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ABSTRACT

As the first awardees in the Student Community Service (SCS) program conclude their third and final year of funding and as SCS becomes an established part of ACTION's system of volunteer opportunities, it seems a proper time to evaluate the program. This evaluation examines whether the SCS has made a difference in the host communities served, and whether it has met its basic goals to nourish student voluntarism through local projects. The SCS encourages full-time high school or college students to undertake community service in low-income communities. In 1987 ACTION, the Federal Domestic Volunteer Agency, funded 55 projects under the SCS, 44 of which received third-year grants in 1989. In all, ACTION has funded 138 projects in its 3-year history, with 121 of these projects active through 1989. This evaluation looks at 40 projects that, in 1989, enrolled 20,505 students (about 25% high school students), who provided 335,095 service hours during the year. Student volunteers are a valuable resource in their communities, making possible many services that could not otherwise be provided. The volunteers themselves gained a diversity of benefits from their service. Current volunteers are proving to be effective recruiters for the programs, and most project directors believe that their efforts will continue following the end of ACTION support. This paper includes 5 bar graphs and 10 tables. A reference list cites 21 sources. (SLD)

THE FEDERAL DOMESTIC VOLUNTEER AGENCY
ACTION
U.S.A.

BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES WITH STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

An Evaluation Report On the Student Community Service Program
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ACTION
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

The first grants in the Student Community Service (SCS) program are concluding their third and final year of funding. This is a proper time to evaluate the program as it moves beyond the trial stages and becomes an established part of ACTION's system of volunteer opportunities. Two broad questions served as the focus of this study. First, has SCS intervention made a difference in the host communities served? Second, has SCS met its basic goals to nourish student voluntarism through local projects?

Background

The Student Community Service Program seeks to encourage students to undertake community service in low-income communities. The program requires that student volunteers attend secondary or post-secondary schools either full-time or part-time. ACTION provides seed money to non-profit organizations to begin or expand student volunteer activities. Grants are for one year, renewable for two years, and decline in amount each year. A first-year grant is $15,000 (maximum), the second $10,000, and the final year $5,000.

In 1987, the first year of the program, ACTION funded 55 projects of which 44 received third-year grants in 1989. In all, ACTION has funded 138 projects in the three-year history of the program, of which 121 were active through 1989.

Results in Brief

This evaluation looked at 40 of the 44 SCS grants in their third year of funding in 1989. These projects had enrolled, by the end of their second year of funding, 20,505 students who provided 335,095 service hours during that year. We found that SCS volunteers tend to be female (70 percent) and white (83 percent). One-fourth of the volunteers are in high school, all but three of the others are undergraduates in post-secondary schools. The average age of a volunteer is 20.

SCS volunteers are active in every area of community life. They are attacking problems associated with shelter, health, jobs, nutrition, education, aging, recreation, communication, and crime prevention. Students serve as tutors to the illiterate, mentors to the young, and companions to the elderly. They work in meals on wheels, food kitchens, teen centers, homeless shelters, and many other settings.

Principal Findings

Effect on Communities. By making effective use of SCS volunteers, many community agencies can maintain or increase the delivery of needed social services. By helping these agencies provide services that they otherwise could not afford, student volunteers become a valuable resource for supplementing public services. Most recipients of volunteers' services have been among the poorer segments of our nation; 20 percent of the recipients have household incomes of $30,000 or above.

Student Volunteer Experience. Based on the reports of volunteers, work site supervisors, and project directors, we believe that volunteers have gained a diversity of service learning benefits. They have gained a better understanding of the low-income community's needs and problems. The volunteers have learned new, marketable skills. SCS projects have exposed students to a wealth of challenging experiences. All this, the student's believe, has resulted in increased self-esteem and self-worth. In addition, many volunteers expect to benefit by being able to make better career choices based on their volunteer experiences.

Volunteer Recruitment. Students and SCS project directors agreed that an effective recruitment method involved the use of current volunteers. Students most frequently learned about SCS through public presentations by project representatives. On the other hand, project directors ranked public presentations fourth in effectiveness and fifth in frequency of use.

Project Continuity. Most project directors, especially full-time directors, believe their projects will continue following the end of ACTION support. At the beginning of the third year of funding, however, only a minority of sponsoring institutions had as yet been successful in replacing the declining amount of ACTION funds.

Recommendations

We recommend that ACTION should:

- Examine the level of participation by minority student volunteers. Already aware of this issue, ACTION has, in the last year, funded demonstration SCS grants to two Historically Black Colleges.

- Provide expanded technical aid to projects on how to better recruit volunteers.

- Take steps to strengthen the ability of local projects to target low-income recipients.

- Consider requiring sponsors to provide additional non-federal funding in amounts at least equal to the decrease in ACTION support.

- Require projects to either hire a full-time project director or justify why they choose to do otherwise.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS	
On-Site Training	Training usually provided by or at the work site. This training focuses on responsibilities and skills specific to the agency, work location or organization where the volunteer serves.
Pre-Service Orientation	Training usually conducted by the project director that emphasizes goals of the SCS project, expectations, skills needed, commitment and job descriptions.
Service Learning	Activities through which the student derives an education of an academic, practical or personal nature.
Sponsor	Federal, state local or private non-profit organization or foundation charged with operational, fiscal and legal management of the SCS project.
SCS Volunteer	Student enrolled in secondary or post-secondary school who provides unpaid service to community organizations under the auspices of an ACTION-supported Student Community Service project.
Work Site	Local agencies or community-based organizations involved in the delivery of social, human, health and educational services where student volunteers serve.
Work Site Supervisors	An employee of the work site to whom the volunteer reports and serves as a liaison between the work site and local SCS project administrative office.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Operations and Goals of Student Community Service

The Student Community Service Program (SCS) enables students to combine classroom education with hands-on experience in low-income communities. Sponsoring institutions draw students from high schools, vocational and technical schools, two-year community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities. Through students' unpaid participation in community-based service programs, SCS seeks to meet six national priorities:

- Provide service learning to volunteers.
- Create a sense of self-worth in the volunteers.
- Create a sense of civic pride in the volunteers.
- Create a sense of continuing community service in the volunteers.
- Enable students to explore possible career fields/occupations.
- Strengthen and supplement local efforts to end poverty and poverty-related human, social and environmental problems.

Through service learning experiences which address poverty-related problems, the Student Community Service program expects students to gain an appreciation of the importance of community-wide, problem-solving efforts. SCS assumes the student volunteers will become more aware of their responsibilities to their respective communities in the process. ACTION provides grants to colleges, universities and other non-profit organizations for a maximum of three years. ACTION expects that SCS projects will become self-sufficient and permanent parts of their sponsoring institutions at the expiration of federal funding.

The Student Community Service Program seeks to encourage students to undertake community service in low-income communities. The program requires that Student volunteers must attend secondary or post-secondary schools either full-time or part-time. ACTION provides seed money to non-profit organizations to begin or expand student volunteer activities. Grants are for one year, renewable for two years, and decline in amount each year. A first-year grant is $15,000 (maximum), the second $10,000, and the

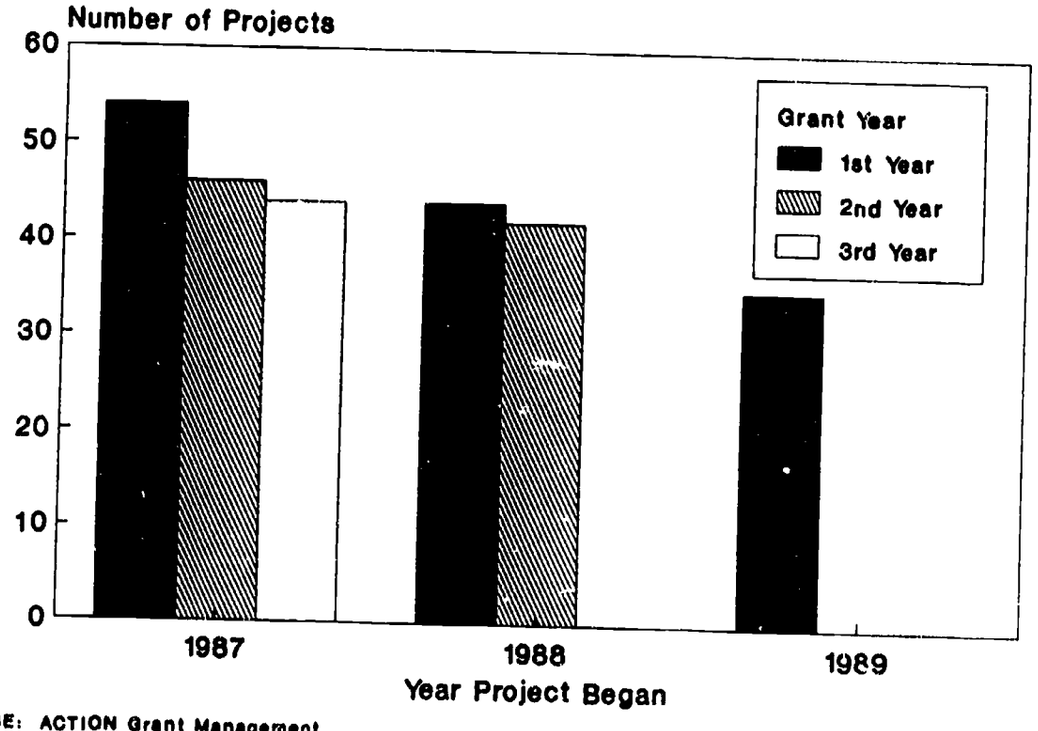
final year $5,000. In return for the federal support, sponsoring organizations must provide at least $3,000 in matching funds for each year they receive a SCS grant.

Sponsoring institutions use SCS grants primarily to fund project directors. These paid staff then seek to develop student volunteer experiences integrating the needs of the low-income members of a community with the resources of the school and the student. An important part of the project director's responsibilities is working with an advisory council to raise money to support the project after ACTION funding has ended.

Brief History of the Program

The Student Community Service Program is a part of ACTION, the federal domestic volunteer agency. Congress has authorized the SCS Program in ACTION's enabling legislation, Public Law 93-113, the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 as amended; Title I, Part B, Service-Learning Programs. ACTION awarded the first grants in September, 1987.

Figure 1.1. SCS Projects 1987-1989



BASE: ACTION Grant Management Information System

SCS is an outgrowth of several earlier student volunteer programs supported by ACTION:

- University Year for Action (1971-1982).
- National Center for Service Learning (1971-1985).
- Youth Challenge Program (1979 - 1982).
- Young Volunteers in ACTION (1981-1986).
- Student Service Learning (1986-1987).

In 1987, the first year of the program, ACTION funded 55 projects of which 44 received third-year grants in 1989 (see Figure 1.1). In all, ACTION has funded 138 projects in the three-year history of the program, of which 121 were active through 1989.

Purpose of the Study

This SCS evaluation study has two principal aims: (1) to assess overall perceived impact of SCS projects on student volunteers, recipients of service, and low-income communities served; and (2) to assess the extent to which SCS projects achieved national goals. Two broad questions are the cornerstone of this investigation:

- Has SCS intervention made a difference in host communities served?
- Has the SCS met its basic goals to nourish student voluntarism through local projects?

Research Methods

The project began with a preliminary investigation which consisted of a review of SCS files on 15 of the 44 third year projects. This investigation included a review of the projects' grant applications and quarterly reports. The study population consisted of the 44 SCS projects in their third year of operation. We used two of these projects to pilot test the study's instruments.

We tried to collect information on all 42 remaining projects. We were successful in getting such information from 40 projects. We have not included the two pretest sites in this report.

We conducted site visits to 16 projects between October 10 and December 12, 1989. We selected these projects randomly and stratified them on the basis of urbanization, type of sponsor, and region so they would be proportional to the total population of projects. Within each project, we targeted five work site supervisors, five volunteers, and five recipients. We also interviewed the project directors at each site and later asked the same questions to the other 24 project directors in a telephone survey.

The total number of interviews completed during the site visits were: 78 volunteers, 82 work site supervisors, and 104 recipients.

Work site selection criteria were:

- It must have active volunteers.
- The project should have assigned volunteers to the work site during the 1987-88 or 1988-89 program year and the current year.
- The work site should have an accessible location for interview scheduling purposes.

In selecting five volunteers from a site for us to interview, first chosen were persons who were then serving as a volunteer with a minimum of four months of service. If we could not reach the sampling goal, we chose former volunteers who worked at least four months the previous semester (or last year). As a last resort, we selected persons to interview who were then serving as volunteers -- at a site this semester for less than four months.

The criteria for the selection of recipients was that they must have received service(s) from a volunteer at a work site. Initially, we planned a random selection of volunteers, work site supervisors and recipients. The realities of the research environment, however, prevented the use of pure random selection. These problems included volunteer placement in progress, inactive work sites at the start of data collection, and difficulties getting accurate lists of volunteers and work site supervisors. Thus, we developed work site and volunteer selection criteria for use in purposive sampling.

Analysis Approach

The data analysis for this report relied primarily on descriptive statistics: frequencies, percentages, ratios, and trends. We used these techniques to characterize the basic features of SCS projects and their participants. We report on numbers of volunteers, hours served, funding levels, types of activities, socio-demographic characteristics of participants. In future reports on these data, we will be using other procedures, such as contingency table analysis and regression analysis.

CHAPTER TWO: DESCRIPTION OF STUDENT COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS AND PARTICIPANTS

Projects

Student Community Service projects place high school and post-secondary students in an assortment of service settings, from urban to rural. Sixty-five percent of the projects serves either totally urban or mostly urban areas.

Table 2.1. SCS Projects by Area Served

Area	Frequency	Percentage
Totally urban	13	32.5
Mostly urban	13	32.5
Suburban	2	5.0
Mostly rural	7	17.5
Totally rural	2	5.0
Other	3	7.5
TOTAL	40	100.0

BASE: 40 third-year projects first funded in 1987.

We have included on the following pages two descriptions of SCS projects to illustrate the types of activities in which student volunteers engage (see Project Examples 2.1 and 2.2). The first project has a single focus -- affordable housing. The other project has an eclectic mix of problems for volunteers to work on: teen parenthood, illiteracy, malnutrition, domestic violence, and others.

PROJECT EXAMPLE 2.1: THE STUDENT HOUSING PROJECT*

Service Delivery Context

The Student Housing Project works in a coordinated effort with local citizen groups and governments. It seeks to provide a volunteer home repair work force to upgrade sub-standard low-income housing units that do not qualify for existing governmental housing programs. They target low-income families with no economical means of upgrading their deteriorated housing. SCS volunteers perform actual home repair labor at project sites under the direction of an adult program manager. For new construction, student volunteers construct housing components in a designated area which are later assembled at the building site.

Sub-standard housing in the community is a critical problem for the number of housing units, persons affected and the severity of some of their circumstances. The 1980 census revealed that more than 900 sub-standard housing units existed in the county alone -- more than 300 of which lacked plumbing. Varied conditions exist. In some cases modest, but well maintained homes require minor repair such as porch flooring or window repair that elderly or physically handicapped owners cannot provide. In other cases, small and deteriorating shelters provide only rudimentary protection from the elements. They often lack indoor water or toilet facilities and adequate heat in winter. In some cases, the homes have minimal cooking facilities. Makeshift electricity comes from a neighboring dwelling by an extension cord. The windows are covered with plastic. The roofs leak and the walls have holes.

Benefits to SCS Volunteers

The SCS program expects the volunteers to develop organizational and public relations skills. The students receive on-the-job training in carpentry, roofing, painting, etc. SCS exposes students to a variety of persons in different age groups and socio-economic levels. Students will also develop an awareness of the existing housing conditions of the very poor throughout their community.

* The identity of this project has been changed to protect project confidentiality.

PROJECT EXAMPLE 2.2: MULTIPLE ACTIVITIES*

Service Delivery Context

Student volunteers work in various social service agencies serving low-income residents in a two-county area. Volunteers help in programs dealing with: 1) teen parenthood; 2) illiteracy; 3) malnutrition; 4) domestic violence; 5) drug and alcohol abuse; and other social problems.

The city has a high school dropout rate of 23 percent. The county's dropout rate has ranked among the top five counties in the state: 37 percent of county residents over age 25 do not have a high school diploma. In addition, the county has an adult illiteracy rate of 12.5 percent and a teenage pregnancy rate of 22 percent (second highest in the state). Thus, the county offers many opportunities for volunteers to address the needs of the low-income population. Among the work sites where volunteers work is a community center. The center is in a low-income, minority neighborhood in which 27 percent of the residents are at the poverty level and 18 percent of the work force are out of work.

SCS volunteers tutor elementary, junior high and high school students, including middle school students who are two years below their grade level. Student volunteers also teach adults in adult basic education classes and spend time individually with at-risk youth helping them with basic reading and study skills.

Benefits to SCS Volunteers

Student volunteers will 1) gain valuable career skills such as teaching, writing, public speaking, counselling, tutoring, organization and management; 2) learn the value of helping others; 3) increase their self-esteem and self-confidence; 4) increase their awareness of local and global problems; 5) relate classroom theory to hands-on experience; and 6) develop interpersonal communication skills.

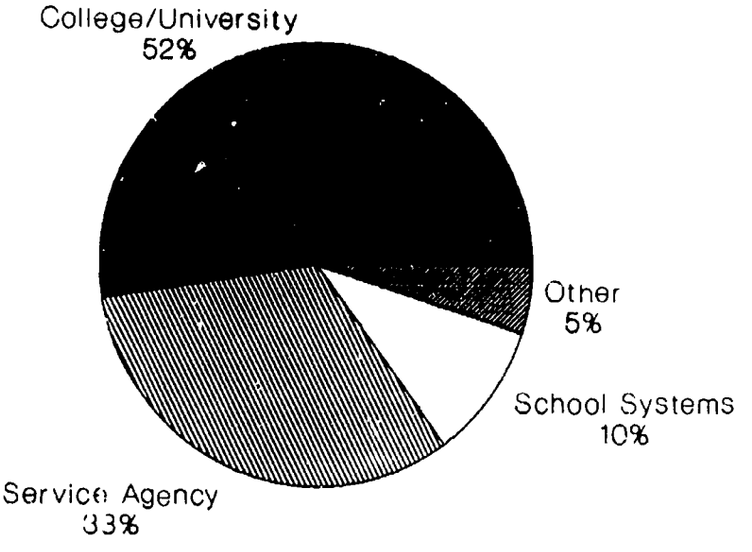
* The identity of this project has been changed to protect project confidentiality.

Participants

This section of the report describes the characteristics of SCS project participants (sponsors, advisory boards, project directors, work site supervisors, volunteers, and recipients).

Sponsors. Public or private colleges and universities sponsor over half (52 percent) of all SCS third year study projects. Private, non-profit social service agencies make up the second largest group of sponsors (33 percent).

Figure 2.1. SCS Project Sponsors



BASE: 40 third-year projects first funded in 1987.

Volunteers. By the end of 1988, the second year of ACTION's support, the 40 projects in our study had enrolled 20,505 student volunteers (see Table 2.2), an average of 512 volunteers for each project. According to the estimates offered by SCS project directors, these students gave 335,095 service hours that year, averaging 16.34 hours per volunteer (see Table 2.3). The number of volunteers enrolled had jumped from the first year when there were 7,277 students participating. This represents an increase of 280

percent. With this dramatic increase, the average number of service hours had dropped in half.

We found that SCS volunteers tend to be female (70 percent) and white (83 percent). This finding closely parallels demographic data reported in a June 1986 evaluation of ACTION'S YVA program where whites make up 73 percent of student volunteers (ACTION 1986). Why are males not attracted to volunteer service to the same extent as females? C. Harrison (1987) suggests that males are more likely to have paid work after school or play scholastic sports (1987). That men are more likely to choose these alternatives derives from the dynamics of conventional sex roles. These distinctions assign women to helping and nurturing activities and men to commerce and competition.

Table 2.2. SCS Volunteers, Planned and Actual 1987-1989

Grant Year	Planned	Actual	Increase
1987-1988	5,659	7,277	+ 1,619
1988-1989	5,521	20,505	+ 14,984
1989-1990	7,132	n.a.	n.a.

BASE: 40 third-year projects first funded in 1987. n.a. = not yet available.

Table 2.3. Volunteer Hours in SCS Projects 1987-1989

Grant Year	Total Volunteers	Total Hours of Service	Service Hours per Volunteer
1987-1988	7,277	225,904	31.04
1988-1989	20,505	335,095	16.34

BASE: 40 Third-Year Projects Funded Originally in 1987.

The average (mean) age of the SCS volunteers we interviewed is 20 and most fall between the ages of 17 and 22. One-fourth of the students are in high school. Table 2.4 shows the distribution of students by age and level of school. Most student volun-

teers are full-time students (96 percent); over half have part-time jobs (58 percent). While 64 percent have previous volunteer experience, 41 percent have SCS volunteer experience of one year or longer.

Table 2.4. Age and Education Level of SCS Volunteers

Age	Education Level		
	High School	College	Graduate School
16 or under	5	2	
17	12	3	
18	2	6	
19		9	
20		14	
21		13	
22 or over		9	3
Total	19	56	3

BASE: 78 SCS student volunteers.

Recipients. We surveyed 104 recipients of service from SCS volunteers. Most of the recipients were female (70 percent) and white (62 percent). Blacks made up 18 percent of the sample recipient population, hispanics 12 percent, and American Indians 7 percent. Most recipients came from households with four or more persons, 58 percent, and single householders made up 15 percent. Forty-two percent had family incomes less than $10,000, but 18 percent had relatively high income of $30,000 or more (see Table 2.5).

We sought to understand how well SCS projects match up with the needs of low-income communities. To do this, we developed a list of the needs that every community must provide for its members. These essential requirements of community life are: shelter and a decent, clean environment; health care; jobs; food and nutrition; care and education of children; care for the aging; opportunities for recreation and play; communication and understanding; and social control and crime prevention. All

communities have these needs, but low-income communities that are the target of SCS projects need a lot of help to meet them.

In Table 2.6 we show these needs and array against them the volunteer activities used by the 121 SCS projects (first-, second-, and third-year grants) to meet those needs. The 40 projects that serve as the base for this report cover all the needs and many of the activities shown in the table.

Table 2.5. Household Size and Family Income of Service Recipients

House-Hold Size	Family Income					Total
	Less than $10,000	$10,000 to $19,999	$20,000 to $29,000	$30,000 to $39,000	$40,000 or More	
One	11	1	0	1	1	14
Two	3	5	2	0	3	13
Three	6	2	2	0	1	11
Four	8	6	1	1	5	21
Five +	10	12	6	3	1	32
TOTAL	38	26	11	5	11	91

BASE: 100 Recipients of Service.

Table 2.6. Community Needs and Volunteer Activities in All 121 SCS Projects Active in 1989

Every Community Needs to Provide:	Student Community Service Volunteers Help Those in Need by:
Shelter and a decent, clean environment	Beautification efforts Clothing collection Environmental activism Work in homeless shelters Home improvement and repair
Health Care	Work in AIDS projects Helping the disabled Fighting drug/alcohol abuse Teaching health education Providing respite care Working with teen parents
Jobs	Tutoring in adult basic educ. Offering career counseling Working in dropout prevention Aid to farm workers Teaching English as second language Teaching money management skills Tutoring in G.E.D. programs Caring for latchkey children Tutoring in literacy programs Aid to international refugees Improving study skills in high school
Food and Nutrition	Working in hunger programs Counseling in nutrition and health Working in meals on wheels Serving in soup kitchens
Care for the Aging	Volunteering in meals on wheels Offering respite care to the homebound Weatherizing homes and apartments Providing companionship

(Continued on next page)

Table 2.6. Community Needs and Volunteer Activities in All 121 SCS Projects Active in 1989

Every Community Needs to Provide:	Student Community Service Volunteers Help Those in Need by:
Care and Education of Children	Mentoring or pairing with at-risk children Providing arts and cultural programs Working in day care centers Helping victims of child abuse Fighting drug and alcohol abuse Anti-gang activities Counseling high school dropouts Working with juvenile offenders Providing activities for latchkey children Aid to runaway youth Counseling teen parents
Recreation and Play	Providing arts instructions and cultural programs Presenting special holiday programs
Communication and Understanding	Teaching English as a second language Tutoring in literacy programs Operating hotlines for community agencies Providing transportation for the elderly and disabled to essential services Advocating for needed community improvements Offering community education Providing clerical help to community agencies
Social Control and Crime Prevention	Providing help to battered women Aiding the victims of child abuse and neglect Fighting drug and alcohol abuse Working to prevent gang involvement Counseling juvenile offenders Helping the victims of sexual crimes

SOURCE: ACTION (1990).

CHAPTER THREE: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Leadership and Supervision

Effective Student Community Service Projects must connect campus and community in ways that allow students to have worthwhile service experience. The responsibility for forging strong links between school, student, and community falls to three types of adult participants in the projects. They are the Project Director, the Work Site Supervisor, and the members of the project's Advisory Council.

Project Directors. An actively involved project director is essential for the development and management of SCS projects. While ACTION would prefer for sponsors to support a full-time project director, most projects (58 percent) have part-time project directors.

Project directors serve as brokers between sponsoring institutions and the communities in which volunteers serve. Directors must recruit volunteers, identify volunteer placements for them, and link the two in a stable and productive relationship. Most project directors do not direct volunteers in their assignments; that task is the responsibility of the work site supervisor.

Work Site Supervisors. The work site supervisor has the responsibility of managing the volunteers in their service placement. This person is most often a full-time, paid employee of a community organization or government agency who takes on the additional task of overseeing the work of student volunteers. They can be responsible for supervising anywhere from one to a hundred student volunteers; the average number of volunteers serving under each supervisor we interviewed was 24.

Advisory Councils. We recorded the types of individuals that sponsors selected for their advisory councils and found a broad representation from the groups with a stake in SCS projects (see Table 3.1). Some differences in councils stem from the type of sponsor, so we report types of representatives for college and non-college sponsors. The college sponsored projects tend to have advisory councils made up of faculty, students, social agencies, and community organizations. The non-college sponsored projects tend to have councils with representation from school boards, business leaders, volunteers, and local governments.

Community Relations

A strong community relations program is essential for the successful placement of volunteers in work sites and for the recognition of volunteer service. Coordination with community organizations may also help ease the integration of the SCS project into the community. These organizations may provide

Table 3.1. Composition of Advisory Councils

Representation	Type of Sponsor: College (N=18)	Type of Sponsor: Non-College (N=11)
College Faculty	100%	27%
Volunteers	83%	54%
Student Organizations	78%	36%
Social Agencies	67%	45%
Community Organizations	67%	45%
Churches	61%	45%
Business Leaders	50%	70%
School Boards	33%	82%
Local Governments	22%	55%

BASE: 40 third-year projects first funded in 1987.

various in-kind contributions such as office space, rent, utility costs and administrative supervision.

Promoting Community Awareness. The projects use a variety of techniques to promote community awareness. Most projects (92 percent) advertise in whatever media are internal to the sponsoring institution. Beyond that, most projects (80 percent) use broader media coverage, including recruitment posters. Project staff and SCS volunteers make personal appeals through public presentations.

We asked project directors to rate the effectiveness of various marketing techniques for promoting community awareness. The three methods rated most effective were, in order of effectiveness: (1) use of the project sponsor's own media (campus newspaper and

radio, primarily); (2) the activities and reputation of the SCS volunteers; and (3) public presentations to community groups.

Community Involvement. We investigated the nature, importance and benefits of SCS project involvement with community organizations. Essentially, community organizations are important to SCS projects for working support. These organizations help SCS projects by training student volunteers, providing awards, recruiting recipients of service, recruiting volunteers, and providing space and utilities. Slightly over half of all SCS projects have community organizations other than the sponsor or work site involved in program activities.

Individuals most often aided SCS projects by recruiting recipients of service, providing awards, training student volunteers, and providing direct financial aid.

SCS projects received revenue from a wide range of sources other than ACTION and the sponsoring institution over the three year funding cycle. The sources from which SCS most frequently received funds changed as the projects matured. Ten percent of SCS projects received funds from businesses or corporations during the first grant year. This figure increased to 20 percent during both the second and third years. Other relatively large increases over the three year period came in contributions from individuals, religious organizations, and service agencies.

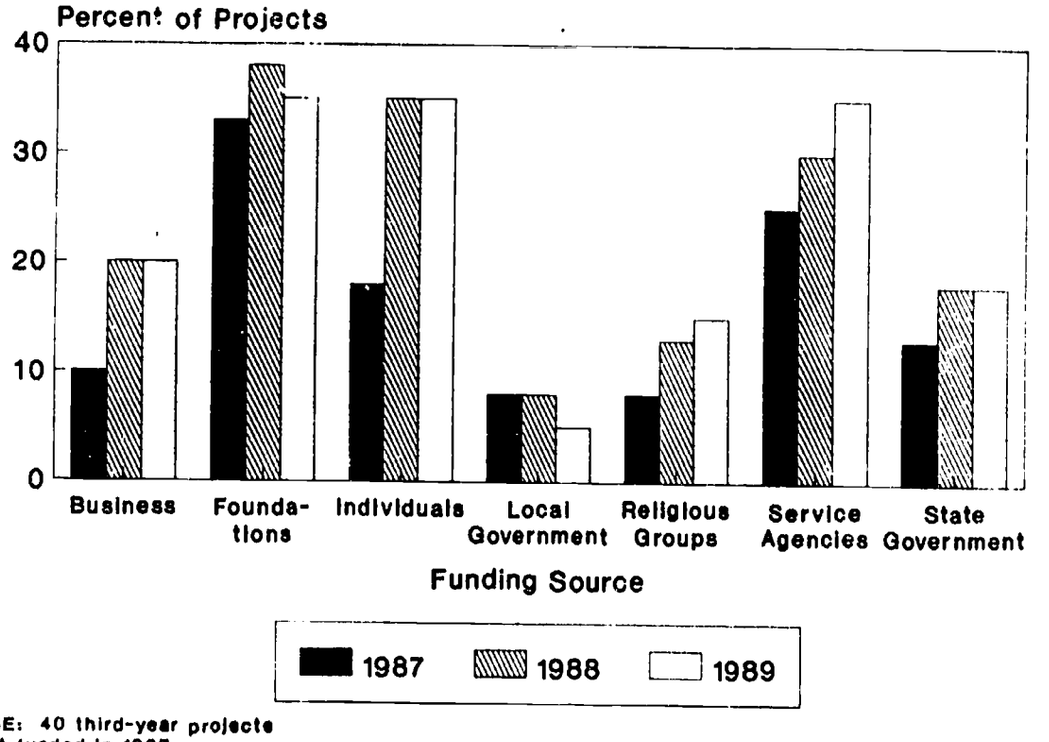
Volunteer Administration

SCS projects use a variety of methods to recruit and place student volunteers in suitable community assignments.

Recruitment. The six most popular methods used by projects to recruit volunteers are: current or former SCS volunteers (93 percent of the projects); sponsoring institution's media -- newsletters, brochures, fliers, advertisements, direct mail (also 93 percent): posters (88 percent); information booths at special events (80 percent), public presentations (75 percent); and broader media coverage -- newspapers, radio, TV, etc. (also 75 percent).

We explored the effectiveness of recruitment methods in two ways. First, we asked project directors to rate the effectiveness of various recruitment methods. The five recruitment methods receiving the highest ratings for effectiveness were: (1) former or current SCS volunteers; (2) the sponsor's media; (3) academic requirements; and (4) presentations to college/university affiliated organizations, tied with using school counselors.

Figure 3.1. Non-ACTION Funding for SCS Projects, 1987-1989



BASE: 40 third-year projects first funded in 1987.

As a second way of rating the effectiveness of recruiting methods, we asked SCS volunteers to tell us how they first learned about the Student Community Service Program. Thirty-four, or 44 percent, of the student volunteers reported first learning about SCS in a public presentation, either to a school group or in a community setting. Two other frequent ways that students learned about the program were through friends who were volunteers (22 percent) and through the project sponsor's media (20 percent).

To compare these three ways of looking at the effectiveness of recruitment techniques, we computed their rank order within each perspective. Table 3.2 on the following page shows the eight highest ranked methods within each perspective. This rating system points to some discrepancies between frequency of a method's use, perceptions of its effectiveness, and how volunteers first learn about SCS volunteer opportunities.

First, the most frequent method by which students first learned about SCS was public presentations. Project directors, on the other hand, ranked public presentations fourth

Table 3.2. Methods Used to Recruit Volunteers

Recruitment Method	Rank Order of 3 Perspectives on Recruitment		
	Number of Projec s Using the Method	Director's Effective-ness Rating	How Volunteers First Learned of SCS
SCS Volunteers	1st	1st	2nd
Sponsor's Media	1st	2nd	3rd
Posters	3rd	6th	6th
Information Booths	4th	6th	6th
Public Presentations	5th	4th	1st
Broader Media Cov-erage	6th	8th	8th
Academic Require-ments	8th	3rd	4th
School Counselors	7th	4th	4th

BASE: 40 Directors of third-year projects first funded in 1987; 78 Volunteers in third-year projects.

for perceived effectiveness; it ranked fifth in terms of the number of projects using the technique. Thus, we would judge public presentations to be a very effective approach, but less used and under appreciated than the data suggest.

The research literature on student voluntarism supports the idea that schools use community service as an option for a course, a course requirement or a requirement for graduation. According to Newman and Putter (cited in Lewis 1988), community service is a graduation requirement in 4 percent of public schools and 14 percent of catholic schools. Further, a study by the National Association of Independent Schools (cited in Lewis 1988) estimates one-fourth of its member high schools require community service for graduation.

Additionally, about 40 percent of high schools with community service programs require that the student do volunteer work (Gallup Organization 1988). In contrast, the Carnegie Foundation's survey of high school principals found that 80 percent of the service programs are voluntary (Harrison 1987).

The literature also provides evidence of the effectiveness of former or current volunteers as volunteer recruiters. Harrison (1987) notes that experienced volunteers recruit students for programs through homeroom presentations. This approach actually combines the two top ranked methods we identified: public presentations and the use of current or former volunteers. Conrad and Hedin (1987) advise managers of student volunteer programs to use previous and current volunteers particularly in making presentations to adult or youth groups.

Training. ACTION expects SCS projects to provide two types of volunteer training to the volunteer as an introduction to the volunteer assignment: pre-service orientation and on-site training.

Project leaders should interview SCS Volunteers before both pre-service orientation and on-site training. These interviews are essential to make sure that the volunteer placement will meet the needs of both the community and the student. Most project directors, 88 percent, say they interview students before placement; 63 percent of the student volunteers report being interviewed. Fifty-eight percent of the student volunteers said they received pre-service orientation. Work site supervisors showed to a greater degree than volunteers that supervisors interview volunteers. Most volunteers and work site supervisors state that on-site training is provided.

We asked about the availability of job descriptions for volunteers at work sites. This is not a formal requirement of SCS project management, but ACTION's training, monitoring, and technical assistance emphasize the value of written job descriptions. Both work site supervisors and volunteers reported that job descriptions are less likely to be available than project directors believe them to be.

Half of all projects have a written agreement or an informal understanding between the project director and volunteer that defines the nature of the volunteer assignment. Close to half of all work sites have a written agreement between the work sites and volunteer.

Projects with structured environments frequently have formal training. Volunteers in nursing homes, hospitals, schools and offices receive classroom instruction, workshops, hands-on experience, manuals, handbooks, organization plans and operations guides before starting work. In some instances, projects reinforce the training with weekly or monthly discussion groups. Volunteers in less formal settings, on short-term, or on one-time type activities frequently receive a briefing on what to expect and informal directions on what to do and when.

Continuity and Self-Sufficiency of Projects

ACTION expects that SCS projects will secure resources enabling them to continue and expand after ACTION support ends. Thus, achieving self-sufficiency should be a priority for all project directors, starting immediately upon receiving the first ACTION grant award.

We asked project directors to assess, on a five-point scale, the likelihood of their projects continuing after ACTION support ends. We also asked them to assess the level of commitment to continuing the project. High ratings (4.6 and 4.5 respectively) resulted for both questions.

In further analysis of these data, we found statistically significant relationships (using the Chi-square test at the .05 level of significance) between expressed beliefs about project continuity and the employment status of the director. The data reveal that 82 percent of the full-time project directors believe their projects will continue and expand, compared to 40 percent of the part-time project directors.

These data suggest that full-time project directors may be a critical element for project success. These individuals have more time to devote to fundraising, writing proposals to funding sources and orchestrating community support and involvement necessary for continuation and expansion. Another possible interpretation is that those institutions committed to continuing a student volunteer office have expressed that commitment by hiring a full-time director. Whichever view one considers, a full-time project director is important to project continuity and expansion.

Three of four project directors, 74 percent, said they expected funding from other sources to assure continuation (see Table 3.3). Other data challenge this belief. We found that total funding for these 40 projects has declined each year after the first grant award from ACTION. ACTION's first year awards are for a maximum of $15,000. In

the second year the maximum award drops to $10,000 and to $5,000 in the third and final year. As reported in the annual applications for renewal of their grant awards, the non-federal funding increased in the second year, but not enough to offset the decline in ACTION support (see Figure 3.2). In the third year, the amount of non-federal funds decreases and the total funding for the projects decline as a result.

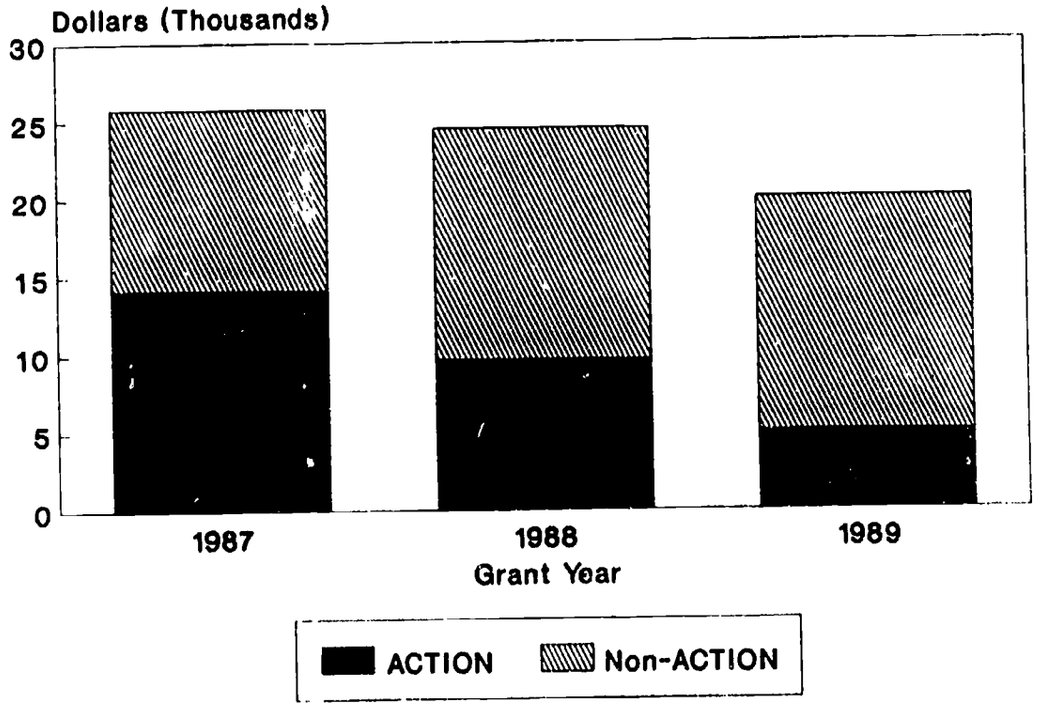
We looked at this issue of non-federal support more closely. We discovered that, in the second-year grant renewal applications, 19 sponsoring institutions expected non-federal funding for their SCS projects to exceed the $5,000 drop in ACTION support. By the third year, 11 sponsors, or 28 percent, report non-federal revenues of at least $10,000, enough to offset the drop in federal funds from the first year to the third year. This left 29 of 40 projects with less total funding in the project during the final year than in the first. The 40 projects in our study will complete their third and final year of ACTION support by the end of fiscal year 1990. In the first few months of fiscal year 1991 we will be able to determine how many projects continue without ACTION funding.

Table 3.3. Beliefs Concerning the Continuity of the Project and Employment Status of the Project Director

Expected Continuity	Employment Status of Project Director	
	Part-time	Full-time
Continue and expand	8	14
Continue at same level	10	2
Continue at reduced level	1	0

BASE: 40 SCS project directors of third-year projects first funded in 1987.

Figure 3.2. Funding for SCS Projects ACTION and Non-ACTION Sources, 1987-89



BASE: 40 third year projects first funded in 1987.

CHAPTER FOUR: OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT VOLUNTEERS TO LEARN AND GROW THROUGH COMMUNITY SERVICE

ACTION expects Student Community Service projects to offer students the opportunity to:

- Integrate academic preparation with experience gained outside the classroom.
- Explore possible careers and occupations.
- Improve their self-understanding.
- Increase their sense of civic pride.
- Develop a continuing commitment to volunteer service.

We sought to measure the extent to which projects met these goals in the 40 third-year projects by asking project directors, work e supervisors, and volunteers a series of questions directly related to the goals.

Integration of Academic Preparation with Experience Gained Outside the Classroom

We asked project directors, "To what extent do you feel your Student Community Service Project provides service learning to volunteers?" On a five-point scale, with one meaning "Not at all" and five meaning "a great extent," the project directors responded with a 4.5 rating.

To further examine goal accomplishment of this national priority, we asked volunteers about their service learning-related motivations for volunteering and the fulfillment of those expectations. Using a five-point scale where one is "not at all important" and five is "very important," we asked students to assess the importance of various service learning motivational factors in influencing them to volunteer. The data show that the highest scoring motives for volunteer service were a desire to help others and a desire for a new experience (both 4.5 on a five-point scale). The next highest rated response was a desire to better understand the community's needs and problems. Apart from the

general motivation to do good, these ratings clearly show a desire to do something different, outside the classroom, and learn something in the process.

Where these expectations fulfilled? Of the 78 volunteers we interviewed, 67, or 86 percent, agreed with the statement that their service enabled them to gain new experiences. Sixty-five volunteers, 83 percent, agreed that they were meeting a diverse assortment of people.

Service learning results mentioned most frequently by volunteers and project directors were that volunteer service 1) provided a better understanding of the community's needs, problems and individuals; 2) provided opportunity to help others and self-fulfillment; and 3) enabled students to gain marketable skills and new experiences .

Recent research supports the above findings. For example, an evaluation of the young volunteers in Action (YVA) program revealed that youth gained understanding through the YVA experience. The study showed that they learned the most about how they can help their communities (ACTION 1986). According to the California Coalition on University-Community Services (1987), "College students who become involved as volunteers with non-profit agencies gain a better understanding of many problems facing our society -- an understanding which helps them become better community leaders." The National Society for Internships and Experiential Education includes this outcome among the benefits seen when researchers consider service and learning. The frequent results of the effective interplay of service and learning are that participants respect other cultures and are better able to learn about cultural differences (Honnet and Paulsen 1989). Information from the Independent Sector shows that a more positive attitude toward being with people of diverse backgrounds is among the results achieved in youth service programs (Woods n.d.).

Marketable skills and new experiences gained by volunteers as a result of community service are often cited in the literature. Teaching basic skills needed by employers is among the ways service activities build positive bonds between youth and institutions of our society (Kirby 1989). Among these was that students learn important job skills (Harrison 1987). Several studies have focused on skills learned through community service. Consistently, these studies show that high school students can become competent in counseling, teaching, classroom management, basic social research skills and care presentation (Hedin n.d.). Further, among the conclusions suggested by volunteer learning, are that volunteering is a potent source of learning and volunteers gain a broad range of knowledge and skills (Rossing n.d.).

Exploration of Possible Careers and Occupations

Related to new, job-related skills is the chance for student volunteers to experiment with potential careers and occupations. Seven out of ten volunteers, 72 percent, agreed with the statement that their volunteer service enabled them to learn new skills. Ten percent fewer volunteers, 48 out of 78, agreed with the assertion that their volunteering helped them to explore possible career fields.

Again, the literature on voluntarism corroborates our finding that community service enables students to make better career choices based on practical experience. Conrad and Hedin (1986) discuss the role community service plays in attracting talented people into service occupations such as teaching. The authors note that a community service program will allow people to explore careers and to make a more rational decision about whether such a profession is for them. In addition, other researchers on student voluntarism have claimed that, through volunteer work, students gain skills and experience useful as an employment credential (n.a. 1989).

Improved Self-Understanding among Volunteers

We listed five goals for Student Community Service at the beginning of this chapter. Of those goals, project directors believe that SCS projects are most successful at promoting a sense of self-worth in volunteers. Thirty-nine of the forty directors we interviewed agreed that SCS projects do accomplish this goal; none disagreed.

Volunteers ranked creating a sense of self worth just behind helping others and gaining new experiences. Sixty-two, or 80 percent, agreed that their volunteer experience had this result. A smaller number, 44 of 78 or 56 percent, agreed that the experience enhanced their understanding of self.

The research literature gives support to these findings. Conrad and Hedin describe the impact of student volunteer service on personal growth and self-esteem in several of their published works. The first of these (1986), published by The Independent Sector, reports that community service offers young people the chance to discover, develop and display talents and skills seldom called on in a school. In addition, students receive recognition that might never otherwise come to them.

A second report by Conrad and Hedin (1987) notes that self-esteem, sense of personal worth, competence and confidence are among the results of youth service programs. Hedin (n.d.) further notes that she has found increases in self-esteem for students in the role of tutors, service providers for the mentally disabled and in other general helping roles. She reports on the results of a study by Newman and Ruther which found that

students involved in community service projects increased on a dimension closely related to self-esteem: a sense of greater social competence with such tasks as communicating effectively to groups, starting conversations with strangers, persuading adults to take their views seriously etc.

Results of other research provide additional evidence of increased self-worth attributable to youth participation in community service. K. P. Luchs (cited in Lewis n.d.), a University of Maryland doctoral student, compared a group of high school students who participated in community service activities to a control group which did not. The findings by Luchs showed that after 30 hours of service work, parti-cipating students displayed significantly more positive attitudes toward others and a elevated sense of efficacy and self-esteem....than those who did not. Further, Harrison (1987) has shown that students engaged in community service gained a responsible attitude toward others and gained feelings of greater self-esteem and personal adequacy.

Increased Sense of Civic Pride among Volunteers

Project directors also believe that SCS volunteers gain an increased sense of civic pride. Thirty-four directors, or 85 percent, expressed this opinion.

Recent literature provides supporting evidence showing that, as a result of community service, students learn the value of social responsibility. Among the most striking examples documenting this measure of success was by Conrad and Hedin (cited in Hedin n.d.). In their study of 27 school-sponsored programs featuring community service and other forms of experiential education, the investigators found that students showed significant improvements in social and personal responsibility.

Similarly, Ruther and Newman (cited in Lewis n.d.), studying the impact of eight high school community service programs, concluded that the programs gave a sense of social competence and responsibility by the students.

Continuing Commitment to Volunteer Service

We asked volunteers, "How have you benefitted from your volunteer service?" They were free to respond however they chose and 24, or 31 percent, reported without our prompting that it strengthened their commitment to voluntary service. Further, 71 of 78 students interviewed, or 91 percent, reported that they would continue to do volunteer work while in school. Asked how likely they were to do volunteer work as an adult, 64 (82 percent) said yes, they would, but 13 (20 percent) were uncertain. The YVA evaluation reported similar results (ACTION 1986).

Project directors and work site supervisors share these views of a strong, continuing commitment to voluntarism. Eight of the 10 work site supervisors interviewed (81 percent) report that student volunteers will continue to volunteer at their work sites after their SCS volunteer service has ended. According to project directors interviewed, most current student volunteers will continue to volunteer as a result of SCS intervention (97 percent). Similarly, most project directors (85 percent) believe that student volunteers, as a result of their experience, will continue to volunteer in the future.

CHAPTER FIVE: MEETING THE NEEDS OF LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES

ACTION expects SCS projects to support efforts to end poverty and poverty-related problems. Student volunteers work in agencies that address the needs of the low-income community. To explore perceived impact of these volunteers or recipients of service and low-income communities, we asked volunteers, work site supervisors and project directors to assess the extent to which student volunteer service benefits recipients and low-income communities. In addition, we asked them to describe ways in which recipients and low-income communities benefit from volunteer service provided.

Service to Low-Income Communities

We asked both volunteers and service recipients to report their household incomes. Volunteers are considerably more affluent than the households of the people they serve. Slightly over 1 of every 10 volunteer households have incomes of $15,000 or less compared to 6 of every 10 recipient households. A household income of $15,000 is slightly above the poverty threshold of $12,675 (for a four-person family) as defined by the federal government. In Figure 5.1, we show the inverse relationship between volunteer and recipient income.

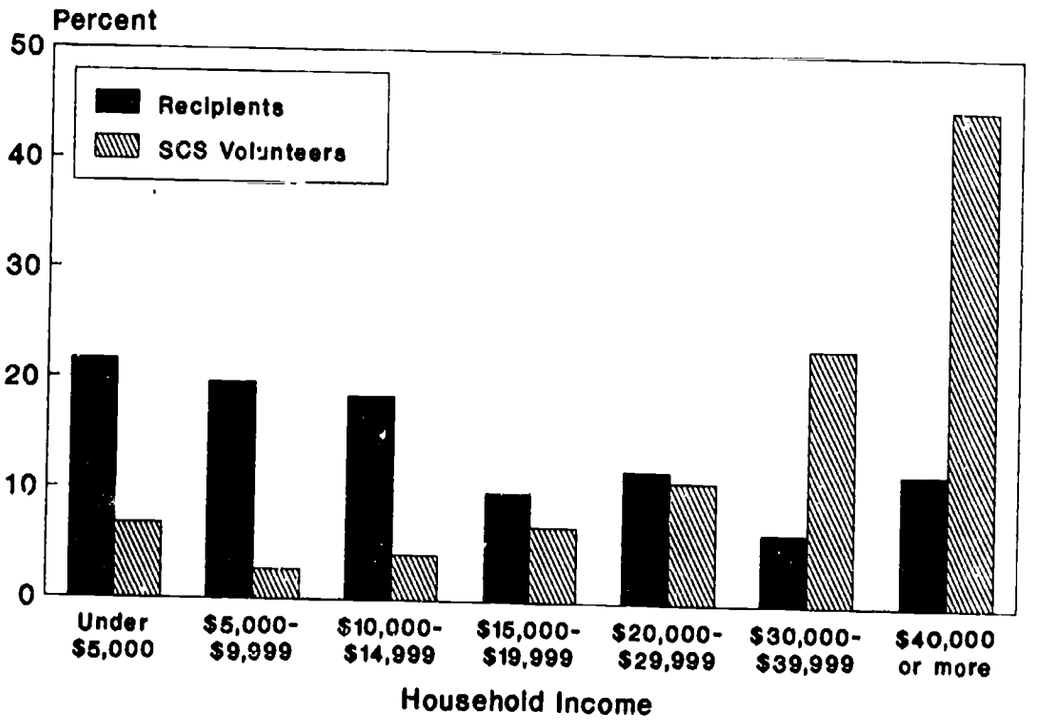
While most recipients are from low-income households, 18.5 percent of the recipients reported annual household income of $30,000 or more. This translates into about one in five of the clients for SCS volunteer service being well above the poverty line.

Meeting the Needs of Community Members

We asked volunteers, "To what extent has your volunteer service benefitted the individuals the project serves?" Most volunteers (97 percent) reported that their service was of benefit to some extent. All of the project directors and work site supervisors, 122 managers, believe there is some benefit to the service recipients.

The benefits provided by student volunteers take many forms. An important impact on recipient communities is the friendship or companionship student volunteers provide. Many of the SCS projects deal with the needs of the elderly, special needs of the developmentally disabled and the needs of disadvantaged children. The SCS benefits most frequently reported by the recipients we interviewed were friendship, companionship, and tutoring.

Figure 5.1. Household Income of Volunteers and Recipients



BASE: 78 SCS Volunteers and 104 Recipients of Service

Volunteers and project directors also stress educational benefits as important results of their service. Improved basic and academic skills, they believe, are a major result of student volunteer activities. In the work sites we sampled for this study, we found student volunteers performing several responsible educational roles. These included: tutoring in high school and elementary school classrooms; teaching migrant workers to read and write; and teaching adults in an inner city tenement to read.

A recently released report published by the National Academy of Sciences (Bernard 1990) provides documented evidence of the effectiveness of tutoring by college students on improving basic or academic skills. Among the studies the publication cites is a report mandated by Congress which highlights tutoring programs for disadvantaged elementary and secondary students that involve college students as tutors. Investigators report that improved test scores, grades or academic ability as well as improved motivation and exposure to new environments were among the effects on tutored

students. Another study reports that volunteers provide an incentive for at-risk students to enter and remain in a class or small group environment. The volunteers work with the children individually under the supervision of a teacher (Kongisser 1985).

Increased Social Service through Student Volunteers

The Student Community Service impact on low-income communities most frequently reported by volunteers, work site supervisors and project directors was that SCS projects enable increased social and human services to be available and delivered at nominal cost.

Students provide aid to work sites by performing tasks that paid staff would do if the work sites had the funds. They work as bookkeepers, builders, nurses' aides, carpenters, painters, tutors, athletic coaches, receptionists, teachers, counselors, cooks, food servers, drivers, housekeepers, writers, interpreters, playground supervisors and activity organizers, among other jobs.

The following are representative comments by work site supervisors describing how the use of student volunteers enables their agencies to either maintain or increase the availability and delivery of needed services:

> "Extra staff assistance from volunteers enables us to serve more people."
>
> "The students free up regular staff -- we give more service to the total community."
>
> "With student volunteers we were able to exceed our service expectations."

The data strongly show that student volunteers are an invaluable resource to agencies. The student helping these organizations provide services that, in a considerable number of cases, already overworked staff cannot do. These volunteer hours represent unpaid labor for which the equivalent monetary value is large.

Using funding data from ACTION's Grant Management Information System and reports from SCS project directors on volunteer hours, we calculated an estimate of the cost per hour of volunteer service (see Table 5.1). In the first year of SCS project operations, the cost was an estimated $4.56 an hour. With the large increase in volunteer hours in 1988, the cost per hour dropped to $2.92. This rate is well below the cost that a service agency would have to bear even if it paid only minimum wage with a modest benefit package. While we have incomplete data for the third and final year of these projects, we believe that the hours of service has either remained at the same level or, more

likely, increased. With the drop in total funds invested in third-year projects, we can assume that the cost per hour of volunteer service is even lower in 1989. We will be able to test this assumption when the data become available early in 1991.

Table 5.1. Monetary Value of SCS Volunteer Service 1987 and 1988

Year	Total Funds, Federal and Non-Federal, for SCS Projects	Total Volunteer Service Hours	Cost per Hour
1987	$1,030,240	225,904	$4.56
1988	$978,874	335,095	$2.92

BASE: 40 third-year SCS projects first funded in 1987.

Recent literature provides evidence of the use of volunteers as a way of increasing resources available for public service delivery. Young people are a vital resource which can help meet pressing human and environmental needs in communities across the nation (Youth Service America 1986). The National Catholic Educational Association (Yeager 1986) reports that volunteers are important because few institutions can afford to carry on all the activities necessary for their continued success. According to Hedin and Conrad (1987), community service activities do more than foster caring and empathy in young people. The educators feel that these activities benefit the larger community by providing the person-power to work on community problems.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

In the beginning we listed the six national priorities for the Student Community Service Program.

- Provide service learning to volunteers.
- Create a sense of self-worth in the volunteers.
- Create a sense of civic pride in the volunteers.
- Create a sense of continuing community service in the volunteers.
- Enable students to explore possible careers and occupations.
- Strengthen and supplement local efforts to end poverty and poverty-related human, social and environmental problems.

It is our general conclusion that based on the expressed beliefs of the various participants in the process, the program is succeeding in fulfilling these goals. The Student Community Service Program is having positive effects on both the low-income communities it serves and on the many, generous volunteers who are learning by helping others.

Effect on Communities. Our analysis has shown that community agencies have benefitted by being able to maintain or increase the delivery of needed social services. By helping these agencies provide services that they otherwise could not afford, student volunteers become a valuable resource for increasing public services. Recipients benefitted from needed services such as tutoring, companionship, housing repairs, counseling, and parental support provided by student volunteers.

For the most part, the recipients of services have been among the poorer segments of our nation, but 20 percent of the recipients have household incomes of $30,000 or above.

Student Volunteer Experience. Based on the reports of volunteers, work site supervisors, and project directors, we believe that volunteers have gained a diversity of service learning benefits. They have gained a better understanding of the low-income community's needs and problems. The volunteers have learned new, marketable skills. SCS projects have exposed students to a wealth of challenging experiences. All this, the students believe, has resulted in increased self-esteem and self-worth. In addition, many volunteers have benefitted by being able to make better career choices based on their volunteer experiences.

Volunteer Recruitment. Students and SCS project directors agreed that an effective recruitment techniques involved the use of current volunteers. Students most frequently learned about SCS through public presentations by project representatives. On the other hand, SCS project directors ranked public presentations fourth in effectiveness and fifth in frequency of use.

Project Continuity. Most project directors, especially full-time directors, believe their projects will continue following the end of ACTION support. At the beginning of the third year of funding, however, only a minority of sponsoring institutions had as yet been successful in replacing the declining amount of ACTION funds.

Opportunities for Improved Program Management. Our analysis has also identified SCS program management issues that offer to ACTION clear opportunities to improve the program. These include a need to increase the representation or participation of males and minorities in SCS volunteer programs. Of course, these are problems generic to voluntarism and mirror ACTION's experience with all of its programs. Another area which warrants further attention concerns the targeting of volunteer service. While our findings show that most recipients are low-income, 20 percent of the recipients are not.

Recommendations

Based on our study, we offer the following recommendations to improve the operation and management of Student Community Service projects:

- ACTION should examine the level of participation by minority student volunteers. Already aware of this issue, ACTION has, in the last year, funded demonstration SCS grants to two Historic Black Colleges. ACTION needs to examine closely the experience gained in these two grants to identify their successes for use in other schools.

- ACTION should provide expanded technical aid to projects on how to better recruit volunteers.
  - This aid would emphasize the value of public presentations by project directors and SCS volunteers.
  - Sponsors should train school counselors and faculty advisors to better inform students about volunteer service opportunities.
- ACTION should take steps to strengthen the ability of local projects to target low-income recipients. The agency could accomplish this by slight changes to existing systems, such as changing ACTION's monitoring procedures to emphasize this point. Also, the annual training offered by ACTION to project directors could deal with this issue without using additional funds or staff time.
- In renewing first and second year grants, ACTION should consider requiring sponsors to provide additional non-federal funding in amounts at least equal to the decrease in ACTION support. With this requirement ACTION can be sure that projects will maintain or increase service through the life of an SCS project. This requirement may also help to sustain the project beyond the final year of the ACTION grant.
- One measure of a sponsor's level of support for an SCS project is the presence of a full-time project director. ACTION should consider requiring projects to either hire a full-time project director or justify why they choose not to.

The Student Community Service Program is now completing its third year. In this report we try to summarize the results of the first evaluation research on this new program. The material included here represents only our initial look at the data gathered during our research. In the coming months we propose to publish a series of brief, management oriented reports based on our data. We will be working with the ACTION Office of Domestic Operations to identify the issues of most concern. These reports might cover: attributes of successful SCS projects; a closer look at volunteer activities; and the relationship between age of student (secondary and post-secondary) and project results.

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