter is a summary of previously published findings from a global assessment of civic service. The comprehensive report can be accessed at <http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/csd/gsi>.
- ² Civic service has often been referred to as public service, if it is sponsored by government; stipended service, if it is compensated; and service-learning, if it occurs through an educational institution (Clotfelter 1999).
- ³ This formal, programmatic focus in defining civic service does not include many other forms of volunteerism, such as informal systems of care. Informal, mutual aid and kinship networks are commonly found in less industrialised countries (Ehrichs 2002), and tend to be the predominate forms of 'volunteerism'. Research that uses a formal definition for civic service may be biased toward more 'developed' countries and urban centres.
- ⁴ Service-learning programmes were not included in this research project due to the varying intensity of the programmes and the sheer prevalence of them around the world. Inclusion of this type of civic service was beyond the scope of the project. Assessing the forms of service-learning programmes worldwide is a recommended area for future research, as is a focus on local service programming.
- ⁵ Lack of confirmation by all programmes is a significant limitation of this study, compromising reliability of the programme information.

- ⁶ Programmes are connected to a specific country, based on the home office address. As such, an international programme like the Japanese Overseas Co-operation Volunteers may be based in Tokyo, but it sends volunteers to 72 countries, which are not reported here.
- ⁷ Transnational service programmes span multiple nations, where a participating country hosts servers from within and outside the nation but also sends its servers to other countries. In international service programmes, some relationship exists between two or more countries, where one country hosts servers and one country sends servers. National service programmes are either government or voluntary sector sponsored, and are characterised by a common framework that is implemented in multiple states and communities within the nation. Local service is defined as locally organised and implemented. The validity of these categorisations has not been determined. This is a first attempt to define the scope of programming in the field, which will benefit from the feedback of practitioners, policy makers, and researchers worldwide.
- ⁸ While one week is the bottom end of the range, only eight programmes expressed this as their required length of service commitment. As the average for the sample suggests, this research summarises characteristics of more long-term, intensive programmes. More research is needed to determine the effects of differences in the nature of the service role in terms of duration and intensity and in the goals and activities of the programmes, e.g. national versus international service.
- ⁹ We seek feedback from the field on these forms, their definitions, and the resulting analysis based on this categorisation. Please email your feedback to gsi@gwbmail.wustl.edu.

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