

VOLUNTEERISM

Expanding the Frontiers
of Youth Development



PROFESSOR DR. TURIMAN SUANDI

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PROFESSOR DR. TURIMAN SUANDI

DKHP (UPM), B.S. (Florida), M.S., PhD (Ohio State)

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“The likeliness of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah, is as the likeliness of a grain; it grows seven ears, and each ear has a hundred grains. Allah gives manifold increase to whom He wills. And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures’ needs, All-Knower”

Surah Al-Baqarah - 261

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ABSTRACT

The role of young volunteers in improving the quality of life of individuals and of the community is well recognized in Malaysia and other parts of the world. They are active participants in various non-governmental organizations, youth organizations, schools, colleges, universities and even homes for the elderly and orphans, as well as other social welfare centers. Volunteers act as a resource of help and support for individuals, families, services, and institutions. Through volunteering, these young people enter into various social environments and encounter people living in different social circumstances.

Through addressing the needs of communities, groups and individuals, volunteering prepares youth towards developing pro-social behaviors in their journey towards adulthood. Through encountering diverse situations involving families, individuals develop tolerance and respect for differences. Thus, youth volunteering is one of the means to nurture the spirit of responsible citizenship. Volunteering motivates young people to continue to get involved in community-oriented volunteer activities even when they become adults. The combination of action and reflection in youth volunteer programs increases the socializing impact of voluntary work.

Interestingly, the concepts and practices of youth volunteerism are highly relevant for national stability and community betterment in Malaysia. Stability in Malaysia depends mainly on the attitudes and behavior of its people. Mutual tolerance based on ethnicity, culture and religion and respect for human rights, coexistence, and solidarity are values and behavior patterns that could be enhanced through educating the young people on volunteerism. Thus, developing the spirit of volunteerism is a powerful means to expand the frontiers of youth development.

Volunteerism has been and will always be one of the pillars for positive youth development in Malaysia and ultimately, the prosperity of our beloved country. This inaugural paper aims to further redefine the roles of volunteerism as one of the instruments supporting positive youth development.

INTRODUCTION

Young people have remarkable and often untapped potential in terms of ideas, knowledge, passion, and experience, to contribute to the nation. Their passion, enthusiasm, optimism and aspiration alone can help in facilitating community development efforts toward nation building. However, these young people are often underutilized, overlooked, alienated and marginalized in many community programs, activities or other initiatives. They are often viewed as a problematic group of people rather than individuals who have the potential to be actively involved in development initiatives.

Looking at the current situation, it is important that serious consideration be given to the following issue: how to involve young people as active participants in community development? One of the answers to this crucial question is to involve young people as volunteers in activities where they will be recognized as persons who are able to address the societal challenges, problems and concerns surrounding them. Many of these young people find themselves outside the boundaries of existing youth development programmes, and they are often motivated by the desire to change the societal forces that cause them to be marginalized. Young people can contribute meaningfully if they allow themselves to participate in community building, work toward social change, and apply their leadership skills. At the same time, they must also have access to the infrastructure, services, supports and opportunities that facilitate their own development at the local, national or international levels.

Today, young people may be perceived as on one end as individuals who passively accept the established culture and at the other end as individuals who are alienated and against the establishment. In reality, the middle of this spectrum includes young

people who care sincerely about the challenges their communities are facing and who really want to work to create positive, desirable change. With guidance, young people in general will have a solid vision, sense of purpose, responsibility, and self-worth. This is due to the fact that they have a combination of passionate, optimistic eagerness, and a willingness to take risks and challenge the status quo. Looking at the current scenario, there is a growing trend where the older group of leaders are making way for the younger ones to be partners in development at different levels. Thus, this paper discusses the scope and approaches that may be considered in developing volunteerism among the younger generation.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN MALAYSIA

Youth development initiatives in Malaysia are aimed at developing and unleashing the potential of young people so that they will become partners in national development. An indication of the government's concern and commitment to the youth development agenda was the increase in the allocation for development in the 9th Malaysia Plan for youth work, programs and activities. The total development expenditure and allocation for youth development programs for the 9th Malaysia Plan was RM5.46 billion as compared to RM4.95 billion in the 8th Malaysia Plan (Ninth Malaysian Plan, 2006).

Youth development is an approach to structuring systems, processes, services, and supports for young people so that they are able to develop the skills and competencies they need to successfully enter into adulthood and be ready to face the multitude challenges of adult life. Grounded in the concept of resiliency, youth development seeks to help youth overcome or deal with negativity in their environments. Youth development approaches also seek to take advantage of opportunities at the various stages

of adolescent development to influence their thoughts, behaviors, attitudes and aspirations. Youth development approaches are also aimed at helping young people to engage in safer, healthier and more positive behaviors.

One of the mechanisms or channels for young people to positively interact with the community is through youth organizations. Youth organizations in Malaysia were established as early as the 1900's with the aim of mobilizing young people aged between 15 to 40 years to unite towards nation building. Around 8,000 youth organizations are registered under the registrar's office. Only 30 percent are considered active with an overall membership of about 2.8 million youth (Ministry of Youth and Sports, Malaysia, 2000). The goals of youth organizations include: mobilizing youth resources; establishing networking among young members; developing the spiritual and physical strength towards morality; encouraging young people to be responsible citizens; developing the caring spirit; involving youth in the planning, implementation and evaluation of development programs; and developing the spirit of solidarity and volunteerism (Azimi et al., 2002).

However, according to Azimi (2002), many youth organizations are not functioning because the leaders have failed to understand their roles and responsibilities as leaders and in managing their organizations. Siti Rabaah and Turiman (2006) stated that youth leaders are responsible for the sustainability of their organizations, and that they must play the following roles:

1. As *managers* who can deliver and inspire their members to effectively become involved in activities relevant to the vision and mission of the youth organizations by: developing and ensuring the organizational goals attainment; translating organizational goals to actions; developing strategies based on the organizational goals; developing and restructuring

the organizational structure; delegating tasks; establishing committees to organize and implement activities; monitoring the activities conducted by the committees; making important decisions; and making changes to the management and leadership of the organizations.

2. As *process helpers* who can help members to achieve the goals of the organizations by: recruiting new members; training new members; providing motivation to members; sharing of expertise, competencies and skills; giving recognition and appreciation; establishing good rapport with members; getting support and guidance; disseminating innovations; mobilizing resources; and doing the ground work to meet members.
3. As *consultants* who can act as resource persons by: getting feedback regularly; and being resource persons and counselors.
4. As *catalysts* who are responsible to change the mindset of the members to act positively by generating new ideas.
5. As *problem solvers* who are responsible for: identifying problems; analyzing problems; handling and managing conflicts; and identifying strengths and weaknesses of the organizations.
6. As *resource linkers* who are able to provide ways and means to get resources by: linking to other organizations; developing networks with other institutions; and providing facilities for members' active involvement in the organizations.

Youth associations have been identified as a strategic platform to help young people meet the challenges of globalization, to develop positive traits and right attitudes, and to become prime movers for national development. The roles and contributions of

youth associations have been geared toward producing credible and successful leaders and these associations are also the inheritors of various areas of Malaysian development efforts such as politics, economics, social life and culture. Youth associations as voluntary and non-government organizations also play an important role in providing a strategic platform for developing youth who can contribute to community advancement, national development and nation building.

YOUTH AS THE NATION'S HUMAN AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

The United Nations and the Commonwealth have defined youth as those between the ages of 15 - 25 and 15 – 29 years respectively. In Malaysia, youth are defined as those individuals within the age group of 15 – 40 years (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2006; Commonwealth Youth Program, Strategic Plan 2003-2006; National Youth Development Policy, 1997; Malaysian Institute for Research in Youth Development). In 2005, around 11 million (42.5%) of the total Malaysian population were from the youth group; out of which 5.6 million were males and 5.5 million were females. It is expected that the youth population will increase to 11.65 million by 2010 (Ninth Malaysia Plan 2006-2010; Department of Statistics 2000 Census; Malaysian Institute for Research in Youth Development). With regard to the workforce in Malaysia, a total of 6.67 million (65%) belong to the youth group, indicating that the youth form the largest contributors to the work force in the country (Malaysian Institute for Research in Youth Development).

In a study by the Malaysian Institute for Research in Youth Development (2006), involving more than 2000 youth, only 18% were interested to become members of any youth organizations. The study identified several factors that hindered young people from

joining youth organizations: youth organizations are not attractive; too many rules and regulations to follow; the membership fees that they have to pay; and putting career as priority. However, the study also revealed that more than 75% of young people are involved in voluntary activities that include community services, sports, education, and culture. Their involvement in voluntary activities, according to the study, is due to the following factors: to fill their time, sympathy, interest and to help others who are facing similar difficulties. This finding indicates that while being actively involved in youth organizations is desirable, youth can still make a big impact on the community and the country through volunteerism.

A study on social bonding among Malaysian youth by Turiman et al. (2008) found that in general Malaysian youth had a moderate to high level of social bonding. Looking at the social bonding components with high percentages in terms of practice, the study indicates that the young people obey public rules and regulations and they have positive attitudes toward citizenship. However, only about half of them communicate well with family members, teachers and adults and practice their religion. For the rest of the social bonding components (peer networking; health practices; community involvement; time management practices; and attitudes toward other races), only a small percentage of the young people were practiced them at a high level (Figure 1).

Based on the findings of the study, there are several implications for nation building that need to be addressed seriously:

1. The nation faces no potential threats with regards to adherence to public rules and regulations as the percentage of young people who break the law is at a minimum level.
2. The nation has a group of young people who are responsible and have positive attitude toward citizenship.

3. There are early warning signals with regards to communication with family members, teachers and adults; and also with regard to the practice of religion among young people.
4. Although it is not critical, the nation may face the problem of a society that has limited networking among peers and also health practices.
5. The nation may have problems with regard to attitudes toward different races, time management and involvement in the community.
6. The nation may face more problems with the male youth rather than the female youth with regard to adherence to public rules and regulations, communication in the family and the practice of religion.
7. 'Middle youth' practice more social bonding as compared to early or younger youth. This is a normal process because of the maturity factor. However, the government should take this issue seriously to avoid it becoming a potential threat to the nation.

The findings show that necessary steps need to be taken to ensure that the young people -- as human and social assets -- truly develop into the leaders of today and tomorrow through volunteerism.

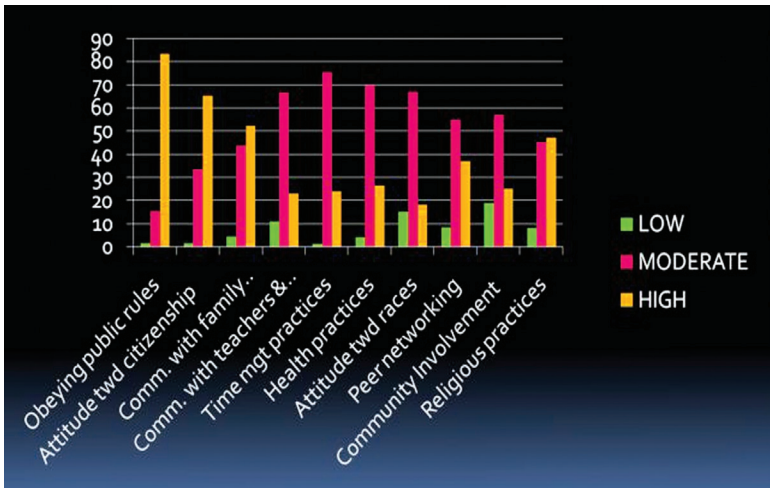


Figure 1 Social bonding practices

DEVELOPING THE YOUNG PEOPLE

An important aspect of the change agent role is the ability to tap the potential of individuals within the organization. It is important that youth workers use youth work techniques and approaches to learn ways to initiate or facilitate positive changes among and within young people and youth organizations, and to ensure that these activities affect real and positive changes in their lives (Krueger, 2005).

The prevailing situation among young people today can be distressing and disappointing to many people, but this can also be viewed as a challenge. Central to youth problems, according to Ginwright and Cammarota (2002), are structural issues which have economic roots such as in policies and programs that create a divide in the areas of gender relations, urban-rural development, and rich-poor classes. The World Youth 2003 Report (Economic and Social Council, United Nations, 2003) noted that illiteracy continues to

be a problem. Unemployment of more than 15 percent has been recorded in 50 countries. About 238 million youth live in poverty. Health issues, drug abuse and juvenile delinquency are on the rise. Numerous youth development programs have been geared toward improving the well-being of young people, however, participation remains piecemeal and ad hoc in nature, and they are insufficiently integrated into the many areas of young people's lives.

There are several ways in which the term 'youth development' has been used: as a process, as a goal, as a framework and as an approach. However, the most widely used definition is where it is viewed as a process which prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a purposive and coordinated series of activities and learning experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, spiritually, physically, and cognitively competent (Roth and Brook-Gunn, 2003). Positive youth development focuses on building assets or competencies necessary for positive youth outcomes.

Youth development has been approached by using several models:

- The positive youth development assets approach as developed by Benson, Leferts, Scales and Blyth (1998) seems comprehensive since it is built around developmental assets. These assets focus on the relationships, social environment, patterns of interaction and norms which are central to promoting youth development. Developmental assets of youth are crucial for promoting healthy youth development and well-being and are responsible for enhancing and promoting outcomes that are indicative of competence.
- Another model of a positive developmental approach (Lerner, Fisher, and Weinberg 2000) categorized desired outcomes of youth into: competence in academic, social and vocational

areas; connection to community, family, and peers; commitment to positive values, integrity and morals; and caring and compassion.

- The community approach as advocated by Huges and Curnan (2000) adds the element of engaging young people as contributors to and active partners in the community.

The youth development approach is a way of working with young people. This approach calls for providing young people with the developmental experiences shown to promote leadership. Ideally, young people receive support from their peers, families, caring adults, schools and community institutions, thereby increasing the likelihood of positive youth development and improved life outcomes. For young people growing up in low income or marginalized communities, the challenges are often provoked by a number of factors: a lack of economic opportunities, family instability, inadequate schools, and prevalence of drugs, violence, social isolation and racism.

A growing body of research on adolescent development recognizes that the environment itself must provide young people with basic supports such as safe places to gather, good relationships with peers and adults, the opportunity to learn and practice the skills needed in different roles and constructive activities for leisure activities.

Young people must be seen as competent to be a part of the solution, not just as part of the problem. A sense of connectedness, through involvement with the family, peers, teachers and the rest of the community members has an influence on protecting young people from at-risk behavior. There are good reasons for getting young people to participate in decision making within organizations and community development processes. For the young people, their participation in the community will help in:

- Promoting resiliency
- Reducing risk
- Promoting commitment
- Developing meaningful relationships and boosting their self-esteem

The transition process from youth to adulthood is about preparing for and moving from school to workplace and community life. This rite of passage is important for every young person. When young people leave the school system, they frequently find that there is no harmonized adult system of support services to help them find work, a place to live, and recreational and leisure activities. Many young adults have difficulty getting jobs because they have no experience and the necessary skills to find employment. Since the community does not do much to help them, they end up with very little involvement in their communities (Brain, 1997). This is where volunteerism can play a role for young people by helping them develop useful skills for the adult world. Volunteer organizations or individuals can play the roles as mentors to support young people by teaching them about the life skills necessary for jobs and survival.

YOUTH AS PARTNERS IN DEVELOPMENT

Research has shown that people of all ages are more likely to make a commitment to a program when they have been involved from the outset in the program's design and implementation (Hohenemser & Marshall, 2002). Engaging young people in development activities will enable us to view youth not as a problematic group of people, but as assets. These young, active and talented citizens should be seen as leaders, innovators, planners, as well as resources in community development. Research and experience have proven

that young people can be involved as partners in development at all levels of decision-making and problem solving in organizations and community programs (Turiman, 2007). Thus, opportunities must be given to the young people to make meaningful decisions to build stronger communities and to protect themselves against risk (Turiman, 2007; Gurstein et al., 2003). As partners in nation building, young people can and must play their respective roles in leading the nation for all humanity.

Another important aspect of the youth development process is the development of young volunteer leaders, which is critical in ensuring the sustainability of youth organizations (Azimi et al., 2002). The success of the organizations depends on the leadership and the roles played by the youth volunteer leaders. Volunteer leaders and their leadership roles are critical factors in ensuring the success and sustainability of their organizations. This is further supported by Kolb (1996) who indicated that the leader's role is the most critical factor in ensuring sustainability of the organization. This developmental process of a young person starts with a focus on the individual, evolving to and influencing group formation, consolidation and growth, and culminating in the group effecting change for itself (Bamber & Murphy, 1999).

Young people are the volunteer leaders of today and tomorrow. They have to actively play their leadership roles and assume leadership responsibilities. Their contributions will have serious implications on the development of society and the nation. According to Azimi et al. (2002), youth volunteer leaders are partners in development, especially in the development of human resources. Youth volunteer leaders' roles in motivating and inspiring their members will promote understanding and cooperation among members towards the sustainability of youth organizations. Young volunteer leaders will behave in a socially constructive

manner, and will be responsible for and capable of making a significant contribution to society if they are given the proper social environment. In other words, when they are helped to make such a contribution, they will have the power to make significant decisions with social consequences (Bamber & Murphy, 1999). Thus, young volunteer leaders need to be given opportunities to fulfill their potential and create positive change in their lives and in the lives of others.

Youth volunteer leaders are at their best when they are able to challenge the process and inspire a shared vision (Kouzes and Posner, 1995). They share certain commonalities and similarities (Taylor, et al., 1995; vanLinden & Fertman, 1998) such as:

- the need for a time of self-discovery and self-definition
- the way they learn and develop leadership skills gradually
- their own unpredictability, and
- the need for a time of exploration

Youth volunteer leaders as change agents can help in initiating, facilitating or accelerating social, cultural or behavioral change. They are capable of understanding different people's perspectives on different issues. They need to constantly adapt themselves to new practices and be motivated to find better ways to do things. Thus, a thorough knowledge of youth development is an important precursor to the development of youth volunteerism.

VOLUNTEERISM AS A CORE COMPONENT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Volunteerism is a powerful force for social change to improve the quality of life in many countries through collaborative efforts with community partners. It is a powerful force for social change within communities. It is also an integral part of society because of the

significant allocation of human resources towards development. Through volunteerism, new ideas and creativity are instilled within society.

Youth development work will usually require its practitioners to practice volunteerism. In one study, Turiman et al. (2008) identified two aspects crucial to the success of volunteerism, that is, altruism and willingness to sacrifice where the overall mean scores for altruism and sacrifice were 4.13, and 3.92 (out of a 5-point scale) respectively. In general, the study revealed that youth workers had positive perceptions towards volunteerism: expecting nothing in return for helping someone; caring for the welfare of youths; willing to work overtime without any expectation of rewards; and willing to take on a job even if it pays less than the work required. The study also revealed that youth workers were willing to put other people's needs before their own but not to the extent of making sacrifices for others.

Volunteerism is one of the most basic values where people help other people and, in the process, help themselves. Volunteering is not just what one can do for other people, it is also what one can do for him or herself (Wong, 2004). Volunteering, according to Knauft (1992), is a value system that places emphasis on the need to help others, compassion toward people in need and a desire to do something for a cause that is important. It is the individual's desire to be selfless; to be charitable with one's time, knowledge and energy and to put these resources to use regardless of whether one is rewarded financially. The feeling that one gets from making someone else's life better is amazingly rewarding.

Volunteering is done out of one's own free will. The purpose of volunteerism is to strengthen participation and community empowerment but not at the expense of others' self-determination (Fletcher, 2003). The benefits of volunteerism are numerous: self

satisfaction; altruism; potential learning or acquisition of new skills; specific benefits for the receivers of volunteer efforts; relaxation; socialization; status or reward; career opportunities; and community improvement (Fischer & Schaffer, 1993). To highlight this point, in 2006, 118 vibrant and dynamic young people from Asia, Africa and Europe took part in the Asian Youth Forum held in Batam, Indonesia. These young people with all their new ideas, participated in lively discussions over several days, culminating in the Batam Declaration. The group undeniably served as catalysts to make the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into a reality. They have since been charged with the responsibility of putting pressure on stakeholders to increase the possibility of achieving the set targets as stated in the MDGs. This proves that young people, when guided, are able to help in achieving the MDGs covering poverty, hunger, education, health, the environment and women's rights. They can do more to integrate the goals into their policies, plans and budgets and translate them into services and benefits for the poor, especially the youth, who are meant to replicate the same initiative and determination to achieve the MDGs.

These young people believed that there is a need for more transparency and accountability so that people can determine whether or not their governments are taking the right steps to move forward. Equipped with visionary leadership, these young people can act as the catalysts for molding a better future. As young leaders, they have the potential to identify, promote and reinforce their roles as role models of basic core values that will facilitate the process to MDG achievement. Through these kinds of activities, young leaders from both rich and poor countries will be able to appreciate and learn from each other by being involved in policy development and decision making with regard to young people.

There is no doubt that given proper guidance, youth will be a priceless treasure to the nation. Turiman (2009) has indicated that university students have the inclination to be involved in volunteer work. According to his study, students are interested and willing to contribute and involve themselves in the following voluntary activities: 42% in community services; 33% in academic development; 9% in spiritual and psychological development; 6% in fund-raising activities; 5% in health related issues; 3% in recycling activities and 2% in just being involved (Figure 2).

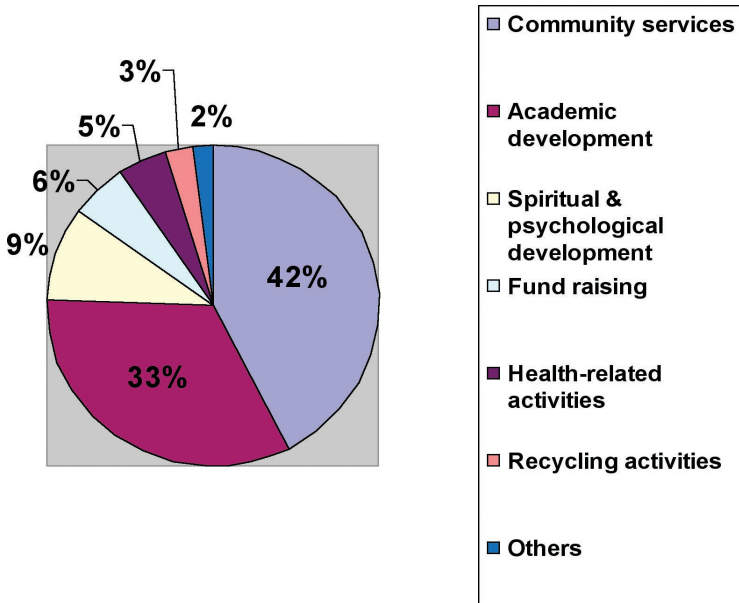


Figure 2 Types of student volunteer activities

UNDERSTANDING YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

Developmentally, youth is that time of life where individuals become adults. They begin to think like adults, socialize like adults and in many ways are adults. Youth in general represent a unique sector of the population. By and large, they are more idealistic, willing to give selfless service, sensitive to the needs of society, and open to new ideas and impulses than their elders. On the other hand, they are fragile, easily influenced by their surroundings, prone to fulfill their desires spontaneously, and can often be rebellious. In short, they are caught between two tendencies (Azimi, 2005). This desire to experience the world first-hand, idealism and often fearless energy that they possess make them perfect candidates for volunteerism. This is perhaps why most of the great (and not so great) socio-political movements in history have been spearheaded and driven by young people.

There are a number of contributing factors in youth volunteerism. Sundeen and Raskoff (1995) found that youth who had strong affiliation with the value of charity were more likely to volunteer than youth valuing monetary gain. The Wirthlin Group found that youth believe that people should be involved in community volunteering, and agreed that the community would be a better place to live in if young people spent some time volunteering. The Wirthlin Group also believed that encouragement from school, parents, teachers and other adults is important in getting youth involved in volunteer activities. Most youth volunteered because it made them feel good and they wanted to give back to the community (Parker & Franco, 1999).

Flanagan et al. (1998) concluded that volunteerism can link young people to other citizens and can help these youth understand the principles of citizenship and civic engagement that make their society work, and gives them a sense of belonging to the greater

community or society. Family orientation to volunteerism and public service thus helps young people to internalize these principles and values.

Encouragement and modeling by adults is a key theme determining whether or not young people volunteer. Research has shown that when adults make a conscious effort to partner with young people in volunteer work, youth are more engaged and more likely to stay engaged in the process. Youth-adult partnership is one of the strategies for building youth-adult relationships to strengthen community development initiatives (Jones & Perkins, 2005).

Research has shown that when young people value volunteerism they are more likely to volunteer. The challenge is on how to instill the value of volunteerism in young people at an early age. Our young people are challenged by an increasingly materialistic world that puts less emphasis on the values of charity and selfless giving. Youth should not only be perceived as a phase that one must pass through from childhood to adulthood. Young people are persons with specific qualities, who have a participatory and responsible role to play, tasks to perform, and skills to develop at their particular stage of life (Azimi, 2005). When young people are exposed and/or engaged in volunteerism, they are more likely to continue to participate throughout their lives. Young people need to be involved, engaged and participate in volunteer activities, but adults also need to guide them, set examples for them and participate with them.

Young people often do not feel they are full members of their community. At the same time, they want to be prime enablers (Azimi, 2005) for change in their lives, their families, and their communities. To create synergy, youth and adults should work together to create the necessary conditions for the successful development of themselves and their peers, families and communities. In other words, youth must contribute to their communities and the communities must in

return support the youth. At this juncture, it is important to stress that the integration of family, school, and community is critical for youth development through meaningful communication and interconnectedness between the various parties.

YOUTH VOLUNTEERISM AS A VEHICLE FOR NATION BUILDING

Volunteerism appears to have many beneficial effects on the volunteer as well. For youth, volunteering brings a new sense of confidence, self-gratification and a positive way to interact with others. It also enables young people to develop new lines of communication, career building and social skills that will be useful for their future. Young, self-motivated volunteers are often those that eventually end up in top positions in organizations and businesses down the road.

Apart from the personal benefits of youth volunteering, however, young peoples' dedication and commitment to volunteerism is also very much needed. Young people are closest to their own problems. Therefore, they should be targeted and recruited as change agents. Youth and adults can learn skills from each other through positive experiences (Jones, 2006). However, major barriers toward community engagement are negative perceptions of adults toward young people (Jones, 2006) and their reluctance to share power (Camino, 2000).

Youth-adult partnerships can facilitate these important learning experiences. Young people can play a critical role as the bridge between current development efforts and the continuity toward future development. Adults need to make every effort to engage them, and their ideas will help them prepare to become future national leaders. Such mentoring and care will facilitate learning, participation, patriotism and solidarity. Through these efforts,

young people will feel valued and will more likely have a sense of belonging and attachment to the nation. When young people feel that they are indispensable in their communities and societies, they will have greater attachment and concern for the nation's future.

Volunteerism provides opportunities for the following:

Developing meaningful adult-youth relationships where both engage in sacrifice for the betterment of the larger community.

Providing young people and adults the opportunity to work as partners in making use of and learning from one another's unique strengths and abilities to build solidarity and patriotism.

Providing a vehicle for a smooth succession plan in the ongoing process of national development and preparing young people for current and future leadership roles.

There is, therefore, much to be gained from volunteerism that is conducted with the active participation of young people and adults working together. It is a big challenge to create a culture of generosity and unselfishness among young people. Teaching altruism and developing the culture of generosity have to begin from early childhood. Young people have to be taught to always share generously without hesitation.

Creating an environment of volunteerism is no simple task. Young people need to be encouraged to participate in discussions, and to make decisions and choices within the community. Young people need to be involved to realize the shared goals of generosity. Developing responsible, independent and self-disciplined young volunteers is indeed a big challenge. It is important to understand the need of young people to experience power or control over their own lives; the need to build inner discipline (Montessori, 1967); the need to treat young people with respect so that their voices are heard (Korczak, 1967); and the need to involve young people in solving problems (Dewey, 1929).

EXPANDING THE FRONTIERS OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The following are some practical suggestions to expand the frontiers of youth development through volunteerism (Figure 3). These include: altruistic self family volunteering; peer volunteering; volunteering in institutions of learning; community volunteering; workplace volunteering; and retiree volunteering.

- Altruistic self. One of the key elements in volunteerism is altruism (putting others as more important than oneself). Without this element any voluntary activity will not be fully successful.
- Family volunteering. Volunteering as a family is an excellent way to spend quality time together. It can start with a little project such as helping an elderly person in the neighborhood. A lot of voluntary efforts of this type can be carried out in the community and help in developing the character of young people.
- Peer volunteering. Volunteering among peers can be a highly effective approach due to the fact that the activities chosen are suited to their own needs; that is, those that they enjoy which at the same time will contribute meaningfully and significantly to the society.
- Volunteering in institutions of learning (schools/colleges/universities). This approach of volunteerism will enable students/teachers/parents to share ongoing learning experiences called service-learning, that will unite youth and community resources.
- Community volunteering. Another asset is a strong sense of community. Volunteering within the community will contribute

in many ways to the quality of life of the young people and the rest of the community.

- Workplace volunteering. Volunteering in the workplace will help to strengthen work teams and build especially the young employees' skills that will contribute to professional development and achievement of organizational goals. There is a need to balance the goals of the organization, the passions of young employee volunteers and the needs of the community.
- Retiree volunteering. This is another asset that needs to be tapped because many older workers look forward to retirement and see it as an opportunity to engage in productive activities through volunteerism involving young people.

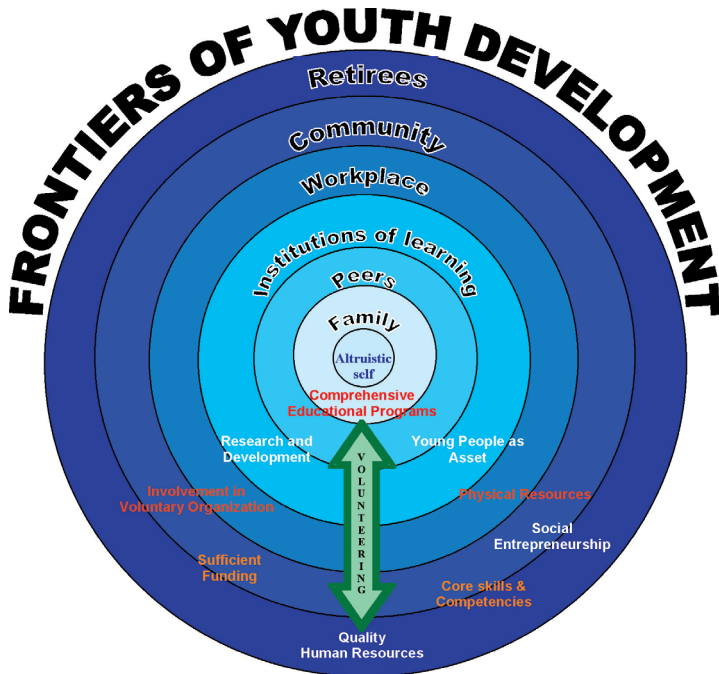


Figure 3 Expanding the frontiers of Youth Development

The voluntary sector is not driven by monetary gains. The goals are toward bettering a situation, group or a cause. To shape the future of volunteer work, we have to take a look back. We have to continue learning a great deal about what it takes to advance the theory and practice of youth volunteerism, unleash new resources for the common good, and help young people to help themselves. The following are some of the initiatives that can be considered to further develop volunteerism towards youth development:

- Develop young people as assets to themselves, their communities and society at the local, national or international levels;

- Develop more comprehensive educational programs that will respond to the wide range of youth needs;
- Provide resources to strengthen volunteerism within the community;
- Improve practice in the volunteer sector through research and development activities;
- Involve youth in voluntary programs/activities;
- Provide sufficient funding to build the voluntary sector's infrastructure and to implement youth development programs;
- Promote the concept of social entrepreneurship among youth;
- Equip young people with the core skills and competencies that will prepare them to be community leaders; and
- Uphold the quality of human resources involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring of youth development programs.

CONCLUSION

Volunteers of all ages have served the needs of the community, state, country, and world. Volunteerism has become an indispensable resource that has made a difference in the public, private and professional sectors. Reclaiming young people to volunteerism requires us to be courageous and willing to struggle to make sure that generosity is made available for all young people.

We need to embrace new perspectives and new ways of working with our youth. Despite the challenges, the future outlook is bright and there is no reason to believe that the spirit of volunteerism will ever be suppressed. The volunteerism spirit needs to be continuously inspired through development programs that will increase attention

to and participation in humanitarian efforts. The integration of community involvement and service learning into the curriculum will promote the value of volunteerism as a preparation for lifetime commitment.

*“Those who spend their wealth (in Allah’s cause)
by night and day, in secret and in public, they shall
have their reward with their Lord.
On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve”*

Surah Al-Baqarah - 274

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BIOGRAPHY

rofessor **Dr. Turiman Suandi** was born in Klang, Selangor in 1955. He completed high school at the Royal Military College, Sungai Besi in 1973 and obtained his Diploma in Animal Health and Production from UPM in 1978. Subsequently, he graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Florida, Gainesville in 1980; and Master's and Doctoral degrees from the Ohio State University, Columbus in 1980 and 1991 respectively.

Dr. Turiman has been with UPM as a lecturer, since 1982. He was appointed to the post of Associate Professor in 1997 and Professor in 2003. His contributions in teaching, research and services have focused on youth development and volunteerism. He served as the Deputy Dean at the Faculty of Educational Studies from 1999 to 2007. Since June 2007, he has been the Deputy Dean at the School of Graduate Studies.

Dr. Turiman has been involved in research, consultancy work and in advisory and community services both nationally and internationally. His areas of specialization include extension education, human resource development, youth development and volunteerism. He is actively involved in Parent Teacher Associations and is currently an Honorary Fellow at the Selangor Youth Council as well as a resource person at the Selangor Youth Consultative Council.

Dr. Turiman has dedicated himself to the area of youth development and volunteerism for more than 27 years. His significant and scholarly contributions and involvement in building the capacity of people in the community, especially the younger generation are highly acknowledged nationally and internationally especially in ASEAN and Commonwealth. He was awarded with the Pingat Jasa Kebaktian (PJK) in 2000, and Johan Setia Mahkota (JSM) in 2008.

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Dr. Turiman is married to Hajah Laili Jupri and they are blessed with six children (Syazwani, Syamimi, Syahirah, Muhammad Syazwan, Muhammad Syahir and Muhammad Syakir).

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Last but not least, I would like to express my love and thanks to my wife and children for their continuous understanding and support.

LIST OF INAUGURAL LECTURES

1. Prof. Dr. Sulaiman M. Yassin
The Challenge to Communication Research in Extension
22 July 1989
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Indigenous Materials and Technology for Low Cost Housing
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Plant Parasitic Nematodes, Lesser Known Pests of Agricultural Crops
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Marketing Management: Prospects and Challenges for Agriculture
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The Changing Demand for Livestock Products
20 April 1994
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Plant Taxonomy, Biodiversity and Conservation
11 May 1994
9. Prof. Ir. Dr. Mohd. Zohadie Bardaie
Engineering Technological Developments Propelling Agriculture into the 21st Century
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Rock, Mineral and Soil
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Sejarah Keagungan Bahasa Melayu
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Chromosome Distribution and Production Performance of Water Buffaloes
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Microbial Fermentation and Utilization of Agricultural Bioresources and Wastes in Malaysia
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Soil Physics: From Glass Beads to Precision Agriculture
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