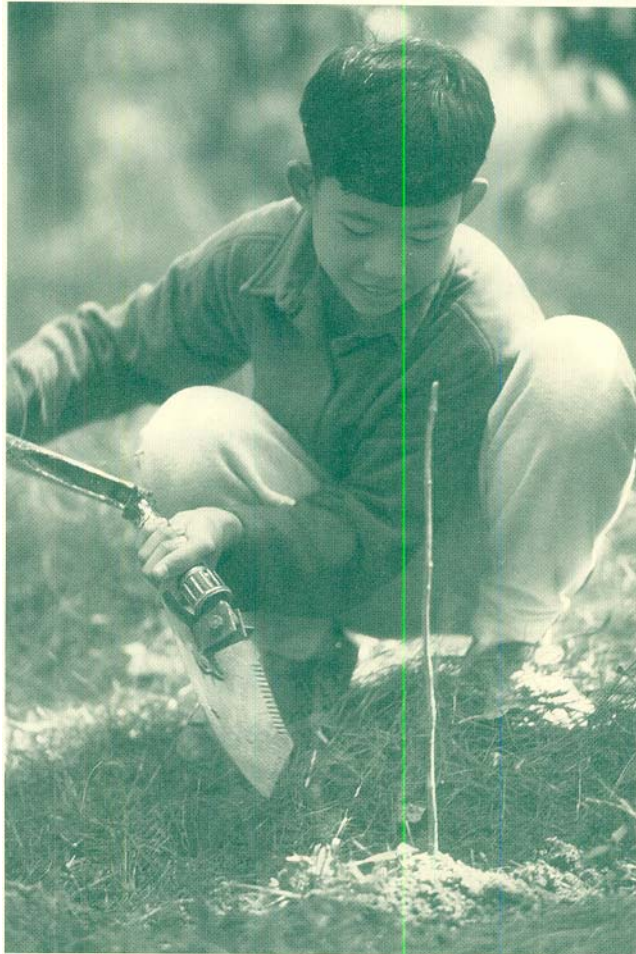




Youth Development And The Environment



Our vision is to clean, green, and sustain our environment, and our mission is to preserve, protect, and regenerate our natural resources.

-Hawksbill Turtles Camp Group Philippines "Youth Ecology Camp
1997



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Youth Development And The Environment

What's It all about?

- Inspiring youth to see their own and the world's beauty and natural resources, and how they can preserve and enhance them.
- Helping younger people develop their skills and talents and contribute to their communities, while practicing environmental awareness and conservation.
- Building self-confidence, discovering self-worth, learning leadership, and becoming responsible citizens.



Hello, my name is Margo Jane Pino, a native Igorot of Daclan, Bokod, Benguet in the Philippines. I am 21 years old, and a fourth year Industrial Education student in the Bachelor of Science Program at the Benguet School of Arts and Trades.

Some of the serious environmental problems facing my country are illegal logging, slash and burn farming, and commercial gardens. I believe education and awareness building is important, and I am taking on the leadership of the local Youth Conservation Club in my community.

I had a great time at the Youth Ecology Camp. I had a chance to meet different people from different places. Being with them was fun. The Youth Ecology Camp lectures and workshops equipped me with more knowledge about the environment I live in, and I am excited about the opportunity to return home and act!





It's about Learning by Doing

Through: Youth ecology camps, clubs, conservation and service corps, income-generating activities, single events, and experiential environmental education.

Where youth participate in:

- Earth Day celebrations
- Urban housing rehabilitation and construction
- Ecotourism
- Environmentally friendly farming
- Environment theater tours
- Park maintenance and trail building
- Recycling and solid waste management
- Canal and drainage construction
- Elderly or handicapped assistance, or repair of community facilities
- Environmental cleanup, erosion abatement, tree planting and nurseries



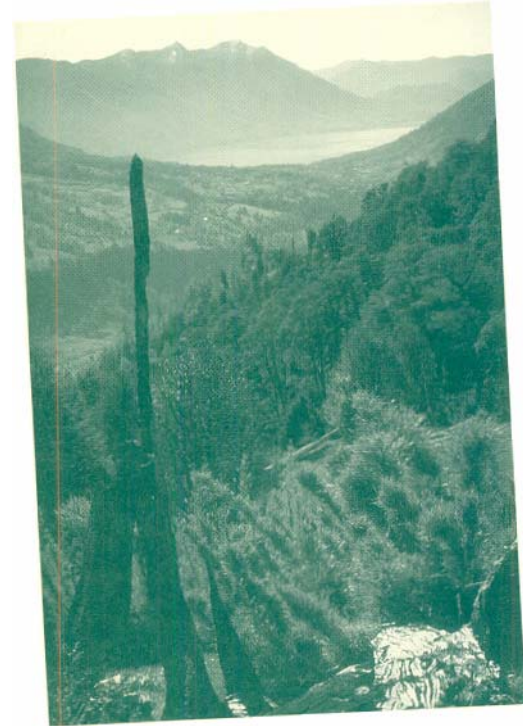
Why This Booklet?

Youth worldwide are demonstrating interest in and enthusiasm for preserving and protecting the environment. They believe they can and they want to contribute to concrete solutions. At the same time, there are environmental problems: depletion of natural resources such as forests and rain forests, endangered species, air and water pollution, poor or nonexistent waste disposal, and protection and restoration of parks and urban areas.

This booklet introduces ideas, concepts, and examples that combine youth development and environment activities. It is written for interested youth, Peace Corps Volunteers, their counterparts, Peace Corps staff, teachers, local or national government officials, parents, and community members. Much of the booklet's content was contributed by young people, Volunteers and Peace Corps staff and youth development workers.

Traditionally, Peace Corps environment activities involving youth have focused on educating young people about environmental issues. For the past several years, reports from Peace Corps posts have shown a marked increase in projects and activities combining youth development and the environment. These activities make a conscious effort to develop young peoples' leadership skills and capacities, while involving them in conserving the environment.

With a few simple ideas Volunteers and counterparts can have even greater impact on the lives of young people and the communities they serve.

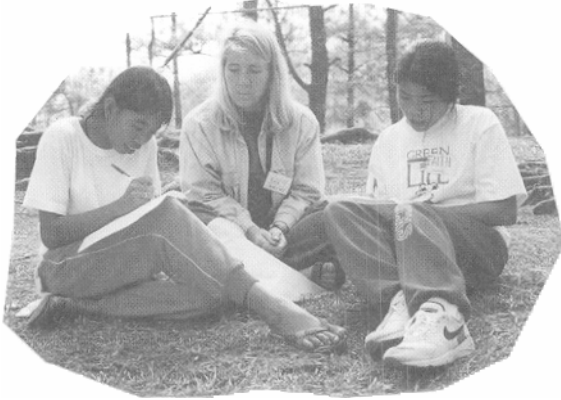


Planting trees and cleaning up communities are not enough. In addition, our projects can serve the young people themselves—by helping them discover their self-worth, learn leadership and become responsible citizens. These are the outcomes that will nurture tree saplings and keep the streets clean long past the Volunteer's service.

— PCV Eric Russman, Costa Rica



The Basics Of



Hundreds of Peace Corps Volunteers and their counterparts work with youth every day. Relatively few, however, work with or have training in formal youth development projects or activities. Here are some of **the basic principles youth workers believe are essential to youth development:**

- **Build on their assets.**

Young people are frequently pushed to the edge of the community ... All energy should focus on saying to young people: "You are not the problem, you are the solution. You are not just out future leaders, you are important today ."

Dr. Jody Kretzmann, Author of Building Communities From The Inside Out

- **Avoid focusing only on their problems.**

Problem free is not necessarily fully prepared.

Karen Pittman, Director of Programs,
International Youth Foundation

- **Offer them a safe place and unconditional love.**

There are seven areas to be persistent with every aspect of youth work: to be patient and to listen to what they really want, sit down and brainstorm even if you don't think it's (the ideas are) right, to be non-judgmental, and to eliminate our United States expectations, to have a sense of humor, to tell them jokes and laugh, to relax and enjoy your time with the kids.

- PCV Kelly Cullen, Republic of Palua

- **Give them responsibility**

Why involve young people? We are enthusiastic. We know our needs best. We are at a stage when we can learn and change. We are more open to new ideas. We are very impressionable, can be influenced easily, and the influence can be positive. Most youth are very passionate; once we are convinced about something, we stick to what we believe in. We are creative, and do can be in a position to lend advice about how issues that affect us can be approaches in as creative a manner as possible, and one that will appeal to us.

**-Matlhogonolo Mogapi, 19,
Peer Educator, Botswana**





Youth Development

- **Strengthen their feelings of belonging and service to community.**

Among the most powerful means of enriching young lives is to enlist their energies in improving their own communities. Young adolescents can and want to contribute to their communities, and they learn much from such engagement.

- *Great Transitions, Preparing Adolescents for A New Century*, 1995

- **Let them learn from their experience.**

Empower students to initiate and carry out constructive environmental projects so that they learn by doing.

- *Youth, Leadership and the Environment – A Program Guide*,
YMCA Earth Services Corps Program

- **Start small and work up to larger expectations**

When working with young adults, it was important for me to set realistic expectations. I had to learn that you must start small and work your way up to larger expectations. If you are positive and let them know you believe they can do great things, they will.

- *RPCV Mickelle Rogers, Eastern Caribbean*

- **Build their competencies and develop their self-esteem**

Show them you have faith in them, and that will enable them to make independent decisions, and so be able to build for themselves good leadership skills.

- *Matlhogonolo Mogapi, Botswana*

- **Teach self-direction**

One of the greatest skills you can give to a young adult is to teach them to be self-directed. Often, youth are trained with skills, but have difficulty using them. Being self-directed helps youth expand on the training they receive.

- *RPCV Mickelle Rogers, Eastern Caribbean*





Guidelines for Youth Empowerment*



- Establish clear and realistic expectations that youth will be the leaders.
- .Assess leadership skills, styles, and potential of each member of your group.
- Provide a safe atmosphere for practicing leadership. .Give advice privately, give praise publicly.
- Motivate youth to do things, don't tell them.
- Give youth room to succeed, and in some cases, they may need the room to fail.
- Help youth realize their responsibilities to make the commitment to take on new roles.
- Give them the freedom to envision how things can be better and to understand that their actions can make a difference.

PCV Edward Hubbard worked with local Kenyan students growing seedlings to sell. In turn, the youth used the revenue to pay for school. This entrepreneurial skill can be utilized and continued after graduation.

You'll recognize successful empowerment when youth initiate leadership on their own, when they make decisions about the projects they value and that meet real needs, and to which they make real contributions.

**Adapted in part from *Youth, Leadership and the Environment -A Program Guide*, YMCA Earth Service Corps Program*





Qualities of Effective Youth Workers*

Effective Youth Workers*

- Respect the individuality of youth, help them develop their own goals and standards; see each youth as an individual apart from the group.
- Are open minded and flexible in their views; able and willing to reevaluate personal beliefs, perceptions, and preconceptions.
- Listen carefully to youth, respect their views, ideas, and decisions..
- Are creative, work with youth in ways that are interesting to them.
- Model stability and patience; persevere and are not easily discouraged by set backs or failure.
- Support, and do not feel personally betrayed by youth who fail to live up to expectations or to the goals they set.
- Help youth better cope with society on their own terms, and are not concerned about "taming" youth.
- Share with youth emotionally as well as professionally.
- Are aware of developmental stages of youth and the major influences in their lives.
- Enjoy the company of young people and are available to them when they need to talk.
- Are optimistic, look for the positive, celebrate success.
- Design programs and activities that take into consideration the age, sex, and culture of youth participants.



* Adapted from Peace Corps' Small Business Development Youth Enterprise Guide, July 1993

PCV Steven Schipani worked in Thailand with school children to cultivate native vegetables growing in a school plot. Each student is responsible for his/her own row of vegetables. The produce from the garden is used in school lunches. An award system was implemented as an incentive for the students. This successful project also helped the school save money on vegetable purchases.



Sustainability

What happens after the Volunteer leaves?

Sustainability is key to development projects, including youth development and environment activities. The ideal is to have different organizations, clubs, and camps continue once the Volunteer has returned home.

Tips on achieving sustainability:

- Recruit adults interested in assisting in the activities and an organization that will provide leadership when the Volunteer is gone.
- Enlist the assistance of adults who are teachers, active community members; older students (college level) or out-of-school youth; anyone willing to take a leadership role, and is interested in working with the youth of their community.
- Be a mentor to the adults you recruit and encourage active participation and leadership. Include your adult counterparts in all aspects of the project.
- Ask for your counterpart's ideas and work as a partner with them.
- Be happy with the small successes! It can sometimes be VERY difficult to find interested adults. Do not become discouraged, continue looking!
- Network. Look for opportunities to collaborate and share ideas with other schools or organizations working in youth development and the environment in the host country. This is a growing field around the world, and the host country agencies may have valuable advice, tools, and resources for PCV projects.



- RPCV Denise Lofman,

Philippines





What's Happening The Field?



Youth ecology camps are typically run in the summer and on the weekend, and they use ecology themes to promote youth development and sometimes other program areas, such as English language. Camps are in session for a few days to a few weeks, are most often residential, and give youth opportunities to plan and work on conservation projects while learning about the environment, teamwork, leadership, and responsibility.

Philippines

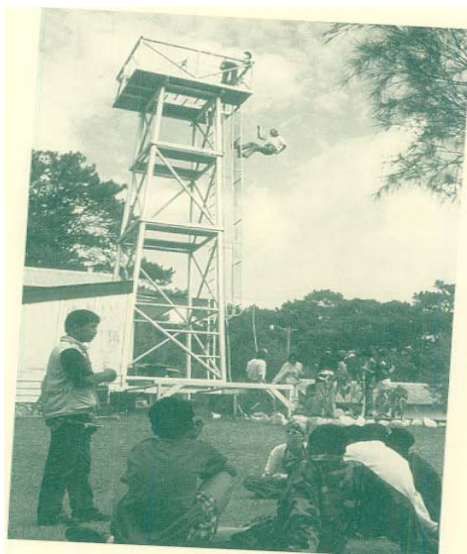
Team Building/Environmental Education/Community Service

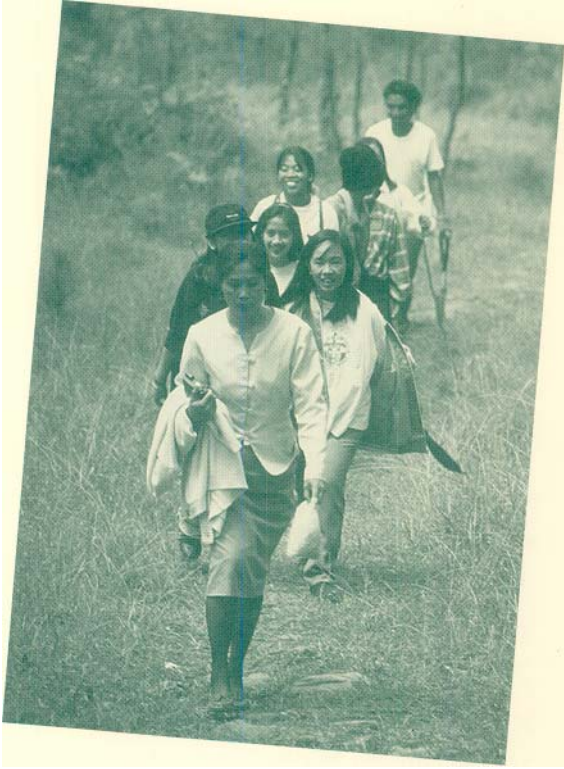
In January 1997, Peace Corps Philippines and the nongovernmental organization Plan International jointly sponsored the first national Youth Ecology Camp. One hundred participants from across the Philippines gathered at Camp John Hay, Baguio City, to spend five days learning about environmental conservation. The camp integrated youth development and environmental education in the hope of creating Youth Conservation Corps (YCCs) throughout the country.



In Costa Rica 92 students attended environmental camps; 196 youths were involved in seven ecological clubs; 145 attended environmental camps set up by PCVs; 128 participated in Guides and Scouts, sponsored by PCVs; 15 environmental education activities (i.e. national park tours, nature walks and talks conservation) reached 500 youths.

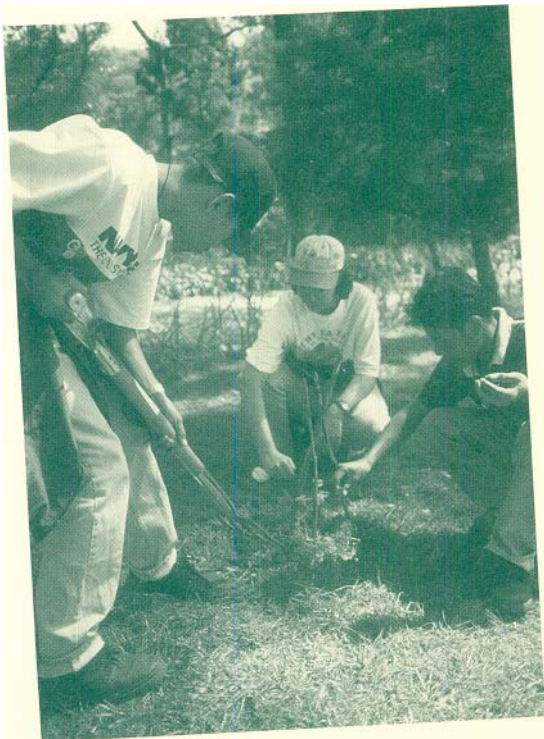
*APCD Gilberto Ugalde
Costa Rica*





The youth participants were chosen on the basis of their interest and involvement in youth activities and environmental conservation, their potential to be future leaders in their community, and their ability to inspire community action. Upon arrival at the camp they were assigned to teams named after endangered animals in the Philippines. Camp activities included team building, environmental education, first aid, outdoor skills, and a special service project in the nearby community.

Mornings were devoted to small group activities and afternoons to physical and outdoor adventure activities. Each evening ended with a bonfire, as youth chased away the cold with Philippines myths and legends, and roasted marshmallows, and shared their talents through songs, stories, and jokes. On the final day, Plan International introduced the concept of starting youth conservation corps in the campers own communities. Plan staff members helped the campers develop action plans and discussed how these plans could be implemented in individual communities.



In October 1997, 29 youth and 17 Volunteers from communities throughout the Philippines attended a second annual Youth Ecology Camp at Subic Bay. The five day schedule was similar to the first camp and included development of community action plans to be implemented when the youth returned home. Examples included waste management programs, letter writing campaigns to gain local government support, and environmental clubs to educate their schools and their communities.*

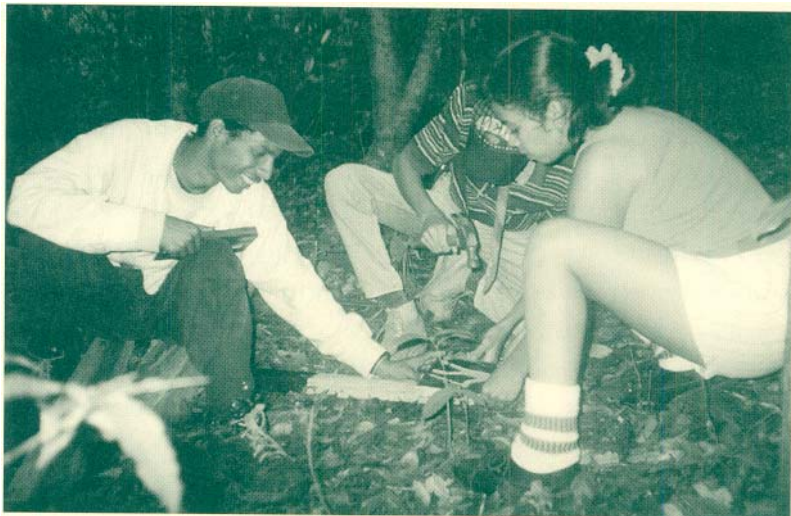


* Full reports available from the Center, see Resource Materials section

Panama

Leadership/Conservation Projects

Panama Verde, a youth development and environment project, has four goals: (1) to train young Panamanians in small project development and management; (2) teach environmental education; (3) foster leadership and group initiative skills; and (4) complete community conservation work.



In January 1997, a PCV, two youths, and one adult representing each participating community, attended the week-long Panama Verde National Seminar. The seminar addressed three topics: small project design and management, environmental education, and leadership / group initiatives. A consultant from the Mexican Conservation Corps (MCC) helped facilitate the seminar, which included a practical exercise in which the group selected, planned, and completed a community project in the park.

Youth were chosen to participate in the seminar on the basis of their motivation and dedication to the environment as evidenced by (1) their participation in 75 percent of their local community meetings and activities; (2) a written statement on why they wanted to participate; (3) a written recommendation from a non-family member; and (4) enthusiasm toward the program. The participants arrived curious about the environment, but unsure of themselves or the possible actions they could take to improve the environment. They left environmentally wiser and motivated to take on projects they believed necessary to help conserve their local environment.

Carlos, 16 years old, is from the "Ciudad del Nino," a group home for youths-at-risk. He came to the national seminar in El Cope and was placed among the group of the most motivated and interested students. He arrived not interested in the seminar, and from the start he wanted only to go back home. He talked very little with the other students. As the week wore on, an opportunity arose for him to go home, but he decided to stick it out. By the end of the week, he seemed to be having an okay time.

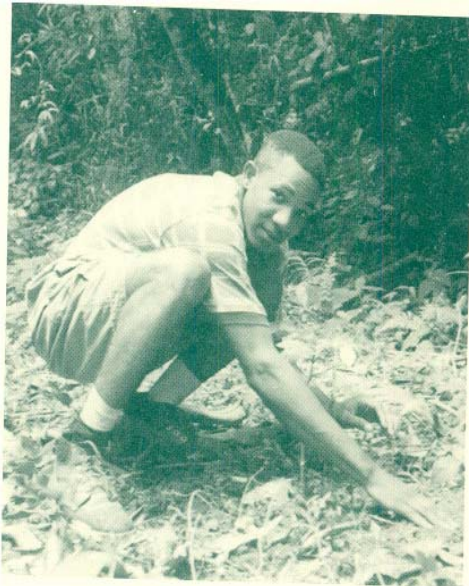
When I brought my group up to Altos de Campaña, I was quite surprised to see him there. He and two other students had been invited to spend several weeks with the various groups. Carlos facilitated several dynamic activities, and was one of the hardest workers I saw at the camp. He integrated himself much easier this time with the rest of the group and seemed to take pride that he lead activities; and he knew how the camp was run, since he had spent the past week there. He says he wants to continue working at the camps.

— PCV Nancy Rauen,
Panama



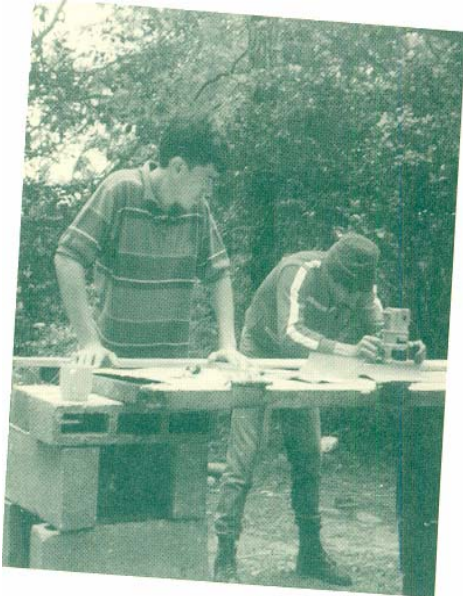
In February 1997, three successive one-week summer Youth Conservation Work Camps were held in Altos de Campana National Park. Two important goals of these camps were to gain national recognition for youth conservation camps and build a strong base of motivated youth and adults serving in this field. An adult participant and a PCV served as co-directors for the Conservation Work Camp. At the camps individuals from Panama's five

regions exchanged knowledge and experiences about environmental concerns in their respective communities. Another MCC consultant, an experienced camp director, provided valuable insight on organizing camps and involving participants in all aspects of camp operation.



The camps combined youth development and environmental education, teaching young people leadership skills and giving them experience working on conservation projects. Mornings were dedicated to conservation work and afternoons were divided between environmental education and leadership activities. Projects included infrastructure improvement within the park, construction of interpretive trail signs, trail maintenance, cleaning and rehabilitation of a bunk house, and repair of the main road leading to the camp. This hands-on experience gave the youth the self-confidence and motivation necessary to return home to implement previously planned environmental projects. Panama Verde participants not only learned to manage projects and appreciate and conserve their local environment, they also created a support network of new friends with a common interest to conserve the Panamanian Environment.

* Full reports available from the Center, see Resource Materials section





Russia/Far

ESL/Environmental Education

Thirty-six English as a Second Language students from Terneiski Raion attended a summer ecology camp. The camp aimed to strengthen students' understanding and appreciation of the regions ecology while they learned English. The entire camp was conducted in English. The theme of the camp was indigenous tribes and their relationship to the natural surroundings. The 36 students learned that nature is constructed of many inter-connected and integral parts. Each group represented a tribe and consisted of a Peace Corps Volunteer and six students. Topics taught included ornithology, botany, and marine biology. They also learned wilderness first aid. Creative environmental education games, such as a biodiversity hunt and a blindfold trust activity, along with a strong English component as well, were incorporated into the day. The intense learning at the camp was a surprise to many of the participants, and very successful.*

In Kazakstan, Volunteer Jennifer Gable established an Ecology Club and a summer English/ Ecology Camp for students. At the first meeting of the Ecology Club, students brainstormed names for their group. At the second meeting, they held an election for their group name. For these students, it was their first encounter with the democratic process in action. Plans are proceeding for the summer camp, which will attempt to teach youth about the environment through English, with the end result being more ecologically responsible young citizens who believe they can make a difference.

— Julie Rossate
Country Desk Unit
Russia/Far East
Peace Corps Washington





Ecology clubs can be involved with schools or communities, and club meetings are usually after school or weekend activities. These groups provide a social setting in which youth can learn about environmental conservation while having fun and learning about themselves. Many countries now have at least some clubs such as these. Club activities range from building cookstoves to planting trees, gardening to rabbit raising, or monitoring water quality-activities important to the community.

Romania

Water Monitoring/Internet

Enthusiastic students, with help from their teachers, started the Ecological Club of Eforie Sud (ECOES). Club members recognized Techirghiol Lake as special place because of its high salinity; it is therefore a very good place for wintering birds (the lake does not freeze). The lake is also well known for its therapeutical mud, a very good treatment for rheumatic diseases. In the past few years the lake has been losing its salinity. Thinking that the lake was in danger of losing its natural habitat and healing attributes, the members of ECOES decided to monitor the lake.

The club met with scientists to learn about the principal environmental problems of the lake, and developed a plan to monitor the lake. It consisted of check stations around the lake operated by three to four club members who recorded data. They compiled and analyzed the data and created their own web page. The students were the heart and mind of the project, but they were helped by nongovernmental organizations Mare Nostrum and Oceanic Club, the Mayor of Techirghiol, and the Self Governing Administration of the Romanian Waters. Club members gained a new level of respect from the community and for the environment.



-Alina Dragomir, 10th grade student,

Romania



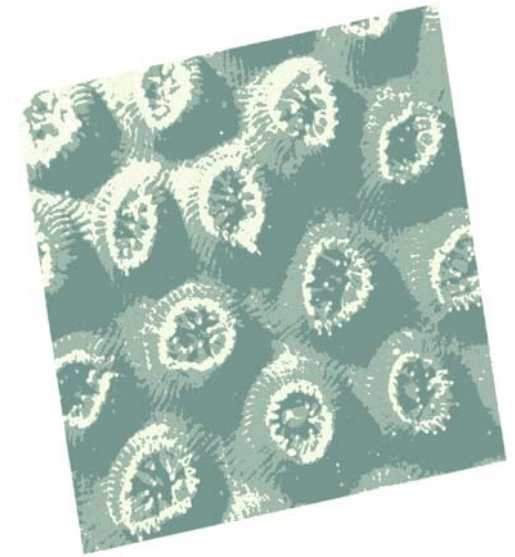
Philippines

Snorkeling Clubs/Marine Life Education

Assisted by PCV David Schopler, the San Andres Vocational School (SA VS) on the island of Catanduanes in the Philippines formed the "SA VS Snorkelers," a student club to combat environmental problems plaguing Philippine coastal resources. The lack of knowledge about the marine ecosystem by the general population leads to insufficient environmental "values" and needless abuse. The club hopes to foster an environmental awareness within the students through the actual observation of aquatic life.

PCV Schopler says. "While teaching environmental education to high school students, I soon found out most of the kids had no idea what coral was, and even fewer had actually seen live coral. So, I thought the best (and most fun) way to teach them about the reef would be to show them reef. Maybe by seeing the beauty of the coral, they would appreciate and help protect them. Thus, the idea for beginning a snorkeling club was conceived. I wrote a six SCUBA equipment manufacturers in the United States for gear; and one of them, U.S. Divers, referred my request to their Philippine distributor, Aquaventure Philippines, Inc. I received 16 sets of masks, snorkels, and fins to form this club at the high school in San Andreas, Cantanuanes."

The club's goals are to teach students the snorkeling skills necessary to view and study underwater life, provide an enjoyable form of learning, contribute to preserving the marine ecosystem, serve the community by informing the public of the needs to preserve marine life, and inspire and develop youth leaders for the environmental movement in the Philippines. Meeting and snorkeling outings are covered twice a month at various sites in San Andres, some that students can see a range of reef conditions.





Tips From The Field

Things to do at youth ecology camps and clubs:

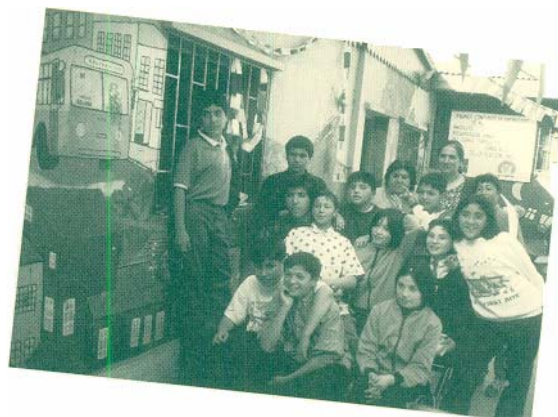
- ◆ Keep meetings as short as possible so you don't lose the group's attention.
- ◆ Start planning early—these projects take a lot of organizing.
- ◆ Meet 4 times a month to accomplish some solid work and learning, but remember meeting this frequently is hard on the leader so schedule the meetings with some thought.
- ◆ Begin each day with an organized roll call.
- ◆ Have parental permission slips.
- ◆ Make use of team building activities to make the youth comfortable with each other.
- ◆ Try to incorporate the environment into every aspect of the group's activities.
- ◆ Try to have a dedicated co-leader—it can help you a lot.
- ◆ Present certificates and t-shirts or some other memorabilia to campers and assistants.
- ◆ Take pictures to create albums and presentations.
- ◆ Compile address lists so participants can keep in touch with new friends.
- ◆ Have the campers make scrap books—they are fun and the youth love them.
- ◆ Have campers write thank-you letters to the funding/support agency.

Suggestions taken from the Philippines ecology camp and PCV Lauren Mitchell, Senegal

Chile

Urban Greening/Community Service

Elementary and middle school youth in Valparaiso, Chile, transformed what was once a trash-filled hillside into an attractive urban greening project. Youth participating in Taller En Accion Comunitario (TAC), directed by former social worker Patricia Castillo, planted ground cover and built terraced demonstration plots for vegetables and herbal and medicinal plants, a demonstration composting area, a high efficiency, low fuel use wood burning oven, and an arboretum where community youth and adults can learn about different trees. They also converted a dumping ground on top of the hillside into a small park. TAC's small center offers a social environment and venue for non-formal educational activities to complement the youth's formal school education. The youth say the best part of TAC is that it "feels like a family." The local middle school principal acknowledged the importance of the project: "The adults in this community have lost hope and do not care about improving their environment. It's the young people who are (and will continue) making a difference." He added that the project's presence has helped change the attitude of many in the community about their surroundings.





Youth Service Corps and Conservation Corps

Youth service and conservation corps offer young people an opportunity to work on conservation projects for extended periods (summer work camps, or full-time, delay for six months or more). Corps members usually work under adult supervision in teams or crews of 6 to 14. Working in crews promotes teamwork and builds strong group identity. Conservation corps use the work experience to teach environmental education and community service and to demonstrate the relationship between the two. Service corps work in areas of education public safety, and health. Youth who participate in corps strengthen their work habits and sense of belonging.

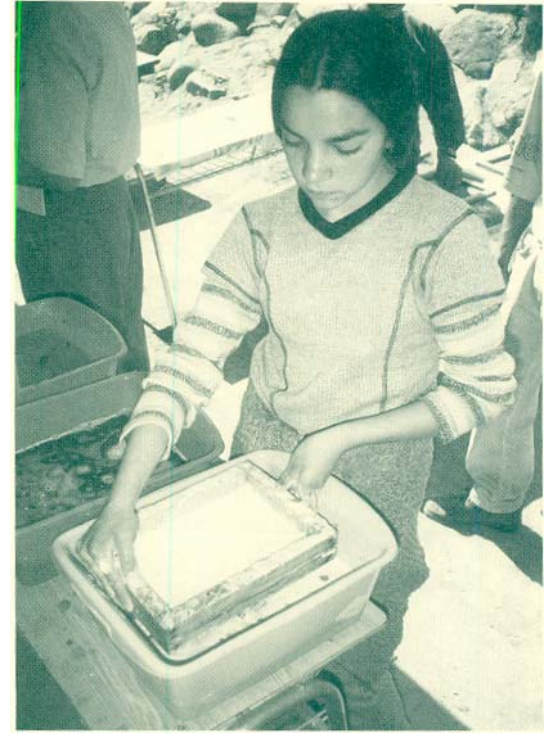
Typical conservation projects include: park development and rehabilitation, tree planting, environmental cleanup, erosion control, environmental theater tours, trail building, stream restoration, housing and community facilities rehabilitation and construction, recycling, and wetland restoration.



International

Youth corps and national service program~ are developing or emerging in the Philippines, Mexico, Chile, Panama, Honduras, Tonga, Fiji, Nepal, Chile, Belize, Papua New Guinea, Mali, Jamaica, and Ghana. Many of the programs in countries where Peace Corps operates have had a Peace Corps staff or Volunteer connection. Many of these programs have adapted some facets of youth corps models established in the United States.

Peace Corps currently has working relationships with three youth conservation and service corps organizations, each has its own unique approach. (See comparison of approaches in box on following page. See Resources section for contact information)



North America

National Association of Service and Conservation Corps

Since 1990 the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (NASCC) has provided technical support to the Peace Corps, beginning with an informational meeting about corps in Honduras that later lead to the startup of the Belize Youth Conservation Corps in 1991. The California Conservation Corps, a NASCC member, assisted in the first staff training session for the Belize Corps and the Mexican Conservation Corps. During the past three years NASCC has provided materials and consultants for Peace Corps youth development and environment workshops and training activities in Nepal, Tonga, Philippines, Jamaica, Panama, and Chile.





Youth Corps Approaches

Similarities and differences of approaches between NASCC member corps, the King Country World Conservation Corps (KCWCC), and the Mexican Conservation Corps (MCC).

They all offer youth between 14 and 25:

- ◆ Direct involvement with environment and conservation work projects and study through service on work crews of 6 to 14 people.
- ◆ Education in life skills, such as leadership, problem-solving, strengthening self-esteem, citizenship.
- ◆ Community service and a sense of belonging.

How they differ:

- ◆ NASCC member corps employ mostly disadvantage youth; pay a salary or stipend; is a full-time, 5 to 6 days-a-week program (one day per week for education) for up to one year; offers job preparation training; some corps operated by branches of national, state or municipal governments; others operate as community-based non-profit organizations; funding comes from government, foundation, and community donors. Increasingly, corps programs are supported by “fee-for-service” projects in which agencies or other organizations contract with and pay for the work performed by corps crews.
- ◆ MCC focuses on youth and some adults from the entire spectrum of society and is voluntary service (not paid); funds raised by individual corps to support weekend projects and/or school vacation work camps; focuses on Mexican community youth, but also invites youth from throughout Latin America and other parts of the world; technical assistance from Partners of the Americas.
- ◆ KCWCC focuses on international youth who have leadership potential to start corps in their own country and with ties to organizations able to sustain projects; serves together with local King County youth. International corps members receive a stipend and local members are paid minimum wage. The corps program operates full-time, 5 days a week for 6 months (one day a week for education); funding comes primarily through fees paid for corps member services.



World Conservation Corps

The King County World Conservation Corps (KCWCC) is an active member of NASCC. Located in Seattle, KCWCC was founded by a returned Peace Corps Volunteer. KCWCC provides a working laboratory to teach and disseminate the youth conservation corps model to young people both internationally and in the United States. International youth are committed to return to their countries to work in conservation. In its first three years of operation, 78 young adults from 20 countries completed 40,000 hours of environmental restoration projects. At Peace Corps' invitation, KCWCC joined a Peace Corps delegation at a youth conservation conference in Chile for discussions on collaboration. One of the 1997 KCWCC participants is from Tonga and comes to the program through the efforts of Peace Corps Tonga staff member Drew Heava. Drew was first exposed to the conservation corps concept at the Peace Corps-sponsored Asia Pacific Regional Youth Workshop, held in Tonga in 1995.



Partners of the Americas and the Mexican Conservation Corps

Partners of the Americas initiated and supports nationally based corps in Mexico, Honduras, and Guatemala. The Mexican Conservation Corps (MCC) Program was started in 1994 to offer young Mexicans a structured experience to learn about the environment. In February 1997, MCC consultants participated in two Peace Corps activities in Panama: a Youth Project Design and Management (YPDM) workshop and a summer ecology camp (see Youth Ecology Camps section). In July 1997 Peace Corps Panama sent a Volunteer's counterpart, who co-directed Panama Verde's summer conservation camp, to MCC's summer camp program for further training and experience. Startup activities for corps in Honduras and Guatemala began in 1997.

High Quality Youth Corps Programs

- ◆ Serve the entire individual and not just selected needs.
- ◆ Are carefully staffed with supportive and dedicated people.
- ◆ Fill an unmet, valued community need.
- ◆ Are highly visible, and publicly responsive in tangible, meaningful projects.
- ◆ Offer an educational dimension in both academics and life skills.
- ◆ Provide introductory job skills training.
- ◆ Are conducted according to accepted safety and design principles.
- ◆ Provide long-term benefits to the community.
- ◆ Are environmentally sound.
- ◆ Lend themselves to group effort and close supervision.
- ◆ Are subject to a well-defined monitoring and evaluation process.
- ◆ Promote understanding among people of diverse backgrounds.
- ◆ Employ sound management and administration.
- ◆ Cultivate relationships throughout the broader corps movement.

Adapted in part from NASCC *Youth Corps Planning Packet*



Income Generation

Ecuador

Ecotourism

In 1992, 16 youth in Puerto Hondo established an ecology club to help protect the natural resources of the area and attract more tourists to the scenic beauty of the mangroves in Cerro Blanco Protected Forest. Youth were initially tour guides and canoe paddlers through the mangroves. Canoes rented from local fishermen were used for the tours. In 1995, the Peace Corps and the Foundation Pro-Bosques offered technical assistance to help the project solicit and receive financial support from the Fund of Canada for Local Initiatives and La Cemento Nacional. With these funds the club constructed a *cabana*, or park shelter, equipped with restrooms and showers; built three booths to sell food and souvenirs; and bought two canoes, life jackets, and T-shirts, with the club's logo.

Initially, only youth were club members, but later fishermen and a family that makes charcoal also worked as canoe paddlers to increase their income and to dedicate themselves to mangrove protection and ecotourism. The project averaged 250 tourists a month, and club earnings paid for another canoe, five boats for self-guided tours, the construction of a picnic table and signs with the area's rules and environmental messages. The tour guides, canoe paddlers, food paddlers, and restroom cleaner each earned the equivalent of \$3,000 in a year and a half. The club hopes to establish an environmental education center for those who choose not to take advantage of the canoe trips and to build a hostel for tourists who want to spend more time enjoying the tranquility of the area.

I am 20 years old and studying at Oscus Academy to be a beautician. In my free time I volunteer at the Pro-Forest Foundation. I attend to the forest nursery so that I can learn to recognize the plants that exist there. I also do office work. During the canoe trips, I teach tourists about the scarce mangrove swamps and about the importance of protecting them. The mangrove swamp is as important to fisherman as it is for environmental conservation. Flora and fauna exist there. Our goal is to protect the mangrove swamp, although at times one sees it is affected by indiscriminate felling of trees.

— Maricela Carranza Rosado,
Ecuador





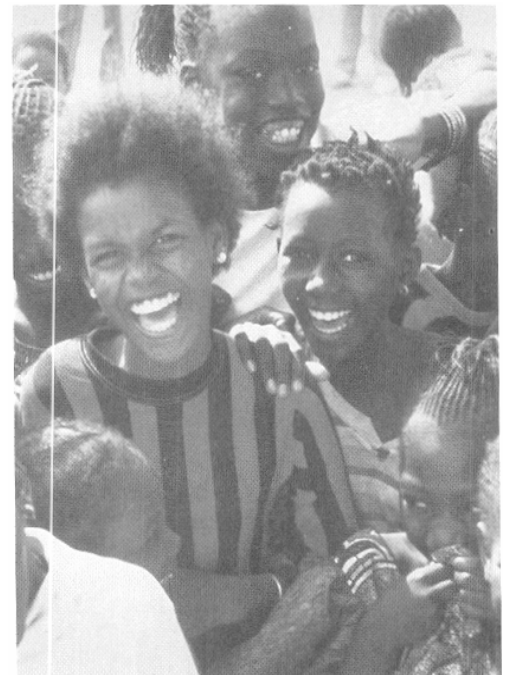
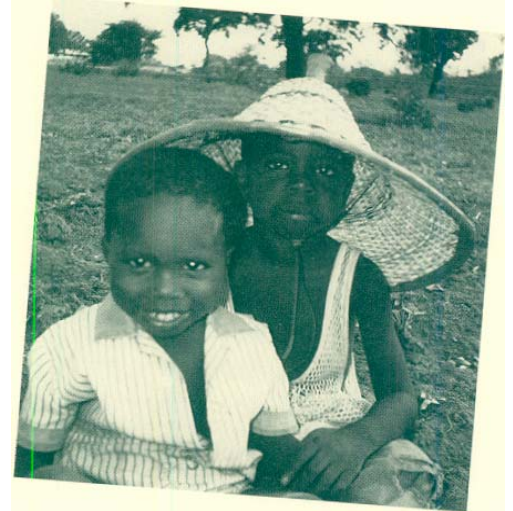
Ecotourism

In early 1995, the Ada Tourist Club and a Peace Corps Volunteers began discussing the tourist potential of the Ada area in Ghana. At the time, tourist and company officials from the cities were traveling to their private chalets and the newly built three star hotel in Ada for the weekend, but these weekend get-a-ways were not benefiting the local people. The Ada Tourist Club and youth leader of the area decided to create a tourist information office to provide tourists an easy and safe of learning about and experiencing Ada, as well as to provide jobs for the youth.

The Ada Tourist Club, with the assistance of the Dangme East District Assembly, built the Estuary Beach Camp, the first locally based ecotourism project in the area. Profits received from accommodations, the restaurant, and boat operations go to both the District Assembly and the communities. The Peace Corps Volunteer gave advice and training in business skills needed to properly manage and market the project.

Youth were employed to operate the tourist office. They conducted tours around the area, taking tourists on boat excursions, and shuttling them to and from the camp. This activity not only created jobs, it also offered an avenue for them to take charge and become responsible for their lives. They realized they had leadership qualities they never knew existed, and they were making money while offering a service to their community. Additionally, this ecotourism project gave the youth involved a new respect for the environment. The Peace Corps Volunteer conducted tourism seminars that emphasized positive and negative impacts on the environment, water safety, water sanitation, and wildlife. Environmental education for youth working in tourism was essential for helping to preserve Ada's natural beauty and wildlife, such as the sea turtle.

-PCV Amber Grove,
Ghana





Cote d'Ivoire

Waste Management

With limited funds, Cote d'Ivoire does not have the means to support a house-to-house trash pick-up. This urban infrastructure issue has direct negative effects on environmental quality. Using the entrepreneurial talents of underemployed or unemployed youths, private money-making trash pick-ups have been established to serve the needs of neighborhoods and fill the gap of municipal services. The organization of youth involves environmental awareness and technical training, as well as health and financial training.*

Full report in *Community-Based Solid Waste Management: A Training Facilitator's Guide*, (ICE publication, Resource Materials section)

More than 100 youth participated in garbage campaigns, which included posters and trash cans, to improve the conditions of waste management in their communities. Two youth groups did regular fund raising and wrote monthly bulletins for the effort. About 485 youth participated in recycling, reforestation, and nursery projects. The youths also participated in a regional youth conference.

— APCD Naomi Till,
Honduras

Local youth wrote and performed 5 to 10 minute skits and songs about the environment. A trash art competition was held and prizes were awarded. This was a very successful event; 1,500 people attended.

— Organized by
PCV Christine Wahlstrom,
Turkmenistan





How The Center Can Help

The Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research (Center) at Peace Corps Washington responds to Posts' specific request for training, technical assistance, and materials to support youth development and environment projects and activities. The objective is to build Peace Corps field capacity, depending on local priorities and opportunities in the areas listed below. Post will be able to enhance existing programming, integrate these youth and environment models and activities into existing projects or, where appropriate, create new projects. Projects and activities include:

- Youth conservation or community service corps
- Youth camps, clubs, and exchanges
- Community development
- Experiential environmental education and income generating activities
- Leadership training
- Youth participation

Technical support will also include building the skills of project managers (including PCVs and counterparts) in the above, and enhancing their ability to:

- Receive and assess project opportunities
- Design, implement (including day-to-day management), monitor, and evaluate projects
- Train youth and adult participants

The Center can be reached at:

Youth Development and the Environment The Center, Peace Corps
1111 20th Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20526 e-mail:
ice@peacecorps.gov fax: 202-692-2641

