



Community Service & Citizenship in Youth

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The Impact of Service on Life Skills of AmeriCorps Members

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Who Was in the Study?

- Partners in the study:
 - Corporation for National Service
 - Aguirre International
 - AmeriCorps State & National programs and their Members in 1995 and 1996
 - Comparison group participants, 1995 and 1996
- 382 AmeriCorps Members/Volunteers, of whom
 - 29% were youth, aged 17–21
 - 34% were 22–25 years old; 37% were 26 or older
- 700 Comparison Group sample, of whom
 - 40% were youth, aged 17–21
 - 30% were 22–25 years old; 30% were 26 or older

What are Life Skills?*

- Basic skills (oral communication, reading, writing, mathematics, and understanding technology)
- Thinking skills (the ability to learn, to reason, to think creatively, to make decisions and to solve problems)
- Useful personal qualities (individual responsibility, self esteem and self-management, sociability and integrity)

**The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) in Learning a Living: A Blueprint for High Performance - A SCANS Report for America 2000, US Department of Labor, 1992.*

Communication

- Listen and respond to other's suggestions or concerns
- Talk with people to get the information you need
- Express your ideas feelings, and insights
- Work closely with people different from you

Interpersonal Skills

- Stop or decrease conflicts between people
- Lead a team – taking charge, explaining, motivating
- Negotiate, compromise, and get along with co-workers/supervisors
- Learn new ways of thinking or acting
- Change plans or ways of doing things
- Stay calm when problems come up
- Get along well with the customers your organization serves

Analytical skills

- Summarize complicated ideas, proposed solutions
- Solve unexpected problems or find new better ways
- Plan for the future
- Weigh different concerns and possibilities before deciding
- Know how to gather and analyze information from sources

Organizational Skills

- Work within a budget and meet deadlines
- Manage your time under pressure
- Get the information you need
- Work within a team or organization
- Know how to get ahead in a career or change careers
- Deal with uncomfortable or difficult working conditions

Technology skills

- Use practical math skills such as graphs, tables or estimating costs
- Use computers to get or analyze information

Did Young Members Gain in Skills?

Skill Area	Pre Service	Post Service	Mean Change
Overall	3.45	3.95	.50***
Communication	3.52	4.27	.75***
Analytical	3.30	3.90	.60***
Organizational	3.26	3.88	.62***
Technology	3.31	3.63	.32***

Conclusions

- Service has benefits for youth beyond moral character and leadership
- The kinds of problem-solving skills we hope youth develop during school may be augmented through service.
- The impact of service or service learning on skills, however, probably depends on how the experience is structured.