

INTRODUCTION

The importance of leisure time for young people, particularly as it relates to personal and community development, as well as given a wide range of opportunities for meaningful participation within the community, provided or facilitated by a multitude of organizations, institutions and programs in all sectors. Certain major themes basic health, risk behavior reduction, education, employment and political participation constitute the pillars of youth policy. Indeed, they are the foundations of human resource development in general, reflecting a continuum of goals from protection to prevention to civic and economic participation.

They are the domains of responsibility of the main public systems charged with providing services and opportunities for youth. They represent the core indicators against which Governments and advocates track progress. They do not, however, represent the totality of young people's lives; herein lays the challenge. In every culture, there are hours in the day when young people are not formally required to be in school or engaged in household or paid work. They choose to be involved in various activities, and there are public and private programs, organizations and individuals who support their participation. These hours, these activities and often even these programs are considered discretionary. They are viewed as optional nice but not necessary, or even particularly important. These are the hours, the activities and the programs whose absence or disappearance would not be noticed by policy makers but would be very much felt by young people. Public recognition of their importance is low, a fact reflected in the scarcity of relevant data.

Equally important, it is these hours, activities and programs that policy makers, programed planners and frequently the public have few qualms about reducing. When crime rates go up, the quality and quantity of young people's discretionary hours are often diminished by strict curfews. When test scores drop or family incomes dip, opportunities to participate in voluntary activities are often restricted, as the hours required for work or study are increased. When public funds are low, sports, recreation and cultural programs and institutions are often among the first casualties. In a number of sectors, these hours and activities and the

infrastructure that supports them are seen as promising means to achieve specific, well-defined ends, including delinquency prevention, formal education or HIV/AIDS prevention. Reducing idle time is adopted as a delinquency prevention strategy, youth counsellors are heralded as effective messengers for reaching peers and family members, and youth organizations are funded to reach and train young people who have failed in the mainstream educational system.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of collecting all important data and information required to be processed for establishment of this report-content, secondary data collection is chosen to gather all available information regarding involvement and contribution of youth in promoting as well as applying a concept of Leisure Activities in both governmental matter and their daily lives. Different sources ranging from journal papers to published news are used to extract and gather all factual information regarding youth-involvement in Leisure Activities. A similar method is also used to gather all responses from various stakeholders towards youth and Leisure Activities. The sources are carefully chosen in order to ensure quality of the content, relevance, and ease of comprehension. Reason of choosing secondary data collection is based on a fact that varieties of source are largely available in electronic network.

LITERATURE AND FACTUAL REVIEW

FACT-SHEET AND ITS EXPLANATION

Fact-Sheet
<p>Spending time in everyday family leisure activities is associated with greater emotional bonding within the family. A family's "core" leisure activities (those that are typically every day, low-cost, home-based activities such as playing board games, playing in the yard, gardening and watching television together) were related to the family's cohesion ("the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another"). Both a family's "core" activities and their "balance" activities (those that are novel experiences and require a greater investment of time, effort, planning and money--such as vacations, special events, and sports activities) were related to the family's ability to adapt</p>
<p>Children in families that participate in religious activities together are more likely to report seeing expressions of love and affection between their parents. Two dimensions of family religious involvement--family participation in religious activities at least once per week and parental prayer more than once per day were associated with greater expression of love or affection between the parents, as reported by their children.</p>
<p>Parents of families in which both the parents and children attend religious services are more likely to know their children's social networks. They are more likely to know their children's friends, those friends' parents, and their children's teachers, than parents of families in which only the parents or only the children, or neither, participated in religious activities.</p>
<p>Children whose fathers spend time with them doing activities tend to have better academic performance. Preteens whose fathers spent leisure time away from the home (picnics, movies, sports, etc.) with them, shared meals with them, helped with homework or reading, and engaged in other home activities with them earned better grades in school, on average, than peers whose fathers spent less time with them. Similarly, teens whose fathers engaged in activities in the home and outdoors, spent leisure time, and talked with them earned better grades, on average, than teens whose fathers spent less time with them.</p>

RESPONSES FROM VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

Young people's discretionary time is worth a significant amount of attention, partly because it is a potential breeding ground for youth problems, but mainly because it presents endless possibilities for constructive development. It is critical that a positive vision of leisure time activities be put forward and defined, and that time and care be given to specifying how such time should be used and why it should be protected. International plans and commitments such as the Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy offer such a positive vision, taking a clear stand against severe infringements on young people's right to free time. Below are the responses or actions of international organizations for young people regarding their leisure activities.

- International organizations as well as local authorities and community development agencies should incorporate leisure-time activity programs and facilities in urban planning, giving particular attention to areas with a high population density. Equally, rural development programs should pay due attention to the leisure needs of rural youth.
- International organizations recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
- International organizations shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

Echoing these international commitments, a developing body of research and a growing choir of advocates and practitioners emphasize the importance of play and recreation for younger children. Leaders in child development have long identified play as critical space for children's cognitive, identity, and social/emotional development.¹³ Research indicates that the specific types of thinking and problem-solving involved in play provide valuable skills for the future.¹⁴ Researchers,¹⁵ therapists,¹⁶ and childcare practitioners have made play a central element of their work with children, with demonstrated impact.

GOVERNMENTS RESPONSES

The importance of leisure-time activities in the psychological, cognitive and physical development of young people is recognized in all societies. Leisure-time activities include games, sports, cultural events, entertainment and community service. Appropriate leisure programs for youth are elements of any measure aimed at fighting social ills such as drug abuse, juvenile delinquency and other deviant behavior. While leisure programs can contribute greatly to the development of the physical, intellectual and emotional potential of young people, they should be designed with due care and concern so that they are not used as a means for excluding youth from participating in other aspects of social life or for indoctrinating them. Leisure-time activity programs should be made freely available to young people. Below are the responses or actions of governments to young people regarding the leisure activities.

- Governments, in planning, designing and implementing youth policies and programs, with the active involvement of youth organizations, should recognize the importance of leisure-time activities. The importance given to such activities should be reflected in appropriate funding.
- Governments are invited to establish public libraries, cultural centers and other cultural facilities in rural and urban areas, with the aid of international organizations, and to provide assistance to young people active in the fields of drama, the fine arts, music and other forms of cultural expression.
- Governments are invited to encourage the participation of young people in tourism, international cultural events, sports and all other activities of special interest to youth.
- Governments, by providing adequate funding to educational institutions for the establishment of leisure-time activities, may accord priority to such activities. In addition, leisure-time activities could be integrated into the regular school curriculum.

PRIVATE SECTOR RESPONSES

Free-time and leisure contexts that feature structured and unstructured leisure activities offer young people the chance to develop relationships with peers, to establish personal preferences and to experiment with various social roles. Some structured activities organized and staffed by private sectors were available to the young people which helps the youth can spend their time with some of the beneficial activities. Here are the responses of the private sectors for the youth regarding their leisure time activities.

- Private sector companies are also major providers of positive activities both in terms of recreational activities popular with young people and in some cases youth work and other structured educational positive activities. Local authorities should not assume that private sector companies are unwilling to co-ordinate activity or work collectively to provide an improved local offer to young people and should seek to engage relevant companies in partnership working.
- Private sectors helped young people to become responsible citizens through a summer time program of activity and community service, to help young people make the transition to adulthood. Private sectors are intended to inspire participants to continue to support their local communities through a lifetime of volunteering and social action, not as a short term one off program.
- Private sectors provide opportunities to develop the personal and social skills and qualities for the young people need for learning, work and their transition to adulthood including self-regulation, relationship-building, and decision-making.
- Private sectors to set out a strategic vision outlining the range and standard of provision required, to publicly announce its intention to retain the statutory duty to provide access to educational and recreational activities for young people, and to ensure that cuts are implemented in accordance with local assessment private sectors.

NGO RESPONSES

Below are the responses or actions of non-government organizations for the young people regarding leisure time activities:

- The non-government believes that local authorities have a critical place-shaping role and acknowledges the strong support from the youth sector for retaining the statutory duty on local authorities to secure young people's access to sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time activities. The non-government is committed to retaining this duty, and will publish much shorter updated guidance to reflect the new statement of policy on young people and services for young people. The non-government's commitment to young people's views being taken into account is discussed further in response to recommendation.
- The non-government to announce publicly its intention to retain the statutory duty on local authorities to secure young people's access to sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time activities, which requires them to take account of young people's views and publicize up-to-date information about the activities and facilities available.
- The non-government agrees that services for young people have an important role to play in engaging young people as positive and active members of their community, and supporting their personal and social development and participation in education and training. Many young people get these opportunities through their families, school or college, and the wider community or existing youth volunteering groups who receive no public funding, and therefore do not need access to publicly funded provision commissioned by local authorities

MEDIA RESPONSES

There are certainly reasons to be concerned about young people's leisure time, and to view the development of positive leisure opportunities as part of a solution to youth problems. It is telling that when young people in the slums of Nairobi began to document life in their communities using photographs, they focused largely on violence, rampant drug use (including glue sniffing), and other negative "leisure activities". In a very different context, the wider mass media coverage and the spread of Internet and other information and communication technologies, particularly in much of Asia, Europe and the United States, have resulted in a significant decrease in physical activity among young people, especially older youth.

It is true that young people disconnected from adult support and supervision are more likely to engage in a variety of problem behaviors, taking risks, performing poorly in school, and abusing substances. Young people who have left the school system and have not found paid employment youth for whom discretionary time is all the time need and deserve policy attention in all regions of the world. That is why media play an important role to young people nowadays to promote and show to them the important of leisure time activities for their health as well as their performance in school, home and surrounding. Below are the responses of media for young people regarding the leisure time activities.

- The media should be encouraged to promote youth understanding and awareness of all aspects of social integration, including tolerance and non-violent behavior.
- Promotion of a greater awareness at both local and national level of the value and benefits derived from community-based youth clubs.
- The media promotes and enables volunteering, but is not solely a volunteering program. It is a personal and social development programs that will ensure young people have a healthy self-image, can build positive relationships with people from different backgrounds, and are equipped to make can make decisions which are right for them.

YOUTH RESPONSES

The amount of time young people spend away from work and school work varies significantly across populations and regions. Differences exist within the developing world. In a Kenyan sample, 10 per cent of children's waking hours were free, compared with 63 per cent for a sample of young men in urban India. In developing country populations, boys tend to have significantly more leisure time than do girls, as the latter spend more time in household labor than do their male counterparts. In the developed world, about half of American young people's waking hours are free, and European adolescents seem to have about the same or slightly less leisure time, while Asian young people appear to have a quarter to a third of their time for leisure.

- Ongoing training for young people to include advice on the organization of activities, training in youth work and training in the management and day-to-day running of youth clubs.
- Youth clubs to build and develop links with other professionals and organizations operating in the area in an effort to adopt a holistic approach to the services they provide.
- Young people should be specifically targeted by local authority representatives and local development committees to facilitate their full participation in the regeneration of their neighborhoods requirements of the young people involved.
- Youth workers working in local communities should be utilized to facilitate the participation of young people in any consultation process and to ensure that the needs and requirements of the young people are adequately met.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

Creating communities that support young people, and in which young people are significant contributors to community life, is anything but easy. No easier is the inextricably linked task proposed in the introduction to the chapter: promoting and protecting young people's discretionary time as critical space for their development and the development of their communities.

There is work to be done, and work being done, by a full range of actors at all levels to promote and protect young people's leisure, and to create communities similar to those described here. There is a need to be vigilant about language. (A funding source once referred to promoting youth development as the equivalent of "shoveling fog".) While the definitions created by those steeped in the discipline may be quite precise, it is important to understand that changing public language use is a difficult task that requires concerted and sustained efforts as well as access to social marketing resources.

Increasing the quality and quantity of support and opportunities for youth cannot be achieved programs-by-programs. There are key leverage points that must be addressed in order to move a broad agenda for young people's development. Logic suggests that addressing these points is critical to moving the sub-agenda of promoting and protecting youth leisure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RESPONSES OF WORLD ASSEMBLY OF YOUTH

With regards to the Millennium Development Goal of Leisure Time Activities developed by the United Nations Member countries to be achieved by 2014, World Assembly of Youth (WAY) will take necessary action to:

- Increase youth involvement by 40% in youth development centers.
- Ensure that 50% of young people are participating in voluntary work.
- Encourage its members to organize activities that help to build the youth in mind, body and spirit.

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