

Illustrative Program Description¹

Rapid Scale-Up of Zambia Youth Service Program to Achieve Educational and Vocational Training Goals

Subject:	Strengthen the Zambia National Service (ZNS) program to engage and prepare out-of-school, unemployed youth
Target Group:	Rural and urban marginalized and low-income boys and girls ages 15-25 years
Period of performance:	3-5 years
Place of Work:	Two districts in each of the 9 provinces: Central, Copperbelt, Eastern, Luapula, Lusaka, Northern, North-Western, Southern and Western.
Summary:	Provide education, vocational training, life-skills including HIV/AIDS prevention, and mentoring through a large-scale civic service ² model focused on community development and reconstruction. The Project will improve overall employability, civic engagement, and health awareness of youth participants while, at the same time, contributing to Zambia's growth and development. The Project will strengthen linkages between national policy and local implementation by offering a comprehensive approach in partnership the Department of Youth (DoY) in the Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development (MSYCD), the Department of Technical Education and Vocational Training (DTEVT), the Zambia National Service (ZNS) Program; and local NGO service providers at the district and province levels.

¹ In order to be as concrete as possible, this illustrative program description targets a specific country. This however doesn't answer a specific request from USAID.

² Civic Service has been defined by Global Service Institute (GSI) <http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/csd/gsi/> as an organized period of sustained engagement and contribution to the local, national, or world community, recognized and valued by society, with minimal monetary compensation to the participant. The term "service-learning" is used in the United States and other developed nations whereby students in the formal school environment learn and develop through active participation in thoughtful organized services conducted to meet the needs of their community (see National Youth Leadership Council www.nylc.org). In developing country contexts the term "service-learning" is often interchange with civic service and can occur in outside of the school system to reach marginalize, out-of-school youth.

I. BACKGROUND

The population of Zambia is estimated at 10.3 million of which 68% are youth between the ages of 15 to 30 (Central Statistical Office 2000 and National Youth Policy 2005). These young people face many challenges, which include among other things unemployment, poverty, poor quality education, and the affects of increasing HIV/AIDS prevalence. The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate for 15 to 49 year old Zambians is 21.5 percent. During the period between 2000 and 2005 Zambians experienced a 21-year reduction in life expectancy due to HIV/AIDS and 32-years is the average life expectancy (UNICEF, 2002). If the current trends continue, by 2010 there will be well over 1 million orphans in Zambia, 77% as a consequence of the AIDS pandemic. The Zambia poverty rate is 73% (CSO 2000) meaning the majority of Zambian youth live in absolute poverty in both urban and rural areas.

The National Youth Policy (NYP, 2005) identifies youth unemployment as one of the country's most pressing issues that exacerbates many other social and economic problems. Disengaged and unemployed young people represent underdeveloped and utilized human and social capital, losses in economic productivity, increased rates of violence and crime, risky behaviors, reduced social cohesion, and increased expenditures on remedial social welfare services.

The closure of industries due to economic decline has reduced formal employment opportunities for all Zambians, and youth have been the hardest hit. In 2000, the CIA estimated that 50% of the Zambian labor force was unemployed. Youth made up 33.4% of the labor force and 67.5% of the unemployed. Youth unemployment is increasing with no effective measures in place to reverse this trend. Every year approximately 250,000 youth enter the labor market with little or no hope of finding formal employment and, in most cases, without technical or entrepreneurial skills, that can enable them to go into potentially gainful self-employment.

The majority of the economically active population is joining the informal sector of the economy as a means of finding alternative employment and incomes. Available estimates show that the informal sector currently employs 78.2% of the country's estimated total labor force of 4.2 million people. While these informal jobs are essential to survival, they are often hazardous and place youth in exploitative situations. Moreover, the majority of informal sector employment only serves to help the poor survive day-to-day, but does not offer a viable alternative to poverty.

In an attempt to address the many challenges facing young people, the Zambian Government has undertaken extensive consultations from 2001 to 2004 with youth, government institutions, community- and faith-based organizations, traditional leaders, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders resulting in a revised National Youth Policy. The stated NYP vision is: *“A Zambia that guarantees at least 50% of youth employment, 30% of youth representation at all levels of decision-making in the public sector and where all youth exercise their rights and obligations, and enjoy equitable opportunity to participate in national development by 2015 regardless of their gender, ability, HIV/AIDS status or locality.*

In order to achieve this vision, the government has launched a number of initiatives to address problems in the education system, vocational training programs, and to promote youth entrepreneurship and job creation. Included among these initiatives is the Zambia National Service (ZNS) program that is in the process of being established to provide practical hands-on

experience to out-of-school, unemployed youth through civic service in reconstruction and development programs. The aim of this Project is to assist the ZNS program through the provision of best practice models from other countries and technical assistance and training to ensure a high-quality, sustainable model that is rooted in local communities (districts) and can be replicated throughout the country.

II. RELEVANCE TO USAID MISSION IN ZAMBIA

The Project addresses the following Strategic Objectives (SO) as articulated in the USAID/Zambia Country Strategic Plan FY2004-FY2010:

SO6 – Improved Quality of Basic Education for School-Age Children - Phase II – The Project will address SO6 by providing out-of-school, marginalized young people with the basic education they need to improve their literacy learning achievement scores, and numeracy achievement scores to 50% or above by 2010. It will accomplish this by providing a cost-effective, decentralized strategy to compliment the school system.

SO7 – Improved Health Status of Zambians – The Project will help to improve the health status of young Zambians and their families in three ways: (1) increased income will enable participants to spend more on food expenditures for themselves and their families; (2) reduced idle time will decrease participants likelihood to use drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism and decrease their vulnerability to other risks; and, (3) health awareness and knowledge will be increased through the life-skills curriculum, leading to healthy habits and decision-making.

SO8 – Government is Held More Accountable – The Project aims strengthen the capacity and coordination of the Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development (MSYCD), and provincial and district level authorities to successfully implement the Zambia National Service (ZNS) Program, an initiative called for by the National Youth Policy (NYP, 2005). There is tremendous promise for a high quality national service program to help improve basic education, employment, civic participation, and health outcomes for young Zambians, but only if the policy is implemented with high standards and firmly embedded within the fabric of local communities.

SO9 – Reduced HIV/AIDS Through A Multi-Sectoral Response – The Project will help to prevent and mitigated the affects of HIV/AIDS by providing a livelihood option to vulnerable youth within the context of their communities and a life skills curriculum that highlights HIV/AIDS prevention. The Project will provide a forum to strengthen district, province, and national coordination – and a vehicle to address community concerns, including the impacts of HIV/AIDS, through community responses. In some districts, the civic service activity may directly mitigate the affects of HIV/AIDS such as provision of home-based health care to HIV/AIDS patients.

III. ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

As the number of young people who are marginalized, unemployed, poorly educated, and living in poverty rapidly increase in Zambia, and throughout much of the developing world, governments are confronted with the challenge of how to address youth needs while also considering overall economic and social development. Civic service is one of the few proven and effective strategies for empowering young people in both rural and urban settings to play an important role in addressing the development priorities in their communities. Structured service programs provide ‘hands-on’ learning opportunities where youth develop transferable skills and competencies; create pathways to further training and employment; gain basic education; offer constructive alternatives to negative behaviors; and, empower youth to actively address urgent social, economic, and political issues in their communities.

Zambia National Service (ZNS) Program will use community service and civic engagement activities as the focus for applied education and training. Involvement in civic service often improves a young person’s sense of self-esteem, overall employability, and gains him or her positive recognition from the community.

Project Goal: To establish a national civic service model³ creating meaningful employment and participation in community development for young people in urban and rural communities throughout Zambia.

Project Objectives:

- Provide access to service opportunities for unemployed, out-of-school, marginalized youth to contribute in meaningful ways to their families, communities and society;
- Increase the long-term employability and income for young people in both rural and urban areas through relevant education, skills training, and hands-on experience;
- Develop a national model demonstrating how civic service can improve reading, writing, and basic math skills, employability, and life skills including HIV/AIDS prevention;
- Create a cadre of trainers and mentors at the district and provincial levels to ensure high-quality training and support to youth participants; and
- Facilitate district, province, and national level coordination and collaboration for multi-sectoral synergy and long-term sustainability.

Guiding Principles:

- Young people are a tremendous resource to their communities and society *today* and they benefit by being viewed as contributors;

³ The model will draw from best practice models that have successful adaptations in Africa including: City-Year, National Youth Leadership Council, and YouthBuild

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- Civic service combines an asset-based approach towards youth development, having concrete educational and vocational goals – combine with social value;
- Youth engagement in *authentic* service addressing *real* issues is essential for youth to feel meaningful to their families, schools, communities, and societies; and,
- Sustainable and cost-effective national service programs need to be flexible to local realities, but based on a replicable program design and quality curriculum.

Main Activities:

The project objectives will be met through three levels of intervention/beneficiaries:

- (a) Education, training, and hands-on service experience for marginalized, out-of-school, unemployed **youth** adapted from best practice models;
- (b) Training, technical assistance, coordination, and support to district and provincial leaders and **program implementers**; and,
- (c) Technical assistance to develop the **national government's** capacity within the Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development (MSYCD), the Department of Technical Education and Vocational Training (DTEVT), and the Zambia National Service (ZNS) Program to provide support and monitoring at the service provider, district and provincial levels.

Activity A: *Educate, Train, and Engage District Youth in Activities to Meet the Critical Needs of their Communities*

This activity will result in a cadre of youth engaged for a ten-to-twelve month period in a variety of activities to meet critical needs in their communities. The focus of the service activities will vary from rural to urban, and district-to-district depending on the needs, but include such activities as:

- (a) Training youth to serve as mentors for children in partnership with local schools and organizing and running after-school programs and curricula on important social issues including violence prevention, and AIDS awareness;
- (b) Training youth to provide critical services such as home-based healthcare to help mitigate the impacts of HIV/AIDS
- (c) Building skills in much needed infrastructure improvements in both urban and agricultural sectors such as housing, roadways, irrigation and sanitation systems, recycling, and other environmental preservation efforts.

For this activity, a *rapid assessment* will be conducted at the provincial and or district levels to identify: the local understanding of service/volunteerism, existing needs/opportunities, potential partners and processes, structures, and assets that can be built upon. In addition, the current education and skill levels of the target youth population will be assessed.

Based upon the assessment and subsequent stakeholder engagement, the *program will be designed* with the target population and community needs/assets in mind. The design phase will involve potential implementing partners at the national, provincial, and district levels. Existing training materials and curriculum will be adapted to the local service program including a hybrid of basic education, job readiness and life skills, and preparation for the specific service-learning experience. It will include classroom, hands-on, experiential, and one-on-one mentoring learning opportunities.

Documentation and monitoring of the program will be built in through a regular data collection and reporting structure, designed for continuous learning and improvement, as well as overall impact analysis.

Activity B: Capacity Building of Implementing Partners

The quality, scale, and sustainability of this Project will depend in large part on building up the capacity and facilitating the coordination of local, provincial, and national implementing partners – including government authorities, non-governmental and faith-based organizations, businesses and other partners. This Project will develop and or employ a cadre of highly qualified technical advisors and trainers to provide implementing partners with the following types of due-diligence services:

- Feasibility and “market-surveys” on the proposed service project/s
- Program design and implementation
- Appropriate technical expertise and assistance
- Organizational development and planning assistance
- Linkages to relevant supply and demand chains for service
- Identify and train mentor pools
- Documentation, monitoring, evaluation assistance
- Financial systems and management
- Annual financial audits and program evaluations

The relationship with each of the selected program implementers will start with high levels of support and involvement, but move towards an intentional process of self-sufficiency so that by years 4 and 5 only minimal facilitation and communication functions are provided by the Project.

Activity C: National Policy Framework and Support

In Zambia, there already exists a highly supportive and favorable attitude within the central government to address the needs of disengaged, out of school and unemployed youth. Service has been identified as a major strategy and recently the Zambia National Service Program was created. However, without experienced technical support, it is unlikely the ZNS program will achieve the scale and impact required to affect a significant number of young people. In the current framework, the ZNS program appears to be an add-on as opposed to a central feature in the youth policy. In order to support the goals of sustainability, scale, and replication, this Project will facilitate:

- Encourage inter-governmental collaboration and coordination to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure financial and material resources are well leveraged;
- Ensure that the ZNS program does not compete with formal schooling but rather compliments educational and vocational initiatives;
- Establish inter-sectoral partnerships and linkages at the national level with provincial and district level implications;
- Facilitate stakeholder workshops and dialogues bringing policy makers and practitioners together, as well as stakeholders from all sectors;
- Coordinate the documentation and dissemination of lessons learned across departments, provinces, districts and implementing partners; and,
- Conduct rigorous impact evaluation and cost-benefit analysis to ensure/justify sustainability of program.

IV. EXPECTED RESULTS

- (1) Increased numbers of formerly out-of-school, unemployed, marginalized youth are meaningfully engaged in civic service
- (2) Increase literacy learning achievement scores and basic math/numeracy skills, improved education
- (3) Acquisition of transferable and marketable skills for sustainable livelihoods (i.e. enhanced employability)
- (4) Increased life skills as evidenced by improvements in personal confidence, self-esteem, decision-making skills, healthy behavior, HIV/AIDS prevention knowledge, and other topics covered
- (5) Participants recognized as contributing members of their families and communities – with tangible benefits to community and society
- (6) Increased capacity and effectiveness of implementing partners – both NGO and governmental
- (7) Evidence of improved collaboration and coordination at national and provincial levels

V. ILLUSTRATIVE SCENARIOS/ POSSIBLE ADAPTATIONS

Civic service has proven to be an easily adaptable model that can be designed to respond the needs/assets of diverse target populations (i.e. ages, gender, street children, illiterate, in-school or out of school, low-income or privileged, urban or rural) and to different contextual and cultural

realities. The model is, in fact, most successful and sustainable when it is flexible and adapted to meet the *real* needs and concerns of participants and the communities in which they live. Following are some illustrative examples of possible adaptations:

Post-conflict, post-crisis, fragile environments – Civic service programs have been successfully implemented to positively re-engage young people after conflict, war, and or natural disasters. In environments where traditional structures have broken down; families have been separated; communities, homes and schools are in disrepair; and children and youth are coping with a range of difficult issues – civic service programs can serve to bring people back together around a common agenda and help to re-build a sense of connection and community. Civic service programs can engage youth in projects requiring low-skill, labor-intensive reconstruction and public works projects that provide them an opportunity to become part of the solution.

Mitigating the affects of HIV/AIDS in high-prevalence areas – The Zambia National Service model incorporates HIV/AIDS prevention as a central part of the life skills training – in other contexts it can become the focus of the civic service activities. Youth can be trained to become home-health care providers, help orphans and other vulnerable children, distribute information and condoms, manage community livelihood projects mitigating the economic impacts and so forth. These programs have the dual benefits of increasing the knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention while providing critical services to those most vulnerable.

Pathways to Employment and or Academic Credentials – Civic service programs may provide complimentary or alternative education resulting in equivalency credentials that enable youth to seek better jobs or continue to the next level of education. Likewise, the successful completion of a civic service program can be linked to employment by qualifying participants to apply for micro-loans to start their own small businesses or compete for relevant job openings. The civic service program can incorporate linkages to future employment and educational opportunities, helping youth by creating new pathways.

Agricultural-based business Preparation – In rural environments, the civic service experience and educational component of the program may focus on appropriate skills and knowledge young people need to work in the local agricultural sector. The curriculum and service experience is designed to meet the local realities and market opportunities.