

# **Alliances for Youth: What Works in CSR Partnerships**

By Mark Nieker, Christy Macy, and Sheila Kinkade  
Foreword by Steven A. Rochlin



**International  
Youth Foundation®**

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# Foreword

By **Steven A. Rochlin**

**T**he future, some have suggested, will belong to partnerships. Vital issues that determine the health and welfare of individuals, communities, and whole societies have grown so multifaceted they have outstripped the ability of any one institution to solve problems and manage what seem like infinite complexities.

Take the issues surrounding youth. As the number of young people across the globe swell to over a billion in the next decade, who will be responsible for ensuring that they are prepared to compete in a global economy? Who will be accountable for ensuring that they are safe, secure, and well nourished? Who will take interest in ensuring that they possess all the resources and opportunities society can provide to live healthy, productive, and happy lives which exemplify good citizenship? And who will bear the costs if we fall short of these aspirations?

No longer can citizens look solely to government to answer these questions. Over the last several decades, governments around the world have been retrenching in their commitment and ability to manage such issues. As this has happened, NGOs and multi-lateral institutions have grown in prominence and worked to take up the slack. In this mix, attention has turned to the role of corporations. As the major source of wealth creation and jobs in the world, the private sector has demonstrated unparalleled capabilities in mobilizing, utilizing, and employing resources to create solutions for some of the world's greatest problems. Many take for granted the private sector's role in producing goods and services that address fundamental needs—from energy, transportation, and health, to information communications, and even entertainment.

At the same time, more and more concerned individuals question the choices made by representatives of the private sector. The aggregated decisions of individual corporations have in certain situations exacerbated problems of human rights, environmental sustainability, and community development.

Partnerships among corporations, government agencies, and nonprofits hold the promise to tackle these concerns. If encouraged to work together toward a common goal, the combined strength and resources of these great institutions hold vast potential. The diversity inherent in what are known as “cross-sector” partnerships is the source of kinetic energy that catalyzes innovative thinking. The complementarity of strengths of corporate, nonprofit, and government agencies creates opportunities to build solutions that are delivered rapidly, brought to scale,

and targeted to the right audiences. The mix of values the sectors uphold can build understanding that ensures that the weakest are protected and the voiceless are heard. And the process of healthy negotiation can ensure that everyone's interests are met without compromise.

Partnerships represent a grand vision. It is no surprise that over the last 10 years or so, numerous institutions have begun to call for cross-sector partnerships. As a result, great experimentation has taken place around issues including biodiversity, workplace conditions, youth, education, HIV/AIDS, global security, healthcare, the arts, safety, water, and dozens more.

These efforts have sparked the imagination. Numerous experiences speak to the potential of cross-sector partnership. Yet, today partnerships remain more rhetoric than reality. While attention is high, there exist relatively few examples that meet the standard of leading practice.

As more well-meaning leaders point to the solution of partnerships, it's vital to identify critical success factors. Otherwise, partnerships will turn into a panacea. To start, it is essential to define what makes a partnership.

Partnerships are not transactions between companies, nonprofits, and government. For example, partnerships are *not* about:

- writing a check
- a fee-for-service relationship (i.e., where the nonprofit becomes a vendor for the company)
- the establishment of joint marketing and promotional opportunities

Partnerships *are*:

- Initiatives in which participants define shared goals and objectives to solve a defined problem that requires each to contribute labor and resources

Partners in true cross-sector partnerships share mutual expectations of one another. They often form an explicit agreement that can be written as a contract. Successful partnerships typically produce deliverables that benefit all partners, as well as individuals and communities.

In addition, successful partnerships typically are planned to last over the long term. Based on the issue partners are trying to address, a short term relationship often will not lead to any real progress.

The seven case studies published here in *Alliances for Youth: What Works in CSR Partnerships* provide practical guidance on how to create effective cross-sector partnerships. To add some context, The Center for Corporate Citizenship at Boston College, in its 20 years of research, training, and collaboration with major global corporations, has learned some key lessons about building and sustaining high impact partnerships. Among them:

## 1. Know thyself—motives matter

Motives and expectations shape partnerships. From the view of corporate partners, altruistic motives to “do the right thing” often close off creativity and innovation. The phenomenon is sometimes characterized as the business leaving its corporate hat back at home. Instead of applying the experience, talent, and expertise used in the workplace, business partners will simply cheerlead and write checks.

At the other extreme, businesses that enter partnerships too focused on generating high rates of financial return can create instabilities in the partnership, distorting or undermining its goals to create social returns on investment.

*“Numerous experiences speak to the potential of cross-sector partnership. Yet, today partnerships remain more rhetoric than reality. While attention is high, there exist relatively few that meet the standard of leading practice.”*



*“Companies can play a critical role in helping to build the capacity of partners. But, it’s not all one way. Nonprofit partners can build important operational capacity for companies as well.”*

Where the nonprofit or government agency is concerned, motives to use partnerships as a vehicle for stable funding may also close off creativity. This motive focuses on securing funding, and leads to business as usual.

And a nonprofit’s strong sense of mission, while helpful to its organizational success, may at times translate into a desire to advocate an ideological point. This can engender rigid attitudes about corporate partners that make it difficult to form productive working relationships.

Organizations seeking to form successful partnerships should take the time to be clear about their motives first with themselves, and then with one another. This kind of transparency allows each partner to enter the relationship with eyes open, and to choose whether supporting a partner’s desired outcomes will be worthwhile or not.

## 2. Do the due diligence

Each partner should imagine that they are forming a joint venture that would require approval from their board of directors. (In certain cases, this may be so). Taking this perspective would naturally require managers to conduct extensive due diligence on their prospective partners. During this process managers should inquire:

What attributes does a good partner need to have? Does the potential partner possess them?

What productive “surprises” does a potential partner possess to drive, stretch, and promote innovation? For example, one partner may have access to intellectual property that could be repurposed to help create high impact solutions.

What are your own strengths and weaknesses? What does the potential partner bring that complements you?

## 3. The vision thing

Successful partnerships do more than focus on the technical details of joint project management. To inspire managers who come from sometimes radically different organizational cultures and possess highly divergent backgrounds to work well together requires clear vision. What is the state or conditions that the partnership will help create? How will the partnership help to get there?

Note that the suggestion here is to focus in on the partnership’s vision, not necessarily its goals. Why is this so?

Partnerships often work like entrepreneurial ventures. Very broad goals shape entrepreneurial ventures. As these ventures move forward, it is useful to ensure flexibility and adaptivity. Specific goals, objectives, and targets can narrow options. The vision is enough to drive action while giving partnership managers the permission to change and adapt to unanticipated circumstances.

## 4. Invest in social capital

Normal ventures require financial capital, physical assets, intellectual property, and human capital. Partnerships need these too. But they need additional investment—in social capital. Partnerships involving the best of ideas and organizations can fail catastrophically if the people involved lack trust in one another.

Building relationships takes time, but in the adage of modern management—sometimes it is best to go slow first, in order to go fast later.

## 5. Build organizational capacity

Often, companies find an imbalance in a nonprofit’s project management skills and other elements of organizational competency. Companies can play a critical role in helping to build that capacity.

But, it’s not all one way. Nonprofit partners can build important operational capacity for companies as well. For example, companies may lack capabilities to build relationships with local communities. Companies may lack systems to access and mine crucial information about local markets. And companies have very little experience in forming social or environmental solutions that follow the processes of good public policy. Nonprofit partners have much to teach companies.

## 6. Make the partnership a priority

Make the partnership a priority activity for your organization. This means each partner should:

- Commit management attention
- Communicate, communicate, communicate
- Revisit and assess how well systems are functioning
- Be flexible and adapt to circumstances

## Conclusion

These are just some of the lessons about “what works” in partnerships. The cases described in this publication represent true partnerships. *Alliances for Youth: What Works in CSR Partnerships* takes us inside these collaborations to understand their history, purpose, tactics, successes, and at times frustrations. Taken together, they serve as an essential guide to learning what to do to ensure partnerships are successful. The lessons are also more than a little inspirational. They show that partnerships, energized to move beyond rhetoric, can indeed deliver on collective aspirations to provide youth around the world, in a variety of circumstances, with opportunities to live healthy and productive lives.

*Steven A. Rochlin is the Director of Research & Policy Development at the Center for Corporate Citizenship at Boston College.*

*“The diversity inherent in what are known as ‘cross-sector’ partnerships is the source of kinetic energy that catalyzes innovative thinking.”*

# Introduction

**By Mark Nieker**

Steve Rochlin suggests in his Foreword that we have entered a period in which the private sector will be increasingly called upon to help solve social problems. This being so, we are fortunate to have the individuals whose voices are collected in this volume to help lead the way. Together, these corporate and non-profit leaders are establishing a new model of collaboration between the private and nonprofit sectors—one that takes the best strategies, resources, and expertise from each of these worlds and brings them together in youth-focused initiatives designed to reach young people at key moments in their lives.

As you read the perspectives presented here, you notice first that they share an absolute commitment to improve the conditions for young people in their local communities. Aside from this commitment, however, each effort is remarkably different. Unilever's *uniquely ME!* initiative, for example, provides a potent example of how a global company has succeeded in integrating its social responsibility within its brand vision. Initially, it seems to bear little resemblance to IBM's Reinventing Education program, an equally innovative initiative that serves young people by providing students and their teachers with new, scalable technology solutions to increase communication and access to academic information.

Taken together, though, these conversations illustrate that the process by which each of these successful programs was developed, introduced, and maintained by each of the parties has been remarkably similar. In every case, a program that now stands as a model public-private partnership began with a simple organizational commitment. Often, this commitment preceded a detailed understanding of how it might be realized. Instead, partners assembled and began to develop a shared vision for how an initial promise to improve young people's lives and prospects would be put into practice. From there, the hard work of creating a successful, scalable, program—the steps that began with establishing specific, concrete ambitions; that extended to implementing those objectives; and that culminated in the accurate and thoughtful measuring of results—then proceeded.

As someone who does just this type of work, I can attest that this process isn't always easy. Nor, regrettably, are there enough public models that document the best way such relationships are forged and maintained. In this way, Steve Rochlin's suggestions—know and understand your motivations for partnership, conduct extensive due diligence, share the vision, invest in social capital, build organizational capacity, and make the partnership a priority—are a welcome set of markers for those of us setting out together to improve conditions for young people around the world. The discussion becomes richer with the personal conversations and the organizational examples collected in this edition. The innovative, best-case examples collected here provide further guidance. Each alliance has resulted in an ongoing, dynamic partnership between participating organizations. Each has also developed programs that continue to make a real difference in young people's lives.

The seven programs profiled in *Alliances for Youth: What Works in CSR Partnerships* established the specific goals, management objectives, and challenges that

together have resulted in some of the best development programs currently in place for today's young people. As you'll discover, these programs embody the International Youth Foundation's own positive approach to youth development—that the best way to ensure that young people develop the skills, values, and attitudes they need is to create opportunities in which they themselves are able to extend their own energies, experiences, and abilities.

Together, these profiles capture the many ways in which corporations and NGOs can come together to create such opportunities. Timberland's partnership with City Year, the *uniquely ME!* program introduced by Unilever and the Girls Scouts of the USA, the Club Tech initiative that resulted from a partnership between Microsoft and the Boys and Girls Club of America, and the Intel Computer Clubhouse program developed by Intel and the Museum of Science, Boston each deliberately extended the reach and the impact of already successful initiatives.

In contrast, the Make a Connection initiative managed by Nokia and IYF, the GE Foundation Life Skills for Employability program, and IBM's Reinventing Education program have each successfully established innovative programs that seek to identify and address local needs. Each case study offers insights into the challenges of creating such programs and suggests the lessons learned as a result.

One recurring theme seems particularly instructive: Though participants necessarily begin with common ambitions for the efforts which brought them together, time and again they acknowledge in these pages the necessity of remaining open to improving their ongoing approach to achieving these goals. In each instance, partners began with a shared vision and with the deliberate realization that getting to this goal was going to take a group effort. As their effort matured, each success brought with it new, often unexpected challenges. In some instances, for example, these challenges were prompted by the need to take specific successful program elements to scale; in other cases, they occurred as program partners began to consider the best way to measure, track, and maintain program impact. Not surprisingly, few partnerships were entirely able to steer clear of the natural tensions that arise in any partnership between a donor and a partner NGO in relation to "final" decision making.

Sheila Kinkade, Christy Macy, and I have been particularly fortunate to have shared the responsibility for developing the profiles in this publication. We chose a particular style: presenting the authentic voices—in conversation—of the people charged with conceiving ideas, managing relationships, leveraging opportunities, and creating effective programs. It's useful to be reminded in such a direct and personal way that such important work can be accomplished between the corporate world and the nonprofit sector. It has been equally inspiring to meet the people and learn from the organizations who together are positively improving the lives of young people worldwide.

We are grateful to those who took the time to share their reflections and ideas with us, and to Nokia, who generously supported the writing and publication of this book.

*Mark Nieker is the President of the Pearson Foundation.*

*"As someone who does this type of work, I can attest that this process isn't always easy."*





*"We don't make these sorts of investments because we think it will affect sales, per se. We do it because it's who we are as a company."*

— Pat Kirby, Service Manager,  
Social Enterprise Department, Timberland



## Timberland & City Year

### **Promoting an Ethic of Service**

One of the most oft-cited examples of Timberland's corporate philosophy of "Doing Well and Doing Good" is the service benefit offered to every employee—forty hours of paid time each spends volunteering in their community every year. The "Path of Service" program, as it is known, is only one facet of Timberland's extensive commitment to promoting a service ethic among its employees and the community at large.

That commitment can be traced back to 1988, when Timberland first entered into a relationship with City Year, a nonprofit start-up in Boston. Launched by Alan Khazei and Michael Brown, two Harvard Law School graduates, City Year was conceived as a national service program through which 17- to 24-year-olds would pledge to serve a range of community, school, and civic organizations. Not only would communities benefit, but also the young volunteers themselves through developing leadership skills and a sense of civic responsibility.

In marshalling the initial resources they needed, City Year's founders approached Timberland for an in-kind donation of boots for its corps members. Then COO Jeffrey Swartz, grandson of the company's founder, Nathan Swartz, liked the idea and granted the request. Soon afterward, Swartz accepted the invitation of City Year's founders to share with him their vision. Swartz, who became CEO of the company in 1998, was deeply moved by what he heard. Therein began an 18-year relationship built on trust and strongly shared values.

Over time, Timberland steadily increased its commitment. In 1992, the company pledged US\$1 million to the nonprofit that included support to cover the cost of all uniforms for City Year volunteers over the next three years.

One of the most pivotal milestones in the relationship was when Swartz agreed to serve as Chairman of City Year's National Board of Directors, a position he held from 1994 to 2003. In this capacity, Swartz played a key role in helping City Year plan its growth and expansion, while offering a corporate perspective on overall management. Recalls Alan Khazei, "Prior to Jeff's assuming the position of board chair, we did not have an annual operating plan. We didn't have quarterly goals... We didn't have a strong sense of management. We were very much an entrepreneurial start up."<sup>1</sup>

All that changed over time, with Timberland lending its support in myriad ways. The company hired City Year graduates to help manage its Path of Service program, loaned its own marketing experts to help with brand-building, and contracted City Year staff to organize service events. City Year even benefited from developing new corporate relationships through its association with Timberland and introductions made by the company to other corporate leaders.

For its part, Timberland credits City Year with helping the company fully integrate service into its corporate philosophy and structure. From City Year staff, Timberland employees learned how to plan, manage, and implement successful service events. City Year trainers likewise ran workshops at Timberland in the areas of team building and diversity training. Through its close association with City Year, Timberland has also reinforced its brand as a company that creates both commercial and social value. Its corporate culture is one in which commerce and justice, in the words of Jeff Swartz, are "inextricably linked."

<sup>1</sup> From Austin, James; Herman, Leonard B; and Quinn, James W. *Timberland: Commerce and Justice*, Harvard Business School, July 2, 2004.



*The Timberland/City Year alliance offers a long-term perspective of how a corporate/nonprofit relationship grew, deepened, and extended its benefits over time. To elaborate on the partnership, we spoke to Pat Kirby, Service Manager within the Social Enterprise Department at Timberland, and Nathan Pelsma, Manager of Corporate Partnerships at City Year.*

## Starting Out

### How did the partnership come about?

**Pat Kirby:** At the time in 1988 when City Year was founded they were launching a summer program in Boston. They were looking for work boots to carry out physical service so they targeted Timberland. Jeff Swartz got the letter and ended up sending 50 pairs of boots. Alan Khazei, City Year's Founder, personally visited Jeff a short time later. Jeff greeted him, expecting a personal thank you for sending City Year the boots. Instead, Alan said to him, "You think your job is to make products and my job is to save the world. If you spend some time with me and with us, I can show you how our efforts can become one." It was a challenge Jeff accepted.

This led to Timberland's first service project with City Year in New Hampshire. The project was at a youth home called Odyssey House. Jeff talked to a young boy there. The boy asked Jeff what he did. He said, "I manage a company." The boy said, "I work at trying to get well."

That moment and the event spoke to Jeff's strong sense of values. It's something that Timberland has always had. Timberland is full of good people who work hard and are more than employees sitting in cubicles. They're members of communities. Jeff recognized that just because you're working in the private sector, there's no reason you shouldn't also be able to contribute to your community, so why not invest in where you work and in the people who buy your products?

Jeff talks about our core themes of "Boot, Brand, and Belief" as a way to describe the evolution of our company and what Timberland represents to its many different audiences. Jeff's grandfather created the first waterproof boot—a symbol of quality, value, performance, and durability—attributes which continue to be the basis for every product we make today. Jeff's father then built the brand, developing a name and an identity for the company that is as meaningful as its products. What Jeff brought was the infusion of "belief" as critical to who we are as a brand. When I think about getting people actively involved in the community, it's how we built the notion of belief in the company. What Jeff found in City Year was an aspirational goal he could subscribe to.



**Pat Kirby**  
Service Manager,  
Social Enterprise  
Department,  
Timberland



**Nathan Pelsma**  
Manager of  
Corporate  
Partnerships,  
City Year

**Nathan Pelsma:** The idea behind City Year was to create a model for what National Service could look like, to create a vision for National Service that could provide the opportunity for young people to serve their country, not through military service, but through human and physical service to other citizens. In order to do this, however, we realized that our mission could be strengthened if we engaged all sectors, especially the corporate sector, in our vision for National Service. With the donation of the initial 50 pairs of boots, Timberland has grown to become one of our bedrock corporate partners.

## Identifying and Maximizing Resources

### Can you describe the basic tenets of your partnership with City Year?

**Kirby:** The first thing I want to emphasize is that this is anything but checkbook philanthropy. There's a two-way give and take. It's a fairly organic relationship. Our mission is to help people make their difference in the world. We equip City Year with uniforms, funding, and shared service planning tools. They inspire us to do more service and help us to implement our service ethic. We speak regularly. We're planning projects constantly. City Year even has a site at our New Hampshire headquarters.

### What specific skills and resources did City Year provide? What about Timberland?

**Kirby:** We began by funding and supporting their uniform. We looked at how City Year wanted to brand itself. We're not a uniform company, but we focused our attention on the brand.

We also received a lot of advice from City Year on how to plan service events and how to build an organizational culture. City Year has developed certain best practices. They had equity in terms of event management, which we learned a lot from. Eight years ago, we shut down our offices for a day and launched our first "Serv-a-palooza" company-wide service event. Now, we have 6,000-7,000 people engaged in service globally and have learned from City Year the art and science of how to run these types of large-scale service events. Over time, the 40 hours of paid service offered to every employee



To date, Timberland has invested more than US\$11 million in City Year, which includes in-kind support.



**Timberland** Headquartered in the northeastern United States (Stratham, New Hampshire), the Timberland Company started out as the Abington Shoe Company in 1955, adopting its present name in 1978.

The Company designs, engineers, markets, and sells premium-quality footwear, apparel, and accessories for men, women, and children, as well as a line of professional footwear.

Timberland delivers on its corporate philosophy of "Doing Well and Doing Good" by producing world-class products, making a difference in the world community at-large, and creating value for shareholders, employees, and consumers around the world. The Company employs a workforce of 5,600 and in 2005 generated revenues of US\$1.6 billion.

Please visit [www.timberland.com](http://www.timberland.com) for more information.

**City Year** is dedicated to building democracy through citizen service, civic engagement, and social entrepreneurship. Its signature program, the City Year youth corps, unites a diverse group of young adults, ages 17 to 24, for a demanding year of full-time community service, leadership development, and civic engagement. These young leaders put their idealism to work through serving as tutors and mentors to school children; reclaiming public spaces; and organizing after-school programs, school vacation camps, and civic engagement programs for students of all ages. More than 1,100 corps members serve in 16 City Year sites across the United States and in Johannesburg, South Africa.

In addition to the youth corps, the organization is committed to pursuing its mission through public policy outreach, international initiatives, and Care Force®, a business division of City Year that helps clients engage their workforce in meaningful community service. In addition to Timberland, City Year's premier corporate sponsors, called National Leadership Sponsors, are Bank of America, Comcast, CSX, and T-Mobile. City Year is a proud member of AmeriCorps.

Please visit [www.cityyear.org](http://www.cityyear.org) for more information.





John Gillooly

A key element to the Timberland/City Year partnership is engaging employees in community service activities.

Timberland wanted to know—to the dollar—how their money was spent. That level of detail pushed us. We also learned from Timberland how to build our brand and how to apply corporate marketing and branding principles to the nonprofit sector.

Timberland also helped guide our development as City Year expanded nationally. Timberland was extremely helpful in terms of their model of growth and how to expand into new markets. For example, what should be the relationship between the national office and the sites? What roles and responsibilities does national have? Do the sites have complete autonomy? In our case, we created a national structure with branch programs in different cities, all operating under one 501(c)3. Such conversations happened at the Board level, with guidance from Jeff.

## Measuring Results

**What constituted your criteria for success? How did you go about measuring results?**

**Pelsma:** Success can be measured in many different ways. Are we growing new levels of partnership? Are we increasing the capacity to raise more money? Are we making a difference in the communities in which we serve? In the case of the communities in which we serve, we look at service impact. In one community, there might be a big issue of homelessness. In another, it might be a lack of youth programs. In determining the impact of our partnership, various factors can be considered. For example, the number of volunteers, number of hours served, number of lives improved, number of trees and bulbs planted, number of Timberland volunteers engaged, and number of City Year participants served—all tell a story of allocated resources. These are the tangible numbers of service impact. The trick is in capturing the anecdotal stories of the emotional impact of our partnership.

**Kirby:** Measuring success and the degree of impact has become increasingly important. At the same time, developing criteria for success has become more sophisticated as we've become more rigorous with strategy. We're now thinking in terms of how we make the most of the money we invest in City Year so we're not just painting walls, but

has become one of the highest rated benefits of the company.

City Year was very clever about how it leveraged its service and event expertise, turning that expertise into an income-generating stream. The more intersection we had between the two organizations, the more we gradually co-opted each other's practices and approaches.

**Pelsma:** For its part, City Year provided the community contact, the on-the-ground experience, the relationships with nonprofits, and hands-on justice mission that Timberland needed to launch a full-scale service initiative. We help to guide their service events and work together to increase the public awareness of their social justice brand.

Timberland brought a corporate culture and the corporate accountability that comes with it.

building something that will last after we leave. We're looking at how to leverage the work we do jointly in a community so that the results are sustainable.

There are companies that through their philanthropy want to be very metrics-driven. They want to measure every dollar spent and assess their return on investment. It's not so easy with our partnership with City Year. It's a bit more of a leap of faith. We're trying to build more of a civic consciousness within corporate America and they [City Year] are working to promote service and meet the needs of communities. It's an organic relationship, but we're now working to sharpen and focus our intentions and objectives. That's to the betterment of both organizations.

That said, impact measurement has been challenging. It can be difficult to determine the exact extent to which Timberland funds, irrespective of other donors, have netted results. From an event management perspective, we've put together some process measurements (e.g., survey data on volunteers). We look closely at volunteer surveys after an event and jointly discuss the findings. For example, if there are five stages to an event, we look at how we did in those five stages and rate ourselves on a scale of 1 to 4.

**What has been Timberland's cumulative investment? Have you been able to measure how your investment in City Year impacts your bottom line?**

**Kirby:** We've spent more than US\$11 million over 17 years, including in-kind support. This doesn't factor in the profit that City Year has made from the running of Timberland-related events. Thirty percent of our corporate contributions go to City Year as part of a targeted strategy. We don't do "traditional" corporate philanthropy. Instead, we tie our investment strategy to our volunteer and civic engagement strategy.

*"City Year provided the community contact, the on-the-ground experience, the relationship with nonprofits, and the hands-on justice mission that Timberland needed to launch a full-scale service initiative."*

— Nathan Pelsma, Manager of Corporate Partnerships, City Year



John Gillooly

Planting seeds of civic consciousness lies at the heart of Timberland's support of City Year.



In terms of how this work impacts our bottom line, we don't think it necessarily does so. We don't make these sorts of investments because we think it will affect sales, per se. We do it because it's who we are as a company. If you look at a lot of socially responsible investing, those companies that have strong CSR reputations are typically organizations that spend a lot of time thinking about who they are as a brand and tend to be buttoned up from a communications and reporting standpoint. Financially they do very well. That makes our case. It's not an either or. Our job is to do well so that we can do good. There's ample information out there that says that it's a smart thing to do from a brand-building perspective. It's also the right thing to do.

## Looking Ahead

### What are your goals for the future?

**Pelsma:** We believe that our futures are inextricably linked, that our missions for social justice are inseparably intertwined. We know that the partnership will continue to represent the prototype of cutting-edge private-public partnerships. We can't imagine a future without Timberland.

**Kirby:** We have a few ideas on the table that we'd like to see real traction against over time. One is how do you get more people engaged in communities? How do you develop premier leaders, premier citizen leaders? We'd like to see City Year become best of class in this area. This dovetails with our aspiration for the future.



John Gillbody

On Earth Day 2005, Timberland employees worked alongside City Year corps members and local residents to renovate a park in the Bronx in New York.

## COLLABORATING ON-THE-GROUND:

### PLANTING SEEDS OF CHANGE IN THE SOUTH BRONX

Imagine on a typical workday your assignment involves a choice—business as usual or volunteering in your community. What would you do? How might you view your employer in light of the choice? How might you view your role differently as a citizen in an increasingly inter-connected world?

Through its "Path of Service" program, Timberland not only offers each of its employees forty hours of paid time annually to volunteer in the community, but organizes events that engage staff in service activities.

For example, in honor of Earth Day 2005, Timberland employees from greater New York City accepted the challenge of renovating a community park in the South Bronx. For eight hours, they removed debris, built benches, and planted trees and flowers. They worked side-by-side with local residents, City Year volunteers, employees at other companies whom City Year had invited to participate, and even Timberland customers who learned about the event at store locations. Meanwhile, similar gatherings took place across the U.S. and internationally in areas where Timberland operates.

The Earth Day event, carried out annually, illustrates the Timberland/City Year partnership in action. For its part, City Year worked with local partners to identify a community need, plan the event, and ensure the necessary resources were available.

"I relied on City Year to help organize the event on the ground," explains Timberland's Pat Kirby. "By the time I got there two days before the event, things were ready to go. Anyone who's done event management knows there are many details to plan. And there's the realm of making sure the impact is sustained."

Timberland, on the other hand, mobilized more than 6,000 of its employees in carrying out similar Earth Day activities around the globe, while engaging its business partners, vendors, suppliers, and customers. In addition to the annual Earth Day event, Timberland and City Year collaborate regularly in organizing service projects planned to coincide with Timberland sales meetings and conferences. Such activities contribute to what the company refers to as building a "civic consciousness."





# Intel & Museum of Science, Boston

## PROGRAM PROFILE: INTEL COMPUTER CLUBHOUSE

### ***Promoting Creativity and Confidence***

The Intel Computer Clubhouse is a community-based after-school program where young people can explore their creativity, build their confidence, and develop skills through the use of innovative technology. The Clubhouse model today reaches youth in more than 20 countries around the globe, offering youth in under-served communities the opportunity to access state-of-the-art software and to express themselves in new ways. Entering a Clubhouse, one can see participants, often working with a mentor, creating computer-generated graphics, recording their own music, or producing their own videos. Clubhouse participants can also learn to design animations, build sculptures and robots, create their own websites, or program computer games.

As a result of these activities, young people gain greater self confidence and have a chance to imagine a future career. Says Rosalind Hudnell, Director of Diversity at Intel, “The Clubhouse is a recognition that in many low-income communities, young people need to be given tangible proof that they can be successful, and an environment that says ‘you’re capable of being innovative, and we believe in you.’”

The Intel Foundation provided seed money to help create the first Computer Clubhouse in 1993, which was developed by the Museum of Science, Boston, in collaboration with the MIT Media Laboratory. In 2000, Intel committed US\$32 million over five years to expand the program worldwide. Today, two-thirds of the Clubhouses receive seed funding from Intel, while the rest are established by a range of foundations, companies, and government agencies. The Intel Computer Clubhouse Network continues to be managed by the Museum of Science, Boston, which serves as the nerve center for technical innovation and expertise. Along with the MIT Media Lab, the Museum also provides programmatic guidance and ongoing support for the Network of Clubhouses worldwide. A wide range of corporate partners donate hardware and software to the Clubhouses, either free or at drastically reduced cost.

Intel and the Intel Computer Clubhouse Network partner with local nonprofit organizations in under-served communities that implement the program on the ground and offer day-to-day management. For example, the Intel Computer Clubhouse in the West Bank is the result of a partnership between the International Youth Foundation (IYF), Intel, and the Welfare Association, a Palestinian foundation. “We are asked sometimes why we choose to expand the Computer Clubhouse Network in communities that are unstable and even violent, such as in the Palestinian West Bank,” says Shira Womack, Intel Computer Clubhouse Network Program Manager. “But to me, knowing that it’s a high risk area also means it’s a high need area. Our goal is to reach those kids who do not have access to technology, and who do not have the ability to leave unsafe or troubled neighborhoods.”

The rapid growth of the Intel Computer Clubhouse Network—from 15 sites in 2000 to more than 100 around the world today—provides a valuable case study in “scaling up” a multi-sector partnership that promotes youth development. Exploring the challenges and learnings surrounding that expansion is a key focus of this chapter.



*“Our goal is to reach those kids who do not have access to technology, and who do not have the ability to leave unsafe or troubled neighborhoods.”*

— Shira Womack, Intel Computer Clubhouse Network Program Manager

Photos and artwork are courtesy of the Computer Clubhouse Community.



To gain further insights into how this partnership evolved and the challenges of global expansion, we spoke with **Rosalind Hudnell**, Director of Diversity at Intel, and **Gail Breslow**, Director of the Intel Computer Clubhouse Network at the Museum of Science, Boston.

## Initial Objectives

### What drove you to develop and support the Intel Computer Clubhouse?

**Rosalind Hudnell:** In 1999, Intel was looking for a new program that would give the company an opportunity to launch something innovative in the education field. We started the program to address the issue of the digital divide in the United States, primarily in the African American and Hispanic community. We knew we didn't want to start something from scratch. We wanted to find something successful and scale it up.

**Gail Breslow:** When Intel approached me in 1999 about developing a partnership to take the Computer Clubhouse program global, it was something I was already attempting to do. We had 15 Clubhouses at the time, but the growth of the Network up to that point had been slow, as the organizations who wanted to establish them had to cobble together their own resources, software, furniture, and staff funding. So for us, Intel's inquiry about becoming our partner was a dream come true.

### What were the initial objectives?

**Hudnell:** The Computer Clubhouse was a real departure from Intel's historic funding strategy, which tended to support hard core math, science, and technology programs. Taking on the Clubhouse was really a formal acknowledgement by Intel that for some students, the traditional educational system was not getting them excited about learning and technology or excited about their ability to create and innovate. At first, there was some resistance within Intel to take on this initiative. As one top corporate leader asked, 'We are going to spend millions of dollars on music and art? Are you crazy?' But we were able to show that young people learn in many different ways, and that the Clubhouse boosted math and technology skills too, as well as self esteem and creativity.

**Breslow:** What makes the Computer Clubhouse unique is not only the technology that this model offers but the practice around how it is utilized to tap young people's interest and ideas. It also has a lot to do with the people who are involved; who

believe in young people and respect them, and who can foster a community of learners in the Clubhouse. It's a non-hierarchical and informal setting, yet it sets very high standards for achievement.

### What were you looking for in a partner?

**Hudnell:** Intel was looking to partner with a nonprofit organization that could deliver results and a program that had been replicated. We found those assets in the Computer Clubhouse model. The Computer Clubhouse had a track record of success, and had already received the Peter F. Drucker Award for Nonprofit Innovation. The Clubhouse had already been replicated in several locations, including two sites outside of the United States. As a partner, the Museum of Science, Boston was a stable, credible organization, and the program was focused on after school and on urban communities. The Computer Clubhouse had everything we were looking for.

**Breslow:** Intel brought a huge amount of knowledge and experience around the technology side of the Clubhouse, and made a tremendous contribution on that front. Intel has also helped us keep current and cutting edge in terms of the technology we use. It's hard to imagine but when we began the Clubhouse, the Internet was not even a factor in people's lives, as it is today. So the passage of time and the advancement of technology went hand in glove with our work with Intel. To me, the Clubhouse was a convergence of our work in technology and in youth development.



Over the past five years, the Intel Computer Clubhouse network has grown dramatically from 15 to more than 100 Clubhouses around the world. Here, Clubhouse members work together at an Intel Computer Clubhouse in India.



**Rosalind Hudnell**  
Director of Diversity,  
Intel Corporation



**Gail Breslow**  
Director of the  
Intel Computer  
Clubhouse  
Network, Museum  
of Science, Boston



**Intel Corporation** believes in being an asset to our communities worldwide. It strives to provide a safe and healthy workplace, to conserve natural resources, and to minimize the impact our manufacturing operations have on the environment and neighboring communities. Working with educators from around the world, Intel is helping students prepare for the knowledge-based economy of the 21st century. Intel employees also contribute thousands of volunteer hours each year through the Intel Involved program, which supports local education programs and coordinates community service projects.

Please visit [www.intel.com](http://www.intel.com) for more information.

**Museum of Science, Boston** One of the world's largest science centers, the Museum of Science, located in Boston, Massachusetts, takes a hands-on approach to science, attracting visitors through its vibrant programs and over 550 interactive exhibits. Highlights include the Thomson Theater of Electricity; the Charles Hayden Planetarium; the Mugar Omni Theater; and the Butterfly Garden exhibit, featuring hundreds of free-flying butterflies. In 1999, the Museum joined forces with The Computer Museum and incorporated the Computer Clubhouse program, recognized as a successful learning model that enables inner-city youth to build skills and confidence in themselves through technology. Please visit [www.computerclubhouse.org](http://www.computerclubhouse.org)

In 2001, the Museum opened its Current Science & Technology Center, which offers breaking news stories to the public with frequent presentations by the scientists and inventors involved. In 2004, the Museum launched the National Center for Technological Literacy (NCTL), which helps facilitate a nationwide expansion of technology literacy through partnering and outreach with schools and other institutions.

Please visit [www.mos.org](http://www.mos.org) for more information.



## Program Design and Implementation

### How does the partnership work?

**Hudnell:** We believe that we are trying to do something that's never been done at this level, it's pretty complicated. [She goes to a blackboard and starts drawing circles and connecting lines.] At the corporate level, Intel is the major donor, providing funds to the Museum of Science and to MIT for the content of the Clubhouses. Intel then partners with a wide range of global software companies, which donate free or dramatically reduced software. Last year, we calculated Intel had received about US\$14 million in in-kind donations from our sponsors—including IBM, Adobe, Hewlett Packard, and LEGO Robotics. These companies also contribute mentors, engineers, and others who help support the Clubhouses.

At the local level, Intel and the Computer Clubhouse Network partner with community-based organizations, who themselves may work with other nonprofit groups. For example, Intel funds the International Youth Foundation, which then works with its partner organizations in Jordan, Palestine, and Russia to manage the Intel Computer Clubhouses in those countries. So we are developing alliances at different levels among the private and nonprofit sectors.

**Breslow:** At the beginning, we had a lot of discussions with Intel about how to shape the partnership, and around the critical factors for success. We talked about what we would look for in community agencies hosting the Clubhouses, and what we needed in terms of building our own collective skills and experience and practice.

### What have been some of the challenges of this alliance?

**Hudnell:** For Intel, one of the challenges was keeping an equal balance of power among the partners. We tried to drive an equal partnership with the Museum of Science, Boston, when we are the major funder. In the beginning, we tried to do

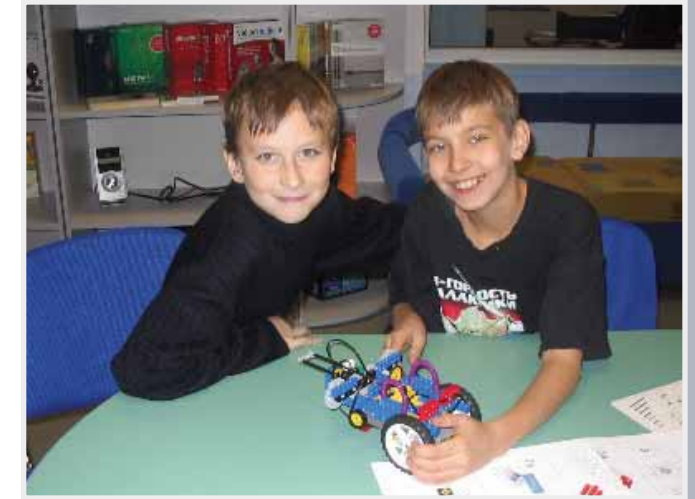
everything together, including all major decisions. But we were also afraid of ruining or overpowering 'the secret sauce'—our expression for the complex ingredients, from the unique technology to the design of the rooms—that have made the Computer Clubhouses such a successful program. But Intel was the major funder, which meant at the end of the day, we got to make the final decisions. Sometimes that created conflict. It was often a very delicate balance to walk.

We also learned that we were trying to merge two very different cultures. There were many at Intel who had never worked in the nonprofit world, and many in the community-based organizations who had never worked in the private sector. There was a lot of time spent bridging those two perspectives.

**Breslow:** One of the challenges of this very close working partnership was getting alignment around our respective strengths and core competencies. The Museum of Science already had a lot of experience working with community-based organizations, and my staff largely comes from the youth development field and nonprofit sector. Of course, Intel brought tremendous resources and expertise to the work as well, on a wide range of fronts. In the end, the fact that we shared a mutual objective has made our work together so much easier.

### What was the initial scale up strategy?

**Hudnell:** Once Intel had decided who would provide the 'content' of the program [Museum of Science, Boston], the next question was how to replicate and scale up the model. So we began to look for nonprofit organizations with whom to partner on the ground. There was a pretty lively debate within Intel around which direction to take in terms of a local partner. At the time, many of the Computer Clubhouses were working with the Boys and Girls Clubs. But we questioned whether choosing one organization was the best strategy for scaling up. So instead of collaborating with a single partner organization, Intel decided to open up the process, through a request for proposals [RFP] system.



At the heart of the Intel Computer Clubhouse philosophy is the belief that young people, like these two Russian youth, become excited about learning when they explore their creativity.



The International Youth Foundation worked with Intel to launch this Computer Clubhouse in Amman, Jordan.

*"Because Ramadan is a very special month for Muslims, I wanted to make something special, so I brought a photo of a lantern and by using a scanner I added the photo to the computer. Then I used a program called Photoshop to continue my project. As you can see, I added the Clubhouse logo to the Ramadan lantern. I like this program very much, as it is very easy to use."*

— Muhammad Al-Dasht, a 17-year-old participant at the Intel Computer Clubhouse in Ramallah, West Bank







Young people who participate in Intel Computer Clubhouse activities develop life skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, project management, and goal-setting, as well as acquire hands-on experience in professional technologies.

### What were the issues around expanding the program?

**Hudnell:** While the partnership worked well initially, it became more challenging during the scaling up process. Quite frankly, we scaled up very quickly, and it was very difficult for some of our nonprofit partners to keep up. And what we did was fill in the gaps over time. We also had a lot of staff turnover—both at Intel and with Museum of Science, and that made the situation more difficult, particularly in the early years.

Working in a wide range of cultural, social, economic, and linguistic settings is not always easy. Intel believes that the technology translates well in every setting. Believe me, a 13-year-old in Amman, Jordan is as excited by the technology and as capable of working on it as a 13-year-old in Atlanta, Georgia. But it gets more difficult when we are working in emerging markets, when it comes to things like infrastructure and logistics. Some companies, for example, are not allowed to donate their hardware or software outside of the United States. There is also the language issue. Some of the technology, such as the keyboards, can be adapted to the local language, and some cannot. But we think because so many of the programs are graphic and are project-based, that we can mostly overcome the language barriers.

**Breslow:** The rate of growth for the Network was huge between 2000 and 2004. For example, we doubled our staff [from five to ten people]. I think both of us [Intel and Museum of Science/Computer Clubhouse Network] underestimated the challenges associated with that rate of growth, and the infrastructure it required at the global level. It placed more pressure on the need for clarity around roles and responsibilities, and the need for real and constant communication. I have been director here for the past ten years, but there were some staff turnovers—primarily at the local level with the community organizations—perhaps more than was typical. This was more of a surprise for Intel than for us. But I think the turnover was caused in part because of the strain of growing the program so fast, and we may not have provided our implementing partners enough support at the time.

### What about sustainability?

**Hudnell:** Sustainability is a big issue. This is a very expensive program. It costs about US\$250,000 to establish one Intel Computer Clubhouse. We provide start up funding, sort of on a sliding scale, and then the community must take on support for the program. So sustainability is a significant challenge in the scaling up process. As part of the RFP, community-based partners must demonstrate that they have identified a funding source past Intel support, as part of their sustainability plan. That is not always easy. But so far, the closing rate of Clubhouses is less than five percent, which we feel pretty good about.

### How do you measure success?

**Hudnell:** We measure progress on all kinds of different levels. First, we view this program as being as much about confidence building as it is about education. So Clubhouse participants are evaluated in terms of what they are learning, both in terms of self confidence and the ability to work in teams, as well as their ability to master the technology and be creative.

Intel also looks at how well the program is doing from a replication point of view. How many Clubhouses have we replicated, and has the quality been compromised? How much did it cost? Is the model being replicated the same way in Los Angeles as in South Africa? We also measure the Clubhouse against its commitment to the individuals and the community it seeks to serve. How many young people are being served? How is the community responding? What are the impacts on the neighborhood? What about test scores? How strong is the organizational capacity of the partner organization to sustain the model? The final level of evaluation is how the establishment of Computer Clubhouses affects the image of Intel by external opinion makers at the local, national, and global level.

**Breslow:** We have been fortunate to work with a number of independent evaluators (including the Center for Children and Technology at EDC, SRI International, and the Wellesley Center for Research on Women) to assess the impact of the Clubhouse on young people's lives.<sup>1</sup> What we find is that the Clubhouse not only gives young people professional technology skills, but it also provides them with highly generalizable life skills, like teamwork, problem-solving and project management skills. In the end, the Clubhouse provides young people with a sense of self and of their own potential, together with the resources and skills to realize that potential.

We also provide Clubhouses with tools to measure their own success. We have a sign-in system that allows Clubhouses to capture the very basic but very important information: who is coming, how often, when do they come, and what are our demographics? Then we have put in place a highly comprehensive assessment and planning process that allows Clubhouses to reflect on their own experience, successes, and challenges, and to consider how to tackle any issues that might need to be addressed.

At the Clubhouse Network level, when we aggregate this information, we get very powerful insights into where Clubhouses might have needs we can help them address. For example, if we see that a lot of Clubhouses are looking for new ways to recruit and train volunteer mentors, then we can strategize about how to support that need on a global basis.

<sup>1</sup> A recent evaluation by SRI International found that, of the members surveyed, more than 85% visit the Clubhouse once a week, 50% visit every day, and a third spend at least 3 hours per visit. The majority, and in some cases the vast majority, indicate positive social/emotional, academic, and technical attitudes. Overall, scores on the attitudinal scales tend to correlate more strongly with the length of Clubhouse visits rather than the frequency of visits.

*"We believe that we are trying to do something that's never been done at this level... developing alliances at different levels among the private and nonprofit sectors."*

— Rosalind Hudnell,  
Director of Diversity,  
Intel Corporation



## Looking ahead

### Will the Clubhouse Network continue to expand?

**Hudnell:** We may be slowing down the pace of expanding the Network. We are not willing to grow the program if it's going to be at the expense of quality, so we are very much focused now on capacity building, and insuring the full potential of our investments. The sustainability of this initiative is clear, but we will not proactively go out and push the growth of the Network, as we have done over the past five years.

Our vision over time is for educators and community leaders to see the value of this kind of learning and this kind of approach, and create and build their own Clubhouses. We want the Clubhouse Computer Network to thrive and grow, and for young people to be energized intellectually and be excited about learning. At Intel, we don't think you get there just by continuing to build more Clubhouses. You get there by leveraging and by really making those [Clubhouses] already up and running as successful as they can be.

**Breslow:** After six years of working together, I think the Clubhouse Network is very strong, and we've gained a lot of that strength from Intel's investments over the years. It's my hope and expectation that all of us will continue to reap the benefits of that investment. But even from the beginning, the original idea was that Intel, working with us, would establish these Clubhouses that would then serve as models, and that other companies, foundations, and government agencies would see them in action and want to proliferate the approach in greater numbers.

We are getting lots of inquiries from the public and private sectors, so we will continue to grow, but not at the rate that we've done before. We also want to deepen the experience of the young people who are involved in the Clubhouse. For example this summer, we will again bring youth leaders from all 100 plus Clubhouses around the world here to Boston, so they can share their experiences and insights, and recognize they are part of a global community.



Sandy Moniz

A recent study by SRI International shows that half the youth members surveyed visit their Clubhouse every day, and that a majority indicate positive social, emotional, academic and technical attitudes as a result.

## THE INTEL COMPUTER CLUBHOUSE IN RAMALLAH, PALESTINE

Renewed violence broke out across the West Bank and Gaza in 2002, coupled with a deep economic crisis. Curfews and constant border and other closings were part of Palestinians' daily life. Yet in spite of these challenges, the first Intel Computer Clubhouse in the Arab World opened its doors in the West Bank town of Ramallah in July 2003.

"The one surprise for us was how fast the project moved forward, considering the unstable conditions and ongoing violence during the early implementation of the program," recalls Raed Yacoub, coordinator of the Intel Computer Clubhouse in Ramallah.



Today, as many as 50 young people attend the Clubhouse after school everyday. Ranging in age between 8 and 18, the youth come from disadvantaged neighborhoods around Ramallah, including three nearby refugee camps. Students from local universities serve as mentors for the Palestinian youth. Yacoub is pleased that the mentors are so involved in the program, and are staying longer than the required mentoring hours. Currently, there are nearly 340 active members participating in Clubhouse activities.

Youth are encouraged to work on creative projects in order to improve their knowledge, talent, and interest in different software packages. Clubhouse coordinators choose some of the young people's best projects every week to be exhibited on the Clubhouse walls.

The Clubhouse is the result of a partnership between the International Youth Foundation, Intel, and the Welfare Association (WA), a Palestinian nonprofit organization. According to Yacoub, the Welfare Association was excited about the partnership with Intel for a number of reasons. "The Welfare Association's motivation to partner with Intel was a result of our commitment to IT and youth development, and our determination to be the first organization in the Arab World to implement such a new and innovative education project."



The Welfare Association has learned a great deal from its collaboration with the Intel Computer Clubhouse. "It offers a great educational philosophy, which addresses the technology fluency gap rather than just the access gap," says Yacoub. The organization has also learned that the after school learning approach plays a major role in young people's lives. "Such approaches enable them to explore their creativity and to be engaged with technology in a manner that will help them to think about their future academic life and career in positive and different ways," he says. "This program, we found, builds on the positive development of young people."

*"After taking a picture of myself using a digital camera, I added my picture to the file, which is distributed into four unequal parts. Then I used Adobe Photoshop to add a background and colors to produce the effect that you can see now."* — Haya Wazaz, age 13,

Participant, Ramallah Computer Clubhouse







*“There was total alignment between our goal of helping girls get more out of life and the Girl Scout’s goal of enabling girls to develop as fully as possible.”*

— Philippe Harousseau,  
Marketing Director for Unilever’s Dove brand



# Unilever & Girl Scouts of the USA

## PROGRAM PROFILE: *UNIQUELY ME!*

### ***Building the Self-Esteem of Girls***

In his 17 years with Unilever, Philippe Harousseau, Marketing Director for the Company’s Dove<sup>1</sup> brand, had never seen his fellow staff as energized and committed to a common aim as they became with the launch of the brand’s “Campaign for Real Beauty” in 2004. Its goal: to make more women feel beautiful every day by expanding popular notions of female beauty and encouraging women to take greater care of themselves.

“The campaign is one where staff feel they can do what’s right for the business and what’s right for society,” explains Harousseau. “It’s not uncommon to witness people—whether they’re executives or team members—choke up at a Dove meeting because they feel it’s right.”

Informing the campaign was a global survey of 3,500 women in 10 countries undertaken by the company in 2004. Not surprisingly, respondents confirmed that contemporary definitions of beauty had become stifling, stereotypical, and too narrow. The campaign was kicked off publicly with a billboard in New York’s Times Square featuring a 96-year-old woman. Beneath, a caption posed the question: wrinkled or wonderful?

Central to the campaign was the establishment of the Dove Self-Esteem Fund, which supports local initiatives around the globe that strengthen the self-esteem of girls, ages 8 to 17. Why the focus on young girls? According to Harousseau, Dove’s research underscored that “many women suffer from hang-ups around body image and self-esteem that are rooted earlier in their life and that keep them from making the most of their potential.” The Fund aims to promote healthy self-esteem at a young age, particularly among girls growing up in low-income and under-served communities.

### ***The Evolution of uniquely ME!***

The Dove Self-Esteem Fund currently supports self-esteem initiatives in 42 countries—and growing. In the United States, the Fund invests in “*uniquely ME!* The Girl Scout Dove Self-Esteem Program,” a pre-existing Unilever initiative launched in 2002 to strengthen the self-esteem of young girls, ages 8 to 14, in areas where the company operates in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. The initial idea for the program grew from the bottom up, with employees engaged in local community activities around the country proposing girls’ self-esteem as an issue that would enable the company to best align its mission and social contribution.

With its national network of Girl Scout Councils and expertise in promoting the healthy development of young girls, Girl Scouts of the USA had emerged in ’02 as an ideal program partner. Over the first two years of the program, the synergies between Unilever’s goal of promoting girls’ self-esteem and the ability of the Girl Scouts to deliver on that goal—while adhering to its own mission—were proven out.

Given the relevancy of *uniquely ME!*’s theme and its record of success, in 2004 Dove adopted the program as the focus of its Self-Esteem Fund in the United States. Says Harousseau, “There was total alignment between our goal of helping girls get more out of life and the Girl Scout’s goal of enabling girls to develop as fully as possible.”

<sup>1</sup> Unilever’s Dove brand produces a wide range of cleansing and personal care products. Now the world’s top cleansing brand, Dove was launched in 1957 as a beauty soap bar.



To date, *uniquely ME!* has reached an estimated 168,000 girls. The company has invested US\$3.6 million in the program, which consists of an educational curriculum that integrates research from the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI) and hands-on activities such as mentoring, community service, and sports. Three activity booklets, in English and Spanish, target two developmental age groups: 8-10 and 11-14 year-olds. A fourth booklet in development will target 15-17 year-olds and focus on issues related to body image and appearance. Delivered by caring adult volunteers, *uniquely ME!* covers recognizing one's strengths and attributes, handling peer pressure, identifying core values and personal interests, eating disorders, the power of positive thinking, relationships, and stress.<sup>3</sup>

### Building a Brand Vision

Today, *uniquely ME!* offers a potent example of how a global company succeeded in integrating its social responsibility within its brand vision. The campaign for Real Beauty was launched in 2004, not long after Unilever announced a new corporate mission: "to add Vitality to life." The Company pursues that mission by meeting "everyday needs for nutrition, hygiene, and personal care with brands that help people feel good, look good, and get more out of life."

In the case of Dove, the brand made a global commitment to ensuring that young girls "feel good and get more out of life" through supporting self-esteem initiatives. Such efforts aren't linked to selling products, explains Harousseau, rather "our commitment is to raising the self-esteem of young girls. We're not talking about how many logo placements and impressions we're going to get through this program."

In terms of company benefits, Harousseau is quick to point out the value of the program when it comes to reinforcing employee morale and engaging employees as volunteers (see story, page 35). "The commitment we're making as a brand is a long-term commitment and one that our employees can readily connect with," he says.

<sup>3</sup> Additional information on the *uniquely ME!* program, including programmatic resources, can be found at: [www.girlscouts.org/program](http://www.girlscouts.org/program) and [www.campaignforrealbeauty.com](http://www.campaignforrealbeauty.com).

To learn more about *uniquely ME!* and how Unilever, through its Dove brand, and the Girl Scouts of the USA have succeeded in achieving common goals, we spoke to **Christy DeSantis**, Dove Global Medical Manager, and **Rande Bynum**, who, at the time of this interview, served as the *uniquely ME!* Project Manager at the Girl Scouts.

## Laying the Groundwork

### What were your organization's first motivations for the initiative?

**Christy DeSantis:** Unilever is committed to helping youth reach their full potential and to working toward alleviating the critical problem of low self-esteem faced by America's youth. In 2001, Unilever was looking to develop a partnership with a non-profit organization that would fit with its overall mission and values, while having a national scope, offering bilingual components, and high credibility in the self-esteem arena. The Girl Scouts of the USA was a great match to all of the above.

In 2004, Unilever's Dove brand recognized how well the *uniquely ME!* program partnership with Girl Scouts of the USA aligned with its mission to widen the definition of beauty and make more women and girls feel confident and beautiful every day. The brand had established its Dove Self-Esteem Fund globally to serve as an agent of change in this area of self-esteem, and, in each country, one individual program partner was selected at the local level. In the US, the Dove Self-Esteem Fund has taken up responsibility for the program partnership with Girl Scouts of the USA on *uniquely ME!*

**Rande Bynum:** We were approached by Unilever in 2002. They were looking for an organization that was national, that had a good foundation, a good reputation. They wanted to take on the cause of self-esteem. They conducted a search. We were in every market they were in. We had a successful 93-year history, along with a research institute.

### What does your organization ask of a partner in this type of venture? How has your expectation of a "good partner" changed since the initiative began?

**DeSantis:** As mentioned, Unilever was looking for an organization that would fit with its overall mission and values, that would have national scope, could offer bilingual components, offered high credibility, and could leverage existing community programs. Girl Scouts-USA has met and exceeded our expectations of a strong partnership. Commitment at a local and national level was very important to Dove,



Christy DeSantis  
Dove Global  
Medical Manager



Rande Bynum  
Former *uniquely ME!* Project  
Manager,  
Girl Scouts of  
the USA



**Unilever** One of the largest consumer goods companies in the world, Unilever employs more than 227,000 people in 150 countries. In 2005, the company's contributions to local communities totaled US\$77.8 million and were targeted at some 13,000 community organizations, benefiting an estimated 200 million people. Roughly one third of the company's support is directed at health-related projects, followed by education, economic development, the environment, arts and culture, and other initiatives. Roughly 10% of the company's employees undertake community activities with the company's support. In 13 countries, the Unilever companies have established charitable foundations that help manage their community programs.

Please visit [www.unilever.com](http://www.unilever.com) for more information.

**Girl Scouts of the USA** is dedicated to ensuring that girls are given opportunities in an accepting and nurturing environment. Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. In partnership with committed adult volunteers, girls develop qualities that will serve them all their lives like leadership, strong values, social conscience, and conviction about their own potential and self-worth.

Founded in 1912 and headquartered in New York City, Girl Scouts of the USA today has 3.6 million members throughout the United States, including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. In partnership with more than 300 local Girl Scout councils or offices, 236,000 troops/groups, 986,000 adult volunteers, its National Board of Directors, and corporate, government, and individual supporters, Girl Scouts works to help today's girls become tomorrow's leaders.

Please visit [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org) for more information.

and the Girl Scouts have demonstrated wonderful commitment to meeting the program's objectives.

**Bynum:** In determining whether there's a good fit with a potential corporate partner, we want to make sure that what they're proposing supports the Girls Scouts message. Something that is important to us is that it is truly a partnership. Because we're large and get approached by a lot of corporations we want to maintain our integrity, our reputation, our brand. In the case of Unilever, we have a similar mission and goals. They respect who we are. They defer to us when it comes to content, activities, and direction. They see us as the preeminent organization for girls.

Unilever is not just telling us, 'here's the money.' It's an ongoing partnership. It serves as a model for future relationships.

## Aligning Skills and Resources

### Which of the skills and resources in your organization were already in place?

**DeSantis:** The most important requirements to make the initiative a success were having committed individuals at both organizations, a solid financial resource, and a well-defined mission.

Girl Scouts of the USA's skills and resources included a wealth of experience with the subject at hand (self-esteem) and existing community programs that could be leveraged at the local level.

Additionally, the resource of a dedicated team within the organization focused on bringing the initiative to life made the partnership successful. In particular, Girl

Scouts Research Institute (GSRI) had the foundation upon which we could build an educational curriculum. The Girl Scouts also had experts who understood the needs of girls and the best ways to communicate with them.

The Girl Scouts supply an educational curriculum integrating the latest research from the GSRI and hands-on activities such as mentoring, community service, and sports to support the program.

**Bynum:** We take what we find from our research and put it into action. Toward that end, the Girl Scouts Research Institute is our direct link to what girls are saying, thinking, and feeling. The approach by Unilever came at a pivotal time. We had just done a lot of research with girls about how they wanted to be seen, and how they wanted to work with adults.

Typically, we do everything from focus groups to online surveying. We talk to girls, parents, and staff directly. We then work to translate that research into effective programs, developing original resources for girls, ages 5 to 17. [Related to self-esteem], we've done research on girls and physical and emotional safety, healthy living, appearance, nutrition, and fitness. We try to enhance a core

set of skills by incorporating other resources. For example, we might promote self-esteem, while teaching financial literacy. Our work encompasses the "whole girl."

### How did partners come to agreement on criteria for success?

**DeSantis:** When Unilever and Girl Scouts of the USA began discussing a self-esteem program partnership, both organizations knew how important it was to set clear expectations from the outset. They wanted to understand each other's goals, to ensure that they aligned. They wanted to choose a program that was meaningful to both the funder [Unilever] and the non-profit group. Both groups understood that things can change over time, so they needed to be flexible as both of their organizations would grow. They would need to review the program periodically, to ensure that goals were being met and to ensure future continuity and success. It was extremely helpful to have open lines of communication and specific contacts in each organization to work together. Contacts have been established in each organization to ensure fluidity, efficiency, and regular sharing of information. The groups brainstorm together, share case studies, learn from ongoing Girl Scouts research and listen to feedback from local staff.

**Bynum:** As Christy says, our relationship is based on mutual respect. I've spent meetings with Dove and Unilever people who are dumbfounded by the flexibility, generosity, and ability to be creative that we share. They truly believe that we're the expert with girls. Whether it's developing a web component or new book, they've been for it. It's been wonderful.

## Setting up Systems and Tracking Results

### How were project management and implementation roles assigned and processes established?

**DeSantis:** We were looking for a partner with expertise and the ability to implement the program at a local level. Girl Scouts of the USA offered to do so. Processes were developed by experts at Girl Scouts as they best understood what girls needed.

**Bynum:** Our relationship is very informal. I have contact with Unilever on a daily basis. On a monthly basis there's a face-to-face meeting. Twice a year there's a larger forum where more players are at the table. We have a three-year plan with annual tasks within that plan. We also have local plans. What I find most refreshing is that it's not "management." They're not checking to make sure we're doing something right or wrong. It's very cooperative. We make sure we're on schedule. We talk about opportunities that weren't in our project plan.





### Have there been any unexpected benefits, surprises, or challenges?

**DeSantis:** While we can't speak to unexpected benefits, one excellent benefit that we have seen is that Unilever employees have had the opportunity to be involved and volunteer at a local level with Girl Scout Councils around the country. Additionally, Unilever has been able to leverage ongoing research provided by the Girl Scouts Research Institute on the issue of low self-esteem among young girls.

**Bynum:** I've been with the Girl Scouts for ten years. As an organization, what I've seen is the opportunity for us to stretch and pursue greater opportunities. This partnership has given us the financial support and stability to do things in new ways and to reach communities we wouldn't have reached and to step out of our comfort zones a bit. We've had girls experience Girl Scouting in new ways. We've had the ability to do things differently and not to be too restricted. Although we're the experts on girls, it has allowed us to grow.

*"What I find most refreshing is that it's not 'management.' They're not checking to make sure we're doing something right or wrong. It's very cooperative."*

— Rande Bynum,  
Former *uniquely ME!*  
Project Manager,  
Girl Scouts of USA

### Looking Ahead

**In what ways, if any, might the partnership/program be extended to make possible broader success? Or, what has been done already to extend the partnership/program?**

**DeSantis:** One way the program was extended was by utilizing a spokesperson to further engage girls. Olympic gold medalist and gymnastics superstar Dominique Dawes serves as one of the program's spokespeople. Dominique visits girls across the US to talk about self-confidence and healthy self-image. Last year, America Ferrera, actress from the films *Real Women Have Curves* and *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*, has also been added as a *uniquely ME!* spokesperson. We're looking at ways to get more girls involved through individual council activities.

**Bynum:** In addition, recent changes include increasing the age range for *uniquely ME!* from 14 to 17, so that girls struggling with self-esteem issues in high

school, particularly body-related self esteem, may benefit from this valuable program. As you can see, there's a lot to look forward to.

We're also adapting the program to new sites. Our original 13 sites were selected based on proximity to Unilever offices. There will be 11 new sites in the next phase, 2006-2008. These will be selected based on their ability to be flexible and not on their proximity to Unilever facilities. We have another 90 Girl Scouts Councils that will be funded at different levels over the next couple years—50 will have one-week programs. There will be a game on our website for girls, ages 8 to 10. We've also developed *true You!* a book about mothers and daughters and self-esteem that will be downloadable on [www.campaignforrealbeauty.com](http://www.campaignforrealbeauty.com).

### FOCUS ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

One in ten of Unilever's more than 200,000 employees around the globe engage in community activities with the company's support. One of those is Wade Brown, Repack Assistant for Quality Control at Unilever's plant in southeast Baltimore, Maryland, USA. For the past ten years, Brown has headed the plant's community outreach, including distributing in-kind product donations to needy groups.

"My focus has always been the children," emphasizes Brown, who, in addition to devoting nearly a third of his time to coordinating the company's outreach to a variety of community organizations in the area, voluntarily assists such groups for up to 15 hours each week. "Whatever we can do with the kids, we do," he says.



Even before *uniquely ME!* was launched, Unilever's Baltimore-based employees had sponsored a local Girl Scout troop with the goal of building girls' self-esteem. Once the national program was underway, the plant stepped up its efforts—working with local educational authorities to introduce *uniquely ME!* in several schools as an after-school program and enlisting local Girl Scouts as volunteers in a variety of community events sponsored by the company.

Brown is particularly proud of the introduction of the program into the city's juvenile justice system in Baltimore. At the urging of the Girl Scouts and Brown, the city introduced a pilot program whereby young female offenders were required to complete the ten-week program before being sentenced. If they passed the course, their judgment was set aside. "As long as they didn't get in any more trouble, it wouldn't come back to haunt them," explains Brown, adding that many of the program's graduates are now training the girls coming into the system.

"These kids have a lot going on. They're going the wrong way," explains Brown. "We're getting an opportunity to make a difference in their lives before they get too old and are too far gone in the penal system."





*"From the beginning, the main drivers for this global effort were elements we call 'value fit.'"*

— Martin Sandelin,  
Vice President, Corporate Responsibility and  
Community Involvement, Nokia



## Nokia & International Youth Foundation

### PROGRAM PROFILE: MAKE A CONNECTION

#### Connecting Young People to Their Communities

An initiative of the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and Nokia, Make a Connection provides opportunities for young people to become actively engaged in and "connected" to issues that directly affect their lives. In more than 20 countries throughout the world, young people have the chance to explore issues that matter most to them—issues including employment, education, literacy, the arts, community service, and citizenship. Though each country program is unique and managed by local partners, all share the common goal of equipping participants with the life skills necessary to transition successfully into adulthood.

Since the initiative's inception in 2000, this growing portfolio of youth-development programs has provided locally defined, managed, and implemented solutions for more than 280,000 young people worldwide. For example:

- In the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Russia, grants are provided to young people who lead volunteer projects in their communities;
- In Thailand, teachers receive training in how to implement a customized life skills curriculum;
- In the United States, young people learn to express themselves—and their views about the world—through art; and
- In South Africa, unemployed college graduates receive practical training in computer literacy, effective communication, goal setting, and acquire skills for overcoming personal and professional obstacles.

"Make a Connection began because Nokia was interested in working with youth in great need, young people in very challenging times of their lives going through substantial transitions into adulthood," says Bill Reese, president and CEO of the International Youth Foundation. "These goals also appealed to our foundation immensely because we believe that young people should not just be the beneficiaries of philanthropy or assistance; they can and should be protagonists in the changes that improve their own circumstances."

In each country, key youth-serving, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) frame and implement the locally branded, locally run program. Because these NGOs are part of IYF's global network of partner organizations, IYF is well positioned to provide overall coordination, monitoring, assessment, and grantmaking. This collaborative approach is at the heart of the initiative's collection of diverse programs, each specifically tailored to meet the needs of young people in their own communities.

Nokia and IYF have deliberately developed a shared management framework to monitor, improve, and scale up this global initiative. This framework encourages partners' creativity at the national level while furnishing the global system with clear and transparent local programs that ensure a shared level of performance among participating NGOs. The resulting balance between global oversight and national ownership successfully manages the ambitions of all local and global program stakeholders in a way that supports, nurtures, and brings together the best of each local program. There are growing references to "glocal" companies. This may be truly a "glocal" NGO-corporate alliance.

Photo credits clockwise from top left: T. Harjumaakola; S. Perilla; S. Kantanen; S. Kiso; and Educational Volunteers Foundation of Turkey (TEGV).



To learn more about the Make a Connection initiative and how it works at both the global and local level, we spoke with **Martin Sandelin**, Vice President for Corporate Responsibility and Community Involvement at Nokia, and **Bill Reese**, President and CEO of the International Youth Foundation (IYF).

### Initial Objectives

#### What were your earliest objectives for the Make a Connection initiative?



**Martin Sandelin**  
Vice President,  
Corporate  
Responsibility  
and Community  
Involvement, Nokia

**Martin Sandelin:** We should begin by making clear that the ‘Make a Connection initiative’ really is the Nokia/IYF relationship. Together, we’re managing a collection of relatively independent country programs and we’re developing and maintaining the processes, structures, and operations we have put in place between Nokia and IYF to manage these programs.

From the beginning, the main drivers for this global effort were elements we call ‘value fit.’ We wanted to build positive life skills programs for and with young people, but when we began we didn’t know what our best approach might be. As a result, we focused first on working with partners who see the world the same way and believe in similar types of approaches as we do.

That was one of the reasons that the International Youth Foundation ranked high on our list of prospective global partners. Their core values fit with ours, and they shared our interest in “positive youth development.” They were particularly interested in establishing preventative youth activities—as opposed, for example, to a program that reaches young people only after something very negative has happened in their lives.



**Bill Reese**  
President and CEO,  
International Youth  
Foundation

**Bill Reese:** You know, despite a huge amount of investment in pre-adolescent programs around the world, there was little corresponding investment in programs serving early adolescent and early adults at the time we birthed Make a Connection with Nokia.

Nokia was interested in working with youth in great need, young people in very challenging times of their lives, going through those critical transitions into adulthood. They liked the idea of youth participation, and they wanted to create a global initiative in which young people could become activists making a difference in their communities. They liked that idea of having local country programs come forward with a clear sense of their own needs and creative plans to address them.

These goals also appealed to our foundation immensely because we believe that young people should not just be the beneficiaries of philanthropy or assistance; they can and should be protagonists in the changes that improve their own circumstances.

### Program Design

#### How did you first set goals for the participating local programs? How do you maintain these goals?

**Reese:** The goal of fostering locally owned, locally devised program designs was a very strong element from the start. Nokia recognized early on that a local program would never take root unless there was a substantial, country-based commitment to support that program. As each local program develops, support and encouragement are provided by the local Nokia office which collaborates closely with the IYF local partner in a way that mirrors the kind of collaboration that occurs at the global level between IYF and Nokia in Helsinki. This approach provides a huge amount of authenticity because it results in a global program that is locally relevant and devised.

**Sandelin:** We did think it was very important that each local program be as locally relevant as possible. We also knew that we wanted each one to have a measurable societal impact. And I’m happy to say that, today, it’s clear we have very much succeeded in these goals. Today, Make a Connection supports locally branded and locally managed programs in 22 countries. For example, in South Africa, activities address the specific needs of South African youth. It’s very different from the one in Brazil, totally different from Finland, and so on.

If you put these independent youth-development programs side by side, you’d be hard pressed to find many commonalities except that they focus on youth, enable or strengthen young people’s non-academic skills, and intentionally use life skills as a tool to engage participants in the broader program design.

When we began, we recognized that each program would require guidance and careful measurements. So we established basic metrics that included, for example, the number of beneficiaries participating in the program, and the actual impact that those participants have. We also took steps to establish a level of employee volunteerism in each participating country that would enhance the programs themselves, motivate our own employees, and develop our employees’ understanding of why Nokia is involved in programs like this.

**NOKIA**



International Youth Foundation®

**Nokia** is the world leader in mobile communications. The company is dedicated to enhancing people’s lives and productivity by providing easy-to-use products like mobile phones and solutions for imaging, games, media, mobile network operators, and businesses. Employing more than 58,000 people from more than 100 countries, the company develops products and services that encourage communication and learning among people and societies, and actively uses its strengths—connecting and communicating—to help make a difference.

Nokia’s community involvement programs complement its core business and vision to be involved with youth and education issues around the world. Each program begins with a belief that

prevention is better than cure. From there, Nokia invests in long-term projects aimed at helping young people create a firm foundation for themselves and to find their place in the world.

In addition to Make a Connection, Nokia’s community involvement activities include: Bridgeit<sup>1</sup>, Nokia Helping Hands<sup>2</sup>, and a variety of local community involvement activities including corporate giving and disaster relief. Nokia employees worldwide contribute their time, efforts, and expertise to each of these efforts. Please visit [www.nokia.com](http://www.nokia.com) for more information.

For more information on the **International Youth Foundation**, please see the inside back cover, or visit [www.iyfnet.org](http://www.iyfnet.org).

1. Bridgeit is an initiative that delivers digital education materials to schools through mobile technology.

2. Through the company’s “Helping Hands” initiative, thousands of Nokia employees contribute to local community projects each year. For further information, visit: [www.nokia.com/P11875](http://www.nokia.com/P11875).



Tuomas Harjumaaskola

Make a Connection programs differ in every country. Here, young people in Mexico are learning to use video equipment to document their community life.

## Program Management

### How do you manage this complex global initiative?

**Reese:** At a purely operational level, both IYF and Nokia have teams that are dedicated to ensuring the smooth running of an effective global effort. While IYF focuses on the mechanics of sound programming, global and local Nokia teams focus on leveraging staff engagement in ways that support our local country partners.

IYF's specific competencies are in running a rich portfolio of local programs in conjunction with our able local partners. As a result, IYF's role is to assist in program design and then grantmaking and technical assistance once the program is operational, and then ongoing program monitoring and evaluation. We also focus on sharing best practices between programs through publications, workshops and other carefully tailored learning opportunities. Nokia has been equally committed to fostering the learning "linkages" between individual country programs.

**Sandelin:** Before a country or a program is selected we work together with IYF to complete the background research and due diligence. Once a local program is initiated, we can be very hands on. But there is a natural second phase in which we institutionalize governance structures and provide clear process management that allows the IYF partner and local Nokia to assume program ownership. For example, our local offices often play a crucial role in providing branding and communications support to the local program partner and program. This is one of their strengths and it allows the IYF partner to focus on program management.

This all works because over time we have developed together with IYF fairly sophisticated global governance procedures. These include our agreements, the emphasis we place on process management, the timelines for managing these systems, and key actions needed to keep the global system functioning smoothly.

But as in any partnership, there's been fine tuning. We've learned over time that once a country program has been selected, specifying roles and responsibilities between the country partner, IYF, local and global Nokia program management is very important. We now have processes in place for what we call our "four-way collaboration." It's an approach that responds to questions such as: What does Nokia do globally? What does IYF do locally? What does the local Nokia organization do? And what does the national IYF partner do? The resulting lines of communication are now the same in every country. The need for this has been one of the key learnings for us.

### How important is it to measure the impact of your programs on young people?

**Sandelin:** As corporate engagement evolves from traditional philanthropy to also include strategic community involvement and societal investments, results-orientation automatically follows. In other words, the need and requirement to measure results is raised by the company's own employees and other stakeholders. There are two kind of results that the company is interested in. One, the societal benefit: does the program return the desired results in the community? Second, the business benefit: does the company receive the desired benefits from the program—in terms of learning, employee motivation, recognition, or however they have been defined. In a strategic cooperation between the private sector and civil society, companies will not only demand results-orientation but will also support the NGOs with tools and processes and other resources to allow them to develop their own skills in target set-

ting and results measuring. This, in the long-term, will also benefit the final recipients of the programs by making programs more effective.

**Reese:** Part of IYF's strategic commitment is to measure impact where possible and feasible. Increasingly funders want to know the impact their resources are having in very measurable terms. IYF and Nokia look at measurement as a way to help judge program effectiveness and to inform program improvement... we often term our approach "prove and improve." Measurement is an intrinsic part of good program design, as is developing the capacity of our partners to conduct cost-effective yet impactful evaluation strategies. We recognize that in most social programming it is probably impossible to prove definitively that a program works. But we can reduce uncertainty about the probable outcome of the program. We have adopted a very pragmatic approach to measurement and recognize that it is part of a continuous improvement cycle.

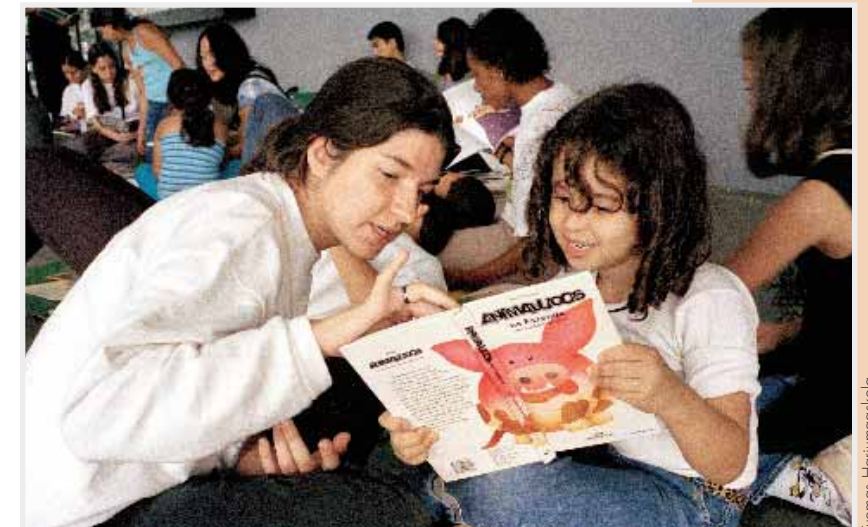
### How do you manage conflicts, disputes, or just differences of opinion?

**Reese:** Conflicts do occur. It is a very natural part of any healthy, complex relationship. And the Make a Connection relationship is a complex one that involves four key stakeholders: Nokia global, IYF, Nokia at the country level, and the IYF partners who implement the program. Our first rule is to over-communicate if the issues warrant it or are potentially contentious. While this takes time, it is time very well spent. Reducing confusion at the front end invariably leads to clarity at the back end. Secondly, there is a strong institutional commitment to transparency—an example on the IYF side was our willingness to share early versions of our five year strategic growth plan with Nokia. Third, we try and get those staff closest to the issue in dispute to try and resolve things first. This means that issues only get "escalated" if they cannot be resolved by programming staff. This approach has led to a strong commitment to decentralizing operations and decision-making. Finally, we recognize there are times when we simply cannot resolve issues to everyone's liking. In those instances we either simply agree to differ or one party needs to compromise. This hasn't happened very often in our experience.

**Sandelin:** I would add that occasionally we have additional entities involved (ODAs and other NGOs)—a situation which further increases the importance of constant and consistent communications. "Over" communications does not exist as a concept here.

### What success have you had in engaging local Nokia staff?

**Sandelin:** Personal engagement and volunteerism is an "acquired taste". When you've done it once the threshold for the next time is much lower and this needs to be understood as we do these programs. From a policy perspective, Nokia supports volunteerism by its employees and it is not uncommon that people—with support from their line management—annually devote a day or two of paid company time to volunteer work. With close to 60,000 employees, the number of volunteer days



Tuomas Harjumaaskola

Youth volunteers trained through Make a Connection in Brazil encourage reading among disadvantaged children.



is potentially huge. The country programs are not, however, designed to be volunteer programs and therefore the overwhelming part of the employee volunteer effort happens in other programs.

**Reese:** From the IYF side, the engagement of local Nokia staff is critically important because it is often a key to program sustainability and being able to leverage the rich communications value of the program. Yet effective staff involvement is also one of the more challenging aspects of corporate programming. The reality is that local corporate staff are extremely busy and often find it hard to dedicate the time to community involvement initiatives. Despite this we work very hard to be creative in engaging them. In Canada, for example, a fairly sophisticated e-mentoring model was developed that allowed Nokia staff to mentor young Canadian indigenous youth over the internet. We've also had to be strategic about matching staff skill and interest with available volunteering opportunity.

## Program Extension

### How will you continue the Make a Connection initiative?

**Sandelin:** A lot of these country programs are achieving tremendous results, and right now we're determining what happens at the next stage. So far, we've committed for a three-year period in every country—which by itself is probably a bit different. Many other organizations may not give that kind of program commitment at the local level. We do it for three years, and in some countries the second three-year period is nearing completion. At this time there is a whole set of questions that arise in relation to a specific country program as well as global objectives and strategies.

We're asking IYF questions like: At the end of any three-year period, should we continue with the same local program, or are local programs designed to come to an actual conclusion? If so, what is the next stage of evolution? Should successful programs naturally grow and expand? How can we learn to identify what works in that respect? These are the types of questions we're expecting IYF to provide expert answers to—issues that will set the tone and direction for the next stages of cooperation.

**Reese:** Together with Nokia, we have created a very special program in Make a Connection. It embodies in the fullest sense the meaning of positive youth development. It's about engaging and empowering young people and giving them opportunities to reach their fullest potential. We believe strongly that by investing in today's youth, particularly in that critical period of their lives where they will transition to adulthood, we will be creating more stable, cohesive and functioning societies of tomorrow.

**Sandelin:** We are naturally also looking a little bit more long term. Where are we heading? Where is the world heading? What kinds of issues and needs are emerging? How can we respond via these programs?

At the same time, it is very important for us to identify the most effective youth development and life skills programs. Once we identify those true "best practices," we want to scale them up together with other players—with businesses, public and private foundations, and with development banks, for example—to replicate them in other countries. If an approach is locally relevant, and it's working in that country context, we want to work with others to see that it's scaled, whether funding comes from the public sector or foundations or other corporations. That flexibility, that ability to continue to support the best local programs, is really one of the great benefits of our management approach.

One way we achieve this is to bring different countries together for best practice sharing. We support training, education programs, and other activities. And together with IYF, we will certainly continue to look at how to best support local partners and local programs through these efforts.

## PROMOTING A VOLUNTEER SPIRIT AMONG YOUTH IN HUNGARY

How do you nurture a service ethic among young people in a country where many view volunteerism with skepticism? For more than three years, the local Make a Connection program in Hungary has worked to engage young people as active contributors to their communities.

"The main challenge we face is that volunteering can have a negative connotation in Hungary because of our communist past," explains Rita Galambos, Chair of the Foundation for Democratic Youth (DIA), a nongovernmental organization—and IYF partner—which is implementing Make a Connection in Hungary. "When I was the same age as our young volunteers we had 'communist Saturdays,' when we were voluntarily 'obliged' to do something for the community – like paint walls in schools or work in the fields. Because it was enforced, the notion of voluntary activity was resented," she adds.



Through its public education efforts and direct outreach to youth, the local Make a Connection program in Hungary has worked to shift this mind-set. To date, the project has distributed grants totaling US\$90,000 to 90 youth-led projects that have engaged more than 800 young people. Similar initiatives are also underway in the Czech Republic, Poland, and Russia. Participants receive funding, as well as training in project management, conflict resolution, communication, fundraising, and personal development.

With such support, participating youth have made substantial contributions to their communities, while serving as role models for their peers. Examples of youth-led projects supported through the program include college students who perform plays for disabled and orphaned children; young people who lead environmental cleanup efforts in local parks; and a group of media-savvy youth that collaborated with a local TV station to highlight young people's accomplishments. Through such activities, participants develop critical life skills such as self-confidence, teamwork, goal-setting, leadership, and civic values.



To further promote life skills education in the country, DIA has adapted a life skills curriculum, originally produced by the Make a Connection program in the United Kingdom, for use in Hungarian schools. Funding for the initiative was provided by the global Make a Connection program and the Hungarian government. In collaboration with Nokia, DIA is also working to promote corporate social responsibility in the country and has convened multinationals, Hungarian companies, and other NGOs to explore how each can work together to address social challenges. Now in its second three-year phase of operation, the Make a Connection program in Hungary aims to engage an additional 3,000 youth in volunteer projects by 2008, and expand its efforts from 48 to 100 communities.

"A major success in our work is that community service and youth activism are becoming part of the public discourse," says Galambos. "Another is that we have been able to educate a group of very capable young leaders who are well trained and prepared to carry out activities on their own."

For further information on Make a Connection in Hungary, visit: [www.i-dia.org](http://www.i-dia.org)





# Microsoft & the Boys & Girls Clubs of America

## PROGRAM PROFILE: CLUB TECH

### ***Bringing Technology to Youth Across America***

It wasn't long ago that young people across the United States visited their local Boys & Girls Clubs primarily to take advantage of the arts, sports, fitness, and recreation facilities the Clubs offer the young people they serve.

That changed five years ago, when Microsoft and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) launched Club Tech, a US\$100 million program with the aim of "technology enabling" every Boys & Girls Club across the country. Club Tech provided the software and resources to create a comprehensive technology program that was used to leverage other donors. As a result, technology centers in Clubs offer a common suite of networked PCs with high-speed Internet access, IT skills training program content, training for club staff, plus a comprehensive package of Microsoft software such as the Encarta multimedia encyclopedia, Encarta Africana, Microsoft Office, and numerous titles in Scholastic's *The Magic School Bus* series.

Now, at technology centers in more than 2,600 Boys & Girls Clubs nationwide, Club Tech helps young people to express themselves, develop new skills, and connect to each other using computers and supporting hardware. They play and learn together, make movies and websites, and explore the world via the Internet. Aaron Young, Assistant Executive Director at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Monica, California, says that while young people enjoy themselves, there's a more serious goal. "No one can get a job these days if they don't have the kind of technology skills that you learn here at Club Tech." In the process, Club Tech has integrated technology into every aspect of the organization's fabric—from the Clubs' overall management to core programs, including educational enhancement, character and leadership development, the arts, sports, and fitness.

Training the Club Tech staff has been integral to the success of the program. "A Club director may hire the technology center director to help take advantage of the Club Tech program, to organize programs for the kids and the community, or to help automate the Club's own systems," says Ed Mishrell, Vice President of BGCA. "But it's rare that the Club director has the expertise to supervise and talk to that person about what software program to run." Microsoft takes providing that training very seriously.

Having developed a clearly successful program, Microsoft and BGCA are now focused on two parallel efforts to scale it up: The first is to make Club Tech programs available in over 3,700 Boys & Girls Clubs nationwide. This national network of neighborhood-based facilities has the capacity to bring technology access to more than 4.4 million under-served youth. At the same time, BGCA is working with local clubs around the country to train administrative and technology center staff so that they—and the young people they serve—can best take advantage of the program's many benefits.



*"In fact, this whole effort has changed the way BGCA delivers programming to clubs, the way they interact with their staff, and the way they share information internally as an organization."*

— Linda Testa, Senior Manager,  
Community Affairs, Microsoft



To learn more about Club Tech and the partnership that launched it, we spoke with **Linda Testa**, Senior Manager, Community Affairs at Microsoft, and **Ed Mishrell**, Vice President of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

## Initial Objectives

### What were your initial objectives for the program when you began?

**Linda Testa:** When we began Club Tech five years ago, we wanted to bring technology skills to youth in under-served communities across the United States. BGCA quickly came to mind as a partner because of the access they have into the community, their expertise in working with young people, and their ability to implement programs on a national scale. The communities they serve already see the Clubs as a place where kids of all ages can come. And as we got to know the leadership at Boys & Girls Club it became clear that they were also interested in creating an environment that makes it possible for kids to become technologically savvy, learn basic IT skills, and go much beyond that by exploring digital arts, multimedia, and interactive technology.

**Ed Mishrell:** We really wanted to get technology in front of kids in a way that makes a difference and that becomes part of the Boys & Girls Club experience. Of course, we also knew that putting the technology in our Clubs was only a first step: Kids had to learn how to use it. They wanted to learn how to make websites, how to create original music, how to make a movie, how to do graphic design. We had to learn how to provide staff with the training and resources they need to teach kids how to really put technology to work for them.

And we've had great success so far. When we started in 2001, probably less than 100 clubs had a technology center. By the end of 2004, we had over 2,600 technology centers and Clubs—1,800 of which we provided all the hardware and software for. Adding this component has really been a fundamental change in the way everyone thinks about Boys & Girls Clubs. Now, more than 1,500 Clubs participate in our Digital Arts festivals each year, festivals that begin at local Clubs and extend regionally and nationally. Last year, our finalists even had a showing at the Atlanta Film Festival.



**Linda Testa**  
Senior Manager,  
Community Affairs,  
Microsoft



**Ed Mishrell**  
Vice President,  
Boys & Girls Clubs  
of America



Club Tech centers benefit young people in 2,600 Boys & Girls Clubs across the U.S.

## Program Design

### How did you go about establishing the goals for the Club Tech program?

**Testa:** Club Tech's initial goals were based on learnings from a pilot project BGCA and Microsoft conducted before we actually developed the Club Tech grant. After the pilot, we worked together to establish project goals based on what we learned, goals that included providing Club with access to current technology, developing programs that infuse technology-skill development into every aspect of the Club program, and training staff to implement and use technology. Then, BGCA took these goals and worked with internal and external experts in youth development to develop the final program content.

**Mishrell:** It really has been a partnership. In 1999, Microsoft funded tech center pilots in 14 clubs. We studied what happened in those tech centers and identified the

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**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS  
OF AMERICA**

**Boys & Girls Clubs of America** comprises a national network of more than 3,700 neighborhood-based facilities which annually serve some 4.4 million young people, primarily from disadvantaged circumstances. Known as "The Positive Place For Kids," Clubs provide guidance-oriented programs on a daily basis for children 6-18 years old, conducted by a full-time professional staff. Key programs emphasize character and leadership development, educational enhancement, career preparation, health and life skills, the arts, sports, fitness, and recreation. The national headquarters are located in Atlanta, Georgia.

Please visit [www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org) for more information.

issues and challenges in each. We also had an outside evaluator come in, visit each of the Clubs, and complete an assessment that identified which ones were doing better than others and why. Then, we looked at that information together and identified three key learnings that became the basis for the current Club Tech Program.

*“The program uses technology to do the teaching, [but] puts the staff person in charge of working with, recognizing, and encouraging the kids.”*

— Ed Mishrell, Vice President of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America

The first thing we found is that, to begin with, you’ve got to make it really easy for technology centers to get set up and operating. Particularly at the beginning, we sent computers to environments whose personnel didn’t have the technical experience needed to set them up. We learned that the best way to get things up and running was to load the software and configure the network before we shipped equipment to the Clubs. That way, the computers could just be unpacked, plugged in, and ready to go. We continue to use this approach and it has helped us to implement large numbers of Tech Centers with relatively little technical support.

The second thing we discovered was the importance of training staff. Initially, Clubs tried hiring

‘techies’ who lacked real experience working with kids, but they didn’t do very well. We decided instead that we had to hire people who could connect with kids and then train them to make use of the technology. That makes training a really critical ingredient.

Finally, we determined that we needed to develop turn-key [ready-made] programs that made it easy for people without technology training to come in and work with kids.

**Testa:** With these elements in place, we focused on Club Tech outcomes—on the ability to understand, document, and communicate the learnings, everything from developing, implementing, maintaining, and scaling the program to capturing the actual learning of the young people served. It was our hope that this would be an extremely scalable program. This has proven to be true with over 2,600 clubs participating in the Club Tech program to date. That’s because from the beginning Club Tech has been rooted in the culture of the club.

## Program Management

**How did you grow the Club Tech offerings? How did you approach staff training?**

**Mishrell:** That first year or so, we really focused on developing the programs, particularly our Digital Arts Program, which is an online curriculum that teaches kids how to use the software and how to get started. Although the program uses technology to do the teaching, the great thing about it is that it puts the staff person in charge of working with, recognizing, and encouraging the kids. As a result, the staff person leads, but they don’t have to internalize the infinite knowledge about how to use the software, or how to make a plan when you’re developing a movie.

**Testa:** From there, the project focused on providing training and resources to the youth professional staff in the clubs. BGCA conducted “Road Show” training sessions in Clubs around the country. We initiated the Digital Arts Festival as a national competition to focus attention on Club Tech resources and programs at a Club level, to encourage clubs to participate in Club Tech programs, and to recognize young people who were learning new technology skills. Club staff saw digital art as a critical piece for youth to come in and engage. In growing YNet, BGCA leveraged their ability to have kids interview stars like Denzel Washington and Shaquille O’Neal who had come out of a club, share their conversations across the network, and in the process become introduced to different professions.

It’s worth pointing out, though, that one of the biggest investments that the BGCA made is in finding the right staff who actually understand how to work with youth. They really are at the forefront of providing this training and interacting with the kids and teens in a way that young people find meaningful. You’re not recreating a classroom environment: The kids have just come from school and they’re coming into a Club to play and learn at the same time. The mentors and coaches understand exactly how to support kids within this type of informal environment.

**Mishrell:** The big piece really is training. A club director may hire the technology center director to help take advantage of the Club Tech program, to organize programs for the kids and the community, or to help automate the Club’s own systems, but it’s rare that the Club director has the expertise to supervise and talk to that person about what software program to run. For the technology center and for Club Tech to flourish, most Clubs are really dependent on our providing new staff with training. We need to help ensure that if somebody gets hired, they can be up to speed in a short time.

I think we trained 1,700 people last year, for example. And as we do it, we’re always doing evaluations and asking people for their feedback. We also ask people to complete surveys to give us an indication as to what’s working and what isn’t working, what needs attention, and what doesn’t.

Beginning last year we also had a lot of growth in online training. Now as we update things, or if our people want a little refresher, they can sign up for one of these modules that walks them through the program and how to do it. And there’s an opportunity to ask questions and interact.

We’ve also established an advisory committee of Club professionals that meets once a year in Atlanta for a couple of days. There, we evaluate together all our content and get their advice on what needs to be upgraded or changed for the next year. With this in hand, we work closely with Microsoft and get their input on it. In fact, one or two people from Microsoft are usually at this meeting.



Young people at Club Tech learn together to make movies, create music, play games, and explore the world via the Internet.





Microsoft and the Boys & Girls Clubs put a priority on hiring those who work well with youth and then teach them technology skills.

### What procedures have you developed to manage the program together?

**Mishrell:** As you'd expect, we send a monthly update to Microsoft that reports our current progress toward our objectives for that year. We also do a weekly one-hour conference call, just to kind of talk about what's happening now. But it's probably all our comparatively informal time together that really defines how we manage the Club Tech program. Linda's always there. She attends our staff retreat, and our advisory committee meetings, and I think she would say that she feels like part of the team, that her voice is heard. I know all of our staff are really comfortable working with her, and she's been there for a lot of the discussions and planning and thinking.

**Testa:** That's true. We're in our fifth year, and we really do have an integrated approach on the executive and the tactical levels of each of our organizations. We've established an advisory committee of Club professionals that meets once a year in Atlanta, for example. There, we evaluate together all Club Tech content and get their advice on what needs to be upgraded or changed for the next year. We go to the annual BGCA technology conference, and we give presentations and get to know and talk with people in the individual Clubs doing the program. And we participate on site visits, and see directly how the program works

with kids. I think this integration with all levels of the organization has helped us know the kind of resources to bring and how to be flexible with our guidance.

Equally important is Ed's strength as a leader and project manager. In addition to his technical expertise, he brings a wealth of knowledge of BGCA, its programs, and its culture to the table. He successfully coordinates the activities of multiple internal BGCA teams that are involved with Club Tech (such as Technology Operations, Club Tech Program Support, YNet, PR, executive support) and makes it easy for me to have a full understanding of all aspects of the project. I play a similar role for Microsoft, representing many internal teams on this project. Ed and I make it a practice to have working meetings at least annually with the members of the individual teams in both organizations that are involved with the project. We work with many on a much more frequent basis. This integration is invaluable in helping BGCA and Microsoft work together as one team.

**Mishrell:** Because Linda's there at the table, she's able to recognize opportunities in which, for example, we're doing something that Microsoft may be able to bring as a resource, or something that would be important for other people at Microsoft or at Boys & Girls Club to know. Not every corporate funding partnership works that well, of course. But from the beginning, Microsoft wanted to be at the table, wanted to be part of the decision-making process, and part of what they bring as a corporation is that they're really great problem solvers.

### How do you measure success when participation is optional?

**Testa:** Initially we tracked only the number of kids who took advantage of the program across the network. As, for example, the digital arts curriculum evolved we were able to track specific participation by individuals and by Clubs. Of course, we have the qualitative information about the work that kids are doing, and we also know that

the kinds of projects in which kids are engaged are getting more sophisticated.

**Mishrell:** But you know, because of the size of the network, it's almost impossible—it would certainly be cost prohibitive—to measure skills across the whole band of Clubs. As a result, we now measure success in a few different ways. We measure, for example, the number of kids and the number of clubs served. Most of our clubs are using the program, so there's not a lot of room for growth there. We've been adding about 250 new Clubs every year, and in this respect the number of Clubs will increase by about this number each year.

We have also done formal studies in which we compare skills over time. We went in and tested the kids' basic technology skills, then ran the program and tested them again to see if they had a gain in skill level. Although some Clubs have tools of their own for doing this—it's something some need to do for their funders—that's not data that we collect from every Club every year. That would be kind of mind boggling.

We work pretty hard at getting that feedback on an annual basis, but we don't really work directly with the kids ourselves. We have more than 3,700 clubs—and that's 1,100 organizations, each of which is its own 501(c)3 corporation. So we can't mandate anything. We provide resources and training and work with clubs to implement those programs. Then, every club matches the needs of the community with the expertise of its staff. So not every club runs all the programs or participates in everything.

We work with the clubs, and they work with the kids. Our goal is to provide a quality product that really makes a difference for kids. You know, at its most basic, that's our role: to provide services to the clubs. A good outcome is one in which we provide a resource that works for them and that they can implement. From this perspective Club Tech has been a really wonderful program.

**Testa:** That's true. Today, you can walk into these Clubs and the kids and the professionals who serve them are completely on top of technology. Whether it is web casting, digital media, or movie-making, there are people there doing it. We were initially inclined to want to know the number of people who did better in school or obtained a job as a result of skills learned in Club Tech. But we've realized that maybe these are not really the questions we should be asking. Instead, we're really trying to understand the quality of work that is occurring in clubs, the number of kids participating in the Club Tech program, and their level of interaction. Because they're learning life skills they will take to any job and at the same time they're becoming aware of their ability to communicate their ideas, believe in themselves, learn new skills, and make a difference in their environment.

And we're just as happy that affiliates have started using technology far more effectively in their day-to-day business. In fact, this whole effort has changed the way BGCA delivers programming to clubs, the way they interact with their staff, and the way they share information internally as an organization. When this program started, for example, they delivered curriculum in printed binders that were physically sent by mail to every affiliate across the network. Now, that's all done online. They've also developed an online YNet for kids within which kids write the content and webcast information between clubs. They have posted the Digital Arts Suite program content online in English and Spanish, making it accessible to a worldwide audience ([www.bgcayouthnet.org](http://www.bgcayouthnet.org)). We're really pleased that this whole change has been important to helping Boys & Girls Clubs move forward as an organization. Microsoft and BGCA believe we are fulfilling the Club Tech mission "to create opportunities for young people to access, learn about,

*"Today, you can walk into these Clubs and the kids and the professionals who serve them are completely on top of technology."*

— Linda Testa,  
Senior Manager,  
Community Affairs at Microsoft





Training staff who can work well with young people is a significant focus for Club Tech.

staff training. Because Club Tech programs and resources are now publicly available on YNet, BGCA is uniquely positioned to provide tech training not just to club members but potentially to all young people in the US and around the world. This will allow both Microsoft and BGCA to become leaders in providing technology skills and digital literacy to youth. To accomplish this with clubs, staff training will be a key to the success of the program. By increasing online training opportunities and fostering Club-to-Club technology mentoring programs, BGCA will create a cadre of staff who can really help Club members, not just bridge the digital divide, but become productive and caring citizens in a digital age.

and use technology in meaningful, positive, and safe ways.”

### Program Extension

#### How will you continue the Club Tech program?

**Testa:** You know, the success of Club Tech is one of our proudest achievements. We were really happy when we heard Roxanne Spillett, president of BGCA, say that Club Tech is making possible “the most significant innovations, improvements, and programs in our (BGCA) history.” Our intent was to create a program that would be woven into the fabric of the clubs and be as ubiquitous as technology itself. We have seen that transformation happen in a short five years. Going forward, we want to make sure that other partners build upon all that has been put in place and help to continue to solidify this program for decades to come.

**Mishrell:** With Club Tech so much part of the fabric of our clubs, the future really hinges on increased outreach and increased

## A FOCUS ON FUN AND COMPUTER FUNDAMENTALS

There are many activities that draw the attention of the 190 or so young people, ages 7 to 18, who flood into the Santa Monica Boys & Girls Club every afternoon. There’s a game room, teen center, art shop, and a gym on the first floor, a learning center where they can do their homework, and a basketball court and playing field at the back of the building. About 25 to 30 youth who participate in Club Tech walk upstairs and sit down at one of about 30 flat screen computers in the newly renovated tech room.

At first, they spend time catching up with each other and their ongoing projects. Then, from 4:00 – 5:30, they receive training and guidance from two instructors on the various Club Tech programs, which include 6-week courses in movie making, music, photography, graphics, and web design. After the direct instruction, participants work independently on their particular assignment.



Aaron Young, Assistant Executive Director for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Monica, California, is proud of what these young people have accomplished over the past few years at Club Tech. “All the computers here were built by the kids themselves,” he says, explaining that the Club acquired the various computer parts, and then taught young people not only how to put them together, but how to repair them. He is pleased that this Club Tech (and the entire Boys & Girls Club) attracts a very diverse group of youth from the local Latino, white, and African American communities.



Every six weeks, Young and others at Club Tech submit the best work of their students to the Digital Arts Festival, a Club Tech initiative that recognizes works of excellence at the regional and national level. Last year, three of the young people at the Santa Monica Boys & Girls Club won in the video category. “It was very exciting for them to get that kind of recognition,” says Young. One of the Club Tech standouts was a young man named Brandon, who had been coming to the Boys & Girls Club since he was seven. “His favorite activity was graphic design,” Young explains, “and he was very talented.” Brandon is now attending the University of California at Davis, and is studying to be a doctor. While Young is very proud of Brandon’s success, he explains that the goal of the Club “is not to turn every kid into a doctor.” It’s more to expose them to the wide range of technology that is at their fingertips. “No one can get a job these days if they don’t have the kind of technology skills that you learn here at Club Tech.”

The 8 to 10 teenagers who participated in Club Tech and who graduated from high school last year all went on to college. And that, says Young, shows the positive impact that this program can have, particularly among youth from under-served communities.





*"We learned that simply providing technical training for youth was not sufficient to ensure successful entry into and retention in the workforce. We came to see that life skills played an important role."*

— Roger Nozaki, Former Executive Director, GE Foundation

## GE Foundation & International Youth Foundation

### PROGRAM PROFILE: GE FOUNDATION LIFE SKILLS FOR EMPLOYABILITY

#### ***Equipping Disadvantaged Youth with Skills for Life***

"Young people in impoverished communities face daunting challenges as they struggle to navigate a complex, competitive, and sometimes very threatening world," says Jack Boyson, Program Director, GE Foundation Life Skills for Employability Program at the International Youth Foundation (IYF). "They need to be equipped with a wide range of skills to be able to overcome these challenges and prepare for positive, healthy, futures."

According to Roger Nozaki, former Executive Director of the GE Foundation, "We learned that simply providing technical training for youth was not sufficient to ensure successful entry into and retention in the workforce. We came to see," he adds, "that life skills played an important role." In 2003, the GE Foundation and the International Youth Foundation formed a partnership to promote life and employability skills among under-served youth in India and Mexico.

The partnership reflects the GE Foundation's commitment to ensuring youth are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for them to make the transition from school to work and to succeed in the global marketplace.

The original goal of the program, which was launched in 2004 with a US\$1.1 million grant from the GE Foundation, was to develop and pilot test a life and employability skills curriculum, and implement that model in India and Mexico in targeted communities. At the outset, the program estimated it would reach 3,000 youth in those two countries over the first two years, and to date it is on track to surpass that goal. The program specifically aims to increase school retention, return youth dropouts to school, and boost participants' employment.

The GE Foundation Life Skills for Employability program equips young people, ages 13 to 18, with a range of skills (see page 59) that will help them be successful, reliable, and confident individuals, and is conducted in after-school settings, vocational training centers, and youth clubs for out-of-school teenagers. The program has developed 81 lessons, with some focusing on general life skills, service learning, and volunteering, while others are specifically tailored to address local issues and employment needs. Beneficiaries include students who are both in-school and out-of-school, with most living in urban slums.

The program is currently being implemented by two organizations that are members of IYF's Global Partner Network. In India, Youthreach, a nonprofit organization based in Delhi, implements the program, while Fundación Rostros y Voces was selected as the local partner in Mexico. To date, the curriculum has reached nearly 1,000 youth in India, with approximately 1,200 young people having benefited from the program in Mexico so far. In early 2006, GE Foundation announced plans to adapt and expand the program to Hungary and Poland, through a three-year, US\$1.8 million grant to IYF.

This chapter illuminates some of the complexities of designing and evaluating "soft" skills programs, and adapting them in different countries and cultures.



To further explore the challenges of a global company and a nonprofit organization working together to develop a model life skills curriculum, we interviewed **Roger Nozaki**, who at the time of this interview was Executive Director of the GE Foundation; **Matthew DeCamara**, Program Director of Education Outside the U.S. at the GE Foundation; and **Jack Boyson**, Director of the GE Foundation Life Skills for Employability program at the International Youth Foundation.



**Matthew DeCamara**  
Program Director,  
GE Foundation



**Roger Nozaki**  
Former Executive  
Director,  
GE Foundation



**Jack Boyson**  
Director, GE  
Foundation  
Life Skills for  
Employability  
Program, IYF

## Initial Objectives

### Why invest in a life skills program?

**Roger Nozaki:** It came out of our research. We kept asking what the barriers were to success for underrepresented students. In India, for example, we found, through conversations with IYF, that while there was a fair amount of activity in job skills training, including computer skills-related courses, students were entering the programs but that wasn't necessarily translating into successful employment. IYF presented data that showed life skills were an important ingredient, and that these young people needed to understand how the workplace works and to learn "life skills" that would help them be successful in that workplace and beyond. So IYF helped build and develop a curriculum to assist these youth to get jobs and keep them, and also succeed beyond the workplace.

**Jack Boyson:** For years, IYF has been promoting life skills as a way to help underserved young people to improve their current conditions and prospects for the future. We know that when young people have these skills they can become self motivated, reliable, and confident; and can overcome adversity and be responsible human beings. They are also less likely to drop out of school and more likely to join an apprenticeship or job training program. Many of them, as result of such training, also change their personal attitudes toward life, and feel a greater sense of hope in the future.

I listened to a group of female gang members in a poor neighborhood in Mexico City talk about how difficult their lives were, having to deal with unresponsive schools, abusive boy friends, and parents who wanted to kick them out of the house. Then I watched them participate in one of the GE Foundation life skills sessions, and learn how to work out their problems peacefully and constructively. I think they were surprised to see there are alternatives to venting their anger in acts of violence, theft, and self-destructive behaviors like drugs.

### How does this initiative fit into the broader strategy at the GE Foundation?

**Matthew DeCamara:** We have been working to operationalize three initiative areas for our programs outside the United States. These are school readiness, school excellence, and youth success and employability. It's in this third area that we view IYF as our partner. We are looking to deploy programs in eight countries where we have a significant GE presence. Those include countries like China, India, and Mexico, that have some very significant societal and education needs; and in Europe, where we are looking to promote secondary school and transition to workforce models.



To date, the GE Foundation Life Skills for Employability program in India has reached nearly 1,000 young people.

### Why did you enter into this particular partnership?

**DeCamara:** We went with IYF because it had a track record with these programs and had a global network of pre-screened NGO partners. IYF also works closely with its partners on capacity building, so that counted as well. Local organizations [in India and Mexico] would also contribute to the process.

**Boyson:** Our partnership with the GE Foundation enabled us to work with a highly respected global company that shared our understanding of the important role that

## GE's CSR Philosophy

"GE's CSR philosophy is quite simple. First, a good corporate citizen has a strong economic model that is sustainable and can fulfill its mission. Then, you must have rigorous integrity and compliance procedures. So if you do these things well, then you can go beyond and do what is ethical and responsible, to help build your company's reputation but also help solve some of the world's toughest problems. Some people, when they think of corporate citizenship, think only of the philanthropy side, and they miss, I believe, the broader ability of a company to do good by being good.

Some organizations use their philanthropy as a topical ointment, spread pretty thin across a range of different issues—the arts, education, science, and environmental issues. We chose to work in only a few areas, but we work very deep, and we look for measurable outcomes. We hold our grantees accountable for what they said they could achieve. We are not giving away money to make us feel good. We are investing it to make a difference.

We see enormous value in public, private partnerships where we seek out issues that are important for us to focus on to help in those communities. But the important thing for us is to focus and prioritize. If you are passionate and committed to improving education, as we are, then you want to work with partners who really deliver the maximum benefit for kids."

— Robert L. Corcoran, Vice President, Corporate Citizenship and President of the GE Foundation.



International Youth Foundation®

**GE Foundation**, the philanthropic organization of the General Electric Company, works to strengthen educational opportunities for disadvantaged youth globally; and supports GE employee and retiree giving and involvement in GE communities around the world. In 2005, the GE Family contributed more than US\$215 million to community and educational programs, including US\$71 million from the GE Foundation.

Please visit [www.gefoundation.com](http://www.gefoundation.com) for more information.

For more information on the **International Youth Foundation**, see inside back cover or visit [www.iynet.org](http://www.iynet.org).





The life skills program has been expanded from India and Mexico to benefit the young people of Hungary and Poland.

life skills training can play in a young person's ability to get a job and be successful. So much of what we do at IYF is aimed at closing the hope gap—between those young people who have a future and those who can't even imagine one. The life skills program with the GE Foundation clearly addresses that overall mission.

The partnership also provided us with the opportunity and seed money to design and develop an effective, relevant, locally-specific life and employability skills curriculum that we could then scale up and use in other IYF programs and in other countries. We wanted to build on the work we've already done in this field.

#### How did you choose your partners and how did those partnerships evolve?

**Nozaki:** Let's take the example of Youthreach, IYF's NGO partner in India. The GE India team spent a great deal of time with the Youthreach staff. GE India got to know their capacity on the ground, and did extensive due diligence. Together, we, IYF and Youthreach spent a lot of time developing the scope of the program and making sure the GE Foundation vision meshed with IYF's and Youthreach's mission on the ground. We worked to define clearly the role of the youth-serving organizations which were actually doing the training and delivering the curriculum. That's one of the challenges of this model. There are many layers to work through, in terms of determining the scope of the program, keeping it on track, monitoring it, and tracking results.

The organizations in all of our partnerships have to be willing to go along with us in a process that builds a common, mutual understanding of what our goals are for the partnership, and how they will be realized through programs, through communications, and through ongoing involvement of GE employees and the GE Foundation. Learning what's not working is as important to know as what is working; open, candid conversations are essential.

**DeCamara:** We are really looking for performance-based programs that are both ambitious and that really take on the tough assignments. As a result, we seek out partners who can execute the programs efficiently and effectively, and who have the ability and the know how to replicate and sustain them. We put a premium on being as smart as possible. As the IYF relationship continues, we'll better realize the overall performance of this initiative.

**Boyson:** Both India and Mexico were of strategic interest to GE, and IYF had partner organizations in those countries who wanted to work with IYF to implement the programs. So it was a good fit.

#### What were the benefits and challenges of this partnership?

**Nozaki:** It's been a learning process. For example, we had many discussions with IYF around getting clear definitions of target audiences, key goals and outcomes, and baseline data and target goals for those metrics. We need to have clarity around what kinds of improvements we want and what level of increase constitutes "success." We also learned that we needed to monitor more closely how programs were being rolled out. Looking back, we could have intervened earlier to address some issues.

That said, there are some successes here. We've seen that this is very important work to be done and that we are working with the right students—students who face significant challenges in their lives. There's real potential for the life skills curriculum to make a significant difference.

**DeCamara:** One of the benefits we bring to our partners is the delivery of professional skills through GE volunteers. Similar to IYF, we can help build the capacity of the NGO sector and contribute in areas where our employees have expertise. We want to find ways we can share and unlock our own skills and approaches, so that in addition to funding and research, we can affect education and society more broadly.

We also want to bring more urgency to the issues and needs of the communities. Fortunately, through the company, we have the ability to develop close relationships with government officials and other decision makers. This is part of what we can offer in terms of leadership and influence, helping to shape programs in ways that are bigger than dollars.

**Boyson:** We have a very good, I would say excellent, partnership with the GE Foundation—particularly in the implementation phase of the project. One of the

#### Skills for Life

A team of experts from the United States, India, and Mexico—representing the fields of general education, career education, positive youth development, and life skills and health education—developed the content of the GE Foundation Life Skills for Employability program. Among the key skills the initiative seeks to instill among participating youth:

- **Personal competencies:** (e.g., managing emotions, cooperation with others, personal responsibility, developing confidence, following directions, and respect for self and others)
- **Problem Solving:** (e.g., managing conflicts and reducing bullying)
- **Effective work habits:** (e.g., workplace protocol, teamwork, interviewing, time management, and workers' responsibilities and rights)
- **Healthy lifestyles:** (e.g., substance abuse prevention, nutrition, STD/HIV/AIDS prevention, healthy relationships, and decision making)
- **Community and Environmental Awareness:** (e.g., environmental and community living spaces preservation)
- **Diversity:** (e.g., respect for differences, tolerance, values)
- **Service learning:** (e.g., civic responsibility, community service, volunteering)



few challenges was in the beginning, when GE Foundation wanted some pretty specific numbers in terms of the targeted outcomes of the program. We were able to predict attendance—at about 80 percent—and that was pretty accurate. But it was more difficult for us to develop numbers around how well each participant would do in terms of specific skills, particularly since we were using a new curriculum and teachers and youth educators who were not yet familiar with it. But now, after a year's worth of experience and evaluations, we can provide those numbers. I also agree with Matt that the involvement of GE employees has been valuable to the overall success of the program.

## Program Design and Implementation

### How does the program work? What are the roles and responsibilities?

**Boyson:** IYF primarily developed the curriculum, along with outside consultants and experts in the field. GE Foundation gave us the freedom to design the basic curriculum, while each country partner took responsibility for developing its own locally-based lessons. The two national organizations, Youthreach and Fundación Rostros y Voces, implemented the program on the ground—training the instructors and running classes at the various schools and other sites through their networks of local NGOs.

### How important is the evaluation process?

**DeCamara:** As a company, we are very results and metrics oriented. So for this life skills program, we want to see baseline data on the participants. How many are out of school looking for jobs, and how many are still in school? We also need to see measurable results that underscore the value of the program for young people after

they've completed it. We are hoping and expecting that this life skills program will positively impact participants' future academic and career path. We don't want to support just a "nice" experience. The key question is, what's the impact, and what level of progress constitutes success? Getting these metrics is a very tough issue for all of our programs, but especially for life skills, which tend to be somewhat intangible. So we're still working on these aspects with IYF.

**Boyson:** IYF sought out the expertise of Brandeis University to develop an effective on-line data collection and evaluation tool for the program. Some of the data and assessment tools are filled out by teachers, others by students themselves. But a few problems came up, primarily because of inadequate computer resources, poor Internet connections, and the time pressures to fill out the forms. But Brandeis did produce a phenomenal model to assess the effectiveness of a life skills program, and it's one that we will use to evaluate other IYF programs. As I said before, developing the metrics and baseline data for this program was initially a significant challenge for us.

*"The key question is, what's the impact, and what level of progress constitutes success? Getting these metrics is a very tough issue for all of our programs, but especially for life skills, which tend to be somewhat intangible."*

— Matthew DeCamara,

### What are some of the learnings from this alliance?

**Nozaki:** Some of what we've learned in the process is that when we are providing grants from the United States to communities in other parts of the world, we need to have a deep and significant involvement at every level to understand the right issues, the right organizations, and the right approaches to take.

We believe that this program demonstrates how local GE involvement can add at least as much value as our funding. That engagement also raises questions regarding the right kind of organization for us to work with. We've seen very clearly that local, indigenous organizations are critical to success. We have always known that, but this has become clearer through this process.

**Boyson:** We've learned that this particular model can really be applied broadly to different groups of young people, and can be conducted in a wide range of settings, from rural to urban communities, and from school-based to community-based sites. We've also seen that shared decision making between a company and the NGO partner, as well as a keen cultural sensitivity to local needs and customs, are essential tools for designing an effective life skills program and determining what works. Some elements of the success of the program included developing a cadre of youth workers and program staff experienced in implementing the curriculum, having long term alliances with a corporate partner, and developing strong ties with an effective evaluation consulting firm.



Young people in Mexico City work on a life skills project at the site of Cauce Ciudadano, the local implementing partner.





Life skills training promotes personal responsibility, effective work habits, tolerance, problem-solving, and time management skills.

## Future Directions

### What are the future plans for this initiative and for the overall work of the Foundation?

**DeCamara:** In terms of programmatic shifts in the life skills initiative, we are moving toward a more school-based focus. There are models that suggest in the near term that success outside the school system is a viable route to consider, so sometimes we will work in NGO settings. But ultimately, we see the delivery mechanism of the program at the formal school level. Also, as a result of a more outcomes-based strategy, we have streamlined our efforts as a Foundation. We cut the number of individual grants in half, cut by two-thirds the different types of grants we fund, yet increased funding significantly at the same time we narrowed our focus. The whole idea is to have a much greater focus on sustain-

able and significant impact.

**Nozaki:** In general, we are placing a far greater emphasis on research. What does the research say are the critical needs and the effective practices in education? We then use that research to frame what we decide to fund, and then identify strong partners who we want to work with in implementing these programs, and making them real on the ground. We are also making a serious investment in evaluation, so that in an ongoing way, we can continue to learn from the initiatives we've funded, and continue to inform our practice and our work. Our goal is for other companies or organizations to be able to learn from what we've learned, to jump-start their own efforts.

**Boyson:** The GE Foundation and IYF are now entering the next stage, taking what we've learned in the life skills program and expanding it into Poland and Hungary. As Matt says, there will also be a shift in emphasis toward implementing the program in formal educational settings and in school-based after school programs, with a greater emphasis on employability skills. IYF continues to be convinced of the importance of equipping young people with these critical skills for life, and we are very pleased that the GE Foundation has decided to extend this partnership.

## PROMOTING LIFE SKILLS IN INDIA

The sun shines through a large window as 17 enthusiastic young people, ages 15 to 18, gather for their life skills class in a downtown building in Delhi. The session is part of their computer training vocational course run by PRAYAS, a local nonprofit organization. The classroom has slightly fading paint on the walls and worn floor mats and chairs. But right now, there is a feeling of anticipation and excitement among the students. "This class is different, it doesn't feel like studies and hard work," says Mita, a 16-year-old participant. "It's much more fun, and we get to speak our minds and say what we think." Echoing these sentiments, Mitesh, the program coordinator at PRAYAS, adds: "Young people have learned so much from this program. They have become more confident and more optimistic about the future."

To date, about 1,000 young people are benefiting from the GE Foundation Life Skills for Employability Program in India, which is being carried out on the ground by Youthreach, a leading nonprofit based in Delhi, and its implementing partners, including PRAYAS. Youth educators, working with local NGOs, are trained to deliver the curriculum. According to Supreet Singh, Executive Director of Youthreach, this program "enables and empowers today's youth from disadvantaged communities to become informed, inspired human beings through learnings in the areas of life skills, employability, and entrepreneurship."



Graduates of the life skills program in Delhi, India, proudly hold their certificates of completion.

The GE Foundation Life Skills for Employability Program, which is being delivered in both India and Mexico, helps young people to find success at school and better equips them to be good workers, lead healthy lives, and give back to their communities. The curriculum promotes a range of common life and employability skills while others are country specific, seeking to address local needs and social customs. For example, youth in India gain knowledge about how to improve their nutrition, fight drug and alcohol abuse, and learn about sexually

transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, whereas those in Mexico learn how to deal with gender discrimination and how to become engaged in their community. The curriculum advisory board in India, comprised of experts in education, career education, youth development, and health, helped maintain the curriculum's standards of quality and context "within the existing Indian realities," says Singh.

One of the unique characteristics of the program is the involvement of the local GE office in Delhi. Monthly meetings are held at the GE corporate office between GE and Youthreach teams, to report progress and make refinements. In the beginning, GE employees were part of the curriculum board, and also helped run focus group interviews, which provided valuable first hand feedback on the program. "We learned that partnerships between nonprofits like us and the corporate and private sector can work if both are open to accepting each other's viewpoints," says Singh. "Such a collaborative approach can become a powerful tool that can help address the many challenges that are facing young people today."





*"The final solution we develop is never really going to look like anything that we envision at the beginning. ...It's going to be a lot better because of the work that's done with a partner."*

— Robin Willner, Vice President, Global Community Initiatives, IBM



## IBM & Public School Districts

### PROGRAM PROFILE: REINVENTING EDUCATION

#### ***Creating Solutions Through Technology***

In the last decade, technology has dramatically changed the way teachers teach and students learn. Inside the classroom, students now have access to literally a world of information via the Internet. Computer-based instruction is also changing the way teachers share lessons with their students and assess students on what they know, ultimately enabling them to offer ever more focused, customized assistance based on these assessments.

As these innovations have been taking place inside the classroom, school districts similarly have been developing their own use of "technology" to improve the ways they record, store, and share information about their students and the ways in which they communicate goals and objectives to classroom teachers and school administrators. Among those leading this progression is IBM, whose philanthropic effort to establish new technological solutions for schools and teachers is called, appropriately enough, "Reinventing Education."

Since its inception more than a decade ago, Reinventing Education has worked with school partners to develop and deliver technology solutions that tackle some of education's toughest problems. Together with school district administrators and teachers around the world, Reinventing Education identifies communication, data management, and professional development challenges common to school districts, administrators, and teachers. The program then assigns IBM employees to help solve these problems together with their school partners. Adopting proven project-management techniques and procedures that they employ with all of their business customers, Reinventing Education staff then collaborate with school districts—sometimes over the course of many years—to develop, pilot, and refine a single technological solution that their school partners share and personalize.

These partnerships have resulted in innovative solutions including:

- **Riverdeep Learning Village<sup>®1</sup>** is an instructional portal that serves as a school's single access point for communication, collaboration, teaching, and professional development.
- **The Teacher WorkPlace** makes it possible for teachers to design and produce electronic portfolio tools; personalize, store, and review professional development materials; communicate with mentors and peers about their classroom experiences; and track student grades and achievement to guide their classroom instruction.
- **Watch-me!-Read** is a speech-recognition software that helps students in grades K–2 gain a solid grounding in reading.

Each effort has succeeded because Reinventing Education engages IBM's researchers, educational consultants, and technology experts in the development of technological solutions. Working with school districts in the United States and across the globe, these personnel help to identify resources and solutions that will meet the needs of the greatest number of schools, teachers, and students. In this respect, the Reinventing Education program mirrors the way IBM's business works with its customers. Reinventing Education personnel listen carefully to the problems that need to be solved and bring the right group of people together to develop and deliver a solution.

<sup>1</sup> For more information, visit [www.riverdeep.net](http://www.riverdeep.net).





**Robin Willner**  
Vice President,  
Global Community  
Initiatives, IBM

To learn more about Reinventing Education, we sat down with **Robin Willner**, IBM's Vice President of Global Community Initiatives, and three school administrators with whom IBM has worked closely in recent years: **Ann Clark** and **Nancy Hester**, Assistant Superintendents at Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools [North Carolina]; **Dr. Terri Mozingo**, Associate Superintendent for Durham Public Schools [North Carolina]; and **Dr. Nancy G. Terrel**, Assistant Superintendent, Communications, Continuous Improvement, Community Involvement for Broward County Schools [Florida].

## Initial Objectives

### What are IBM's general objectives for the Reinventing Education program?

**Robin Willner:** Most broadly, the Reinventing Education program is focused on innovation; but each time we begin a new project, our specific goals are very much defined by the school districts that act as our lead partners. We have completed three rounds of Reinventing Education in the last 12 years. In every case, we begin with the aim of developing new technology applications that directly address barriers to school improvement and student achievement. Then, we put out a call for proposals and ask school districts to identify specific educational solutions they believe could be accelerated with technology. We listen to them, and—working with school districts as lead partners—move forward to develop the appropriate technological solution.

We've deliberately established this structure; it's the best way to initiate a pilot and then to engage school districts in thinking about IBM's involvement as the first instance of a broad and lasting district strategy. In the process, we've come to focus on a specific set of issues: things like assessment, lesson planning and instructional planning, and parent involvement—all issues that, each time we work with them, are identified by school districts as important priorities.

## Program Design

### How are specific project goals established when a new Reinventing Education initiative begins?

**Willner:** Because the specific goals come from our school partners, Reinventing Education really begins with investigation. In fact, Reinventing Education starts much earlier in the software development process than a standard IBM engagement. In no other instance at IBM do we spend so much time with customers getting such

*"In this respect, we reaped a double dividend: we presented one problem to IBM and ended up having additional benefits from the work the teachers did around lesson plans and ways to post and share materials."*

— Ann Clark, Assistant Superintendent, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

specific requirements before we begin developing software. That's because we're not starting with a set of specs. We start with a very high-level idea and then [follow it] through a long discovery stage before we catch up with the place where normal engagement would begin.

To build the "Teacher WorkPlace," for example, we worked with a number of districts to determine the right set of features that the districts believe are needed by teachers to design and view lesson plans, as well as to enter and track grades. Each district—whether Memphis City Public Schools, or the State Education Department of West Virginia—worked with us to come up with a common set of requirements. Then, instead of working separately, each district received a Reinventing Education grant that made it possible for all of us to work together to develop this solution.

**Ann Clark:** Because we're one district among many, our goals were necessarily more narrow than IBM's when our project began; but our goals were adopted by the group. For example, we first looked at ways that technology could enhance parent engagement. But the project also ended up considering ways to enhance teacher instruction and improve parent communication. In the process of talking through these issues, teachers in our districts also realized there were ways that technology could help them build and share lesson plans and collaborate with each other. In this respect, we reaped a double dividend: we presented one problem to IBM and ended up having additional benefits from the work the teachers did around lesson plans and ways to post and share materials.

**Nancy Hester/Terri Mozingo:** We had much the same experience. We wanted to create a technology-based environment that would give all of our teachers access to the same resources—24 hours a day, seven days a week. We wanted to reduce instruc-



**Dr. Terri Mozingo**  
Associate  
Superintendent,  
Durham Public  
Schools



**Nancy Terrel**  
Assistant  
Superintendent,  
Broward County  
Schools



**Ann Clark**  
Asst. Superintendent  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
Schools



**Nancy Hester**  
Asst. Superintendent,  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
Schools



*Reinventing Education is an IBM initiative that integrates the ambitions, experience, and expertise of school districts worldwide including Brazil, Ireland, Italy, and Vietnam.*

**IBM** is the world's largest information technology company, with 80 years of leadership in helping businesses innovate. Drawing on resources from across IBM and key business partners, IBM offers a wide range of services, solutions, and technologies that enable companies to take full advantage of the on-demand era.

Please visit [www.ibm.com/ibm/ibmgives](http://www.ibm.com/ibm/ibmgives) for more information.

**The Broward County School District** in Florida is the largest fully accredited school district in the United States. It is also one of the fastest-growing districts in the nation, with a unique urban/suburban mix of students. During the 2005/06 school year, Broward County Public Schools will educate more than 270,000 students.

**The Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District** in North Carolina is a large urban school district. During the 2005-2006 school year, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools will serve more than 126,000 students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12.

**The Durham Public School District** is the seventh largest district in North Carolina. The district offers its 31,000 students and parents a wide-range of options and a flexible transfer policy that allows greater choice in instruction. DPS is a diverse school district with students from more than 60 countries who speak 79 languages. Located at the center of the Research Triangle Park, DPS enjoys great partnerships with businesses and higher education institutions.





The Reinventing Education Change Toolkit helps ensure that innovative educational approaches are not simply filed away but shared with the entire educational community.

tional isolation across the district by opening up access to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study to our teachers and to all of our families. IBM is a neighbor and has been a great supporter of Durham Public Schools for years, so it was natural for us to turn to them for guidance. We shared our goals with the Reinventing Education team, and together really developed a shared understanding that guided our project.

**Terrel:** When we decided to write the grant for Reinventing Education, we were having difficulty getting all of the student data we needed in a way that was user friendly and timely. We were at the point where schools were required to write school improvement plans, and these plans had to be based on genuine performance data; but the data was not arranged in a way that people could easily read it or use it. We did some investigation and found that an application existed in the business world that could solve our problem, but at the time nothing like it had ever been used in a school system. Our goal became getting what we called “fingertip accessibility to data” in our own school system.

**Willner:** That really is the way it works. In our most recent Reinventing Education round, for example, we had eight or nine school partners that all were thinking about teacher professional development. At the same time, we were looking to build a suite of online collaborative tools that could enhance professional development, and we hoped to change the way that professional development is actually offered. We thought we could offer innovations that would make the whole effort more collaborative and something that could grow with teachers as they learned.

To build these tools, we asked a number of different sites in the United States to give us requirements. They were all doing very different projects, but had some common collaborative needs and some common portfolio needs from which we could generalize. So we pulled these people together and got folks to come up with a common set of requirements. The result was a consensus that if we took steps to develop a common program, individual partners could customize it and make it look the way they wanted.

## Program Management

### How is a specific technology solution developed and tested?

**Willner:** The hard part is really the first part: getting people who began by talking about functionality (about what it is that teachers need to be able to do) to then determine the degree to which they might best leverage our delivery of this functionality. That’s why this requires folks at IBM with an education background—they’re not software developers, but they know enough about technology to be able to make suggestions and tease things out.

**Terrel:** In our case, IBM lent people to our district to organize focus groups in which they talked with stakeholders to determine the type of data we needed to collect and store. Those people were wonderful. They had a very special ability to determine the specifications we really wanted. And, they spent a lot of time with us to determine the types of reports that were required. They talked to people in guidance, they talked with principals, and they talked to every stakeholder group that we could find. They were with us for several months, going to various sites and meeting with people to find out our exact needs.

As a result, before software development began they very clearly understood the kind of data that needed to be moved out of storage from the student system we were already using. From there, they thought through the best environment within which the data would be accessible to teachers, to administrators, to parents, and to our school improvement teams.

**Hester/Mozingo:** It was a joint effort all around. We worked closely with classroom teachers, department chairs, principals, and technology directors to develop key components—a course overview that provides a summary of each course, for example. In fact, we initially suggested the course overview as an essential component because we thought it was especially important for our classroom teachers and parents to have access to a summary of each course. For every course we also developed templates



Computer-based instruction is changing the way teachers share lessons and assess students.





The ultimate goal of Reinventing Education is its impact on student achievement.



IBM employees work with partners in the school system to develop, pilot, and refine technological solutions.

for a pacing calendar that provides a 90-day or 180-day snapshot of classroom goals. Teacher-developed unit plans, lesson plans, student activities, and resources eventually made their way through the Learning Village portal into our own version of the Durham Public Schools Comprehensive Instructional Organizer. As a result, we developed an instructional tool we knew our teachers would find useful. Because teachers had played a key role in the development of this resource, our partnership with IBM gave us the confidence that this solution would be critically important to our teachers and students to meet district achievement goals.

### What happens once the technology is ready to be deployed more fully?

**Willner:** Every school district partner works relatively independently once the technology solution is ready to be shared with its teachers and staff. As the technology is deployed, there really are two sets of evaluation criteria for IBM. On the one hand we want to be sure that teachers are finding the programs to be useful. We want to know, for example, if they are in fact using the programs we've developed; if they are pleased with them; if they feel they've been able to acquire new skills. On the other hand, we have corresponding sets of criteria for the school districts with whom we work: For example, is the solution in fact being scaled up? Is it flexible enough to be used as new district programs roll forward? But the bottom line is, what's the impact on student achievement?

**Hester/Mozingo:** When the Riverdeep Learning Village® was ready for “prime time,” everyone in Durham Public Schools—from our superintendent, to our deputies, to our principals—did their best to ensure that the Riverdeep Instructional Organizer (RIO) would become the instructional road map for our teachers. We supplied our faculties with laptops with a single purpose of accessing “RIO.” The district Senior Staff Leadership Team also introduced this initiative with much excitement at every high school and middle school faculty meeting.

**Clark:** In our case, we tested the Learning Village™ program on a four-school campus here in Charlotte: two elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. Then, we rolled it out to our entire school district in a way that ensured that administrators could share pacing and alignment documents with teachers, and that teachers in turn could submit lesson plans and then have those plans be juried, approved, and shared across the district. Later, we scaled the Learning Village™ program from the K–12, four-school campus to 150 schools and 120,000 kids. Throughout, we trained our teachers every step of the way, but—needless to say—IBM was an invaluable resource. They provided technical support to migrate and move information, for example. And there remains significant local involvement between IBM and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

**Terrel:** We had much the same experience [in Florida]. We started a pilot at Sunrise Middle School, Virginia Shuman Young Elementary, and at Fort Lauderdale High

School where we actually went in and trained teachers and administrators on how to use the system. In our case, however, IBM sent trainers down, and they did the training; so that's how we began the project. The trainers were wonderful, plus IBM gave us some full-time staff who actually continued to work on the architecture of the system so that we could begin building all of the data elements that needed to be there. They were a presence in our system for four full years. In fact, they didn't leave until they were certain that we could sustain our own system. A Broward staff member began working with the IBM team within six months of beginning the project and was trained by the IBM team to take over the data warehouse.

### Program Extension

#### What is your district's involvement with the Reinventing Education program now that the district is making use of the solution delivered through your partnership?

**Hester/Mozingo:** Our partnership with IBM has provided Durham Public Schools with a critically important resource to face challenges presented by the No Child Left Behind legislation. The Riverdeep Learning Village® we developed aligns directly with the work we're doing to eliminate the achievement gap and to ensure our third graders are reading at or above grade level. High schools and middle schools across our district are using this wonderful resource, and this coming fall we will deploy the same technology to our elementary schools. When we're done, the Riverdeep Instructional Organizer will be the instructional “centerfold” of our district for all of our teachers.

**Terrel:** In our case, our district served as a demonstration site once the initial data warehouse was deployed and people were trained. Even now, visitors still come to see us about adapting or adopting the program for their own school systems. And over the years (it's been more than ten years since this effort began), we've seen that the technology we helped to develop has

*“Because teachers had played a key role in the development of this resource, our partnership with IBM gave us the confidence that this solution would be critically important to our teachers and students to meet district achievement goals.”*

— Nancy Hester, Assistant Superintendent,  
Durham Public Schools



Reinventing Education uses technology solutions to tackle some of education's toughest problems.



become institutionalized in our district. It has evolved from a program that served only teachers, staff, and school improvement teams to an environment in which kids can also go in and see their own grades and records. Little by little, we've added all kinds of information for students and for parents. And throughout, the people from IBM—100 percent of them—were bound and determined to be our partners working together for the right solution.

**Clark:** That's true for us, too, and I think the most unique piece of this whole relationship is that Robin in particular has extraordinary credibility because she comes from the public-education sector. She understands that you don't give a grant that ends in three years and then walk away, because there are going to be pieces that will continue to need to be addressed. Reinventing Education is about a sustained relationship with the school district over time.

Even today, as we continue to use the Learning Village on our own, we know IBM is a phone call or an email away if we come up with issues or challenges. Robin would certainly tell you that IBM corporate expects the local IBM office to be a willing, active participant in an ongoing way. And as Reinventing Education continues, IBM frequently comes back to us and says, for example, "We're thinking about a project with the National Board of Teachers and would like to just bounce some ideas off you." Plus, if I saw an opportunity where IBM could be involved in something that wasn't necessarily specific to Charlotte, but might have implications for K–12 anywhere in the United States—or globally—I'd feel equally comfortable picking up the phone and calling Robin. Even after the grant is over, the relationship remains very much a mutual exchange of advice and expertise.

**Willner:** It has to be that way. In fact, the most important thing I've learned through Reinventing Education is that the final solution we develop is never really going to look like anything that we envision at the beginning. And it's going to be a lot better because of the work that's done with a partner. The other thing I've learned is that the technology—the actual building of the software—is the easy part. There are many things that we can do to give teachers access to more resources, but they are the ones who do the hard work. We can make teachers' lives easier. Our goal is to support them through innovation.

*"They [IBM] were a presence in our system for four full years. In fact, they didn't leave until they were certain that we could sustain our own system."*

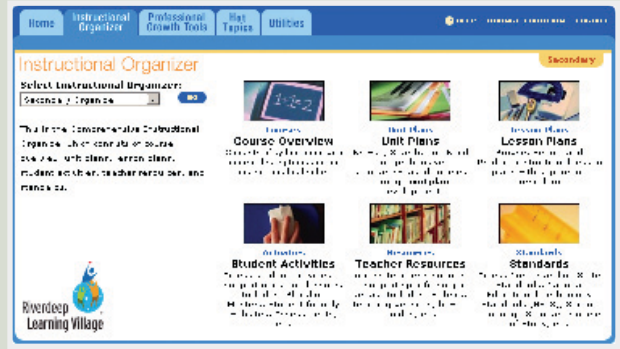
— Nancy Terrel, Assistant Superintendent, Broward County Schools

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

As Assistant Superintendent for Durham Public Schools in North Carolina, Nancy Hester can attest that one of the best examples of the success of Reinventing Education is the program (first developed by IBM in 1994) that is now known as the Riverdeep Learning Village®.

From the beginning, this effort cultivated development partnerships with state departments of education and with urban schools like those in Durham, North Carolina. As Hester explains, the result was a solution that participating educators felt they had shaped themselves. "In Durham, we worked closely with everyone—with classroom teachers, department chairs, principals, teachers, and technology directors. Then, we designed everything we think is important for teachers. As a result, the final product contained unit plans and lesson plans our teachers created themselves. Components they know work in our classroom that link to tested student activities and teacher resources."

After collecting similar inputs from each of its education partners, IBM shared results with all its learning partners. In the process, IBM developed a suite of related applications that support communication and collaboration among parents, teachers, community members, and students. Once these applications were developed and tested, IBM established a strategic partnership with leading K–12 software publisher Riverdeep Interactive Learning, Ltd., to develop an enhanced, easier-to-navigate version of this program that could be made more broadly available.



This version, which is now being implemented in all appropriate Reinventing Education grant partner sites, is used by more than 80,000 teachers and nearly one million students, including teachers and students in dozens of school districts in Australia, Brazil, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Singapore, the United Kingdom, as well as the United States.

Riverdeep Learning Village® serves as an education community's single access point for communication, collaboration, teaching, and professional development. The portal:

- Enables districts to build, create, link, and maintain their curriculum within an easy-to-use instructional framework;
- Makes it possible for administrators to manage the communication and learning environments within their state, district, and individual schools; and
- Provides teachers with a single instructional desktop; as well as the ability to create customized lessons and activities based on individual student needs while also aligning instructional plans, content, and assessment to state or local learning objectives and standards.

For more information, visit [www.riverdeep.net](http://www.riverdeep.net).



## Appendix

*We extend our appreciation to those who agreed to be interviewed for this publication.*

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### **Jack Boyson**

Jack Boyson is the Director of the GE Foundation Life Skills for Employability Program at the International Youth Foundation, which he joined in 1993. Originally a member of IYF's International Training and Consulting Institute team, he later joined Business Development. Prior to joining IYF, Jack served as Project Planner and Acting Director of the Office of Planning for ADRA/International. In addition to his work at IYF, he is Lecturer in International Development for Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. Jack received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Southern Adventist University, has a Masters of Arts degree in Communications and Marketing from Andrews University, and a Masters of Music from the University of Idaho.

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### **Gail Breslow**

Gail Breslow is the Director of the Intel Computer Clubhouse Network and has overseen the expansion of the Computer Clubhouse to community-based organizations both nationally and internationally since 1995. She has also spearheaded the development of programs such as Hear Our Voices (a Clubhouse program for girls and young women) and Clubhouse-to-College/Clubhouse-to-Career. Gail has served on the Technology and Youth Advisory Committee of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. She joined the Computer Clubhouse after twelve years with Gemini Consulting, an international management consulting firm. She served as Program Director at the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Washington, D.C. Gail holds an MBA from the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University and an undergraduate degree from Oberlin College. A breast cancer survivor, Gail climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro in 2004 and ran her 20th marathon in 2005.

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### **Randell M. Bynum M.S.W.**

Randell Bynum has been with the Girl Scouts for 10 years—most recently at the Girl Scouts of the USA where she was responsible for the implementation of The Dove Self-Esteem Fund partnership in the United States and the development of *uniquely ME!* The Girl Scout/Dove Self-Esteem Program. She is the co-author of Dove's *true you! "Sometimes I Feel Ugly" and Other Truths about Growing Up*—workbook for mothers and daughters. A former social worker, Rande is currently an independent consultant at her own firm, marieimage inc., serving nonprofits and other organizations in support of positive youth image. Her current clients include New York City's 1199 SEIU Employment and Training Fund, Unilever's Dove brand and their Campaign for Real Beauty, and Scholastic Inc.

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### **Ann B. Clark**

Ann Clark is the Assistant Superintendent for High School Curriculum and Instruction at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in Charlotte, North Carolina. A former high school, middle school, and elementary school principal, as well as an elementary school teacher, Ann has spoken widely on educational issues and challenges. The recipient of numerous awards and honors, she was recognized as the First Union Outstanding Educator in Charlotte, N.C. in 2000 and 1986, and as National Principal of the Year in 1994 by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Ann received her Masters Degree in Special Education from the University of Virginia, and her School Administration Certificate from the University of North Carolina, Greensboro.

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### **Matthew J. DeCamara**

Matthew DeCamara serves as Program Director at the GE Foundation, the US\$75 million philanthropic organization of the General Electric Company, and leads the education portfolio outside the U.S. Matt joined GE in 2000 as Executive Communications Manager for GE Global Exchange Services, the company's former technology unit in Maryland, and has been with the GE Foundation since 2002. His political, nonprofit, and corporate background includes serving the first President Bush, working for an international democracy assistance organization, and participating in the U.S. election observation delegation to Ukraine's first democratic election in 1994. Matt received his BA from Villanova University and MBA from Boston College. He serves on the International Committee for both the Council on Foundations and Independent Sector, and is a member of the George W. Bush Presidential Library Foundation.

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### **Christy DeSantis**

Now at Unilever for nearly three years, Christy DeSantis has focused on building the Dove brand's expertise in healthcare professional marketing as Global Medical Manager, and currently serves as Health & Wellness Marketing Manager. An accomplished communications and marketing professional, Christy has held positions in healthcare professional marketing at Cline, Davis and Mann (Fallon Medica) in New York and GEM Communications in Connecticut. She also played a public relations role in the Health Education and Information division of the Westchester County Department of Health in New York. Christy began her career as an admissions counselor at Iona College in New Rochelle, New York, where she earned a Masters degree in Communications, and received her Bachelors degree from Loyola College in Baltimore, Maryland.

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**Nancy Hester**

Nancy Hester is Assistant Superintendent of Support Services, Durham Public Schools. She has been in the Durham Public Schools for 27 years as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, executive director for professional development, executive director for public affairs and chief information officer.

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**Rosalind Hudnell**

Rosalind Hudnell is the Director of Corporate Diversity for Intel Corporation, managing Intel's approach to diversity and inclusion worldwide. She oversees a team responsible for external outreach, employee affinity groups, retention and development programs, compliance, communications, and training. Rosalind is well known for creating the Intel Computer Clubhouse Network—a global program for under-served youth and communities. She has been with Intel for nine years. Rosalind began her career in cable television, and has over 15 years of experience in management, including serving as a diversity recruiting consultant to major Fortune 500 companies. She has also served as the Vice President of the Sacramento Urban League. Active in the community, Rosalind has been the recipient of numerous awards including the Black Engineer of the Year for Corporate Promotion of Education and has received two Intel Achievement Awards, the company's highest honor. She holds a BA in Management from St. Mary's College.

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**Patrick Kirby**

Patrick Kirby is the Service Manager in Timberland's Social Enterprise Department. He is in charge of promoting, tracking, and evaluating the impact of the company's Path of Service™ program, a benefit that affords all full-time employees one week of paid time per year to volunteer in the community. As part of his overall duties, Patrick oversees the management of a range of service events each year, including global initiatives engaging up to 7,000 volunteers. Prior to joining Timberland in 2003, Patrick briefly taught high school before joining the staff of City Year, where he held a number of senior leadership roles. He serves on the Volunteer NH! Board of Directors and is a proud player/coach for his over-30s men's soccer team.

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**Ed Mishrell**

Ed Mishrell is Vice President, Strategy, at Boys & Girls Clubs of America. In his previous post as Vice President of Technology Programs, he was responsible for leading the Deepening Impact and Club Tech initiatives. Ed has decades of experience working with youth, first as a probation officer and then for the last 25 years in the Boys & Girls Club Movement. Since joining Boys & Girls Clubs of America in 1986, Ed has been the Director of the Targeted Outreach Delinquency Intervention Program, the Director of Staff Development, the

Senior Director of Training and Development and Vice President, Program Services. Ed holds a BS degree from Alfred University, an MEd from Elmira College, and an MSW from Temple University.

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**Dr. Terri Mozingo**

Dr. Terri Mozingo is Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Durham Public Schools. Dr. Mozingo has served in the Wake County Public Schools and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, curriculum coordinator and assistant superintendent.

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**Roger Nozaki**

Roger Nozaki, who now serves as Associate Dean of the College and Director of the Howard R. Swearer Center for Public Service at Brown University, previously served as Executive Director of the GE Foundation, the philanthropic foundation of the General Electric Company. Roger joined the GE Foundation from the Hitachi Foundation, where he served as senior program officer. He previously worked with Campus Compact, a project focused on strengthening higher education through civic engagement; and spent two years as a full-time volunteer in a community of adults with developmental disabilities. He holds degrees from Princeton and Brown Universities. Roger has served on numerous boards including the American Council on Education's Commission on Minorities in Higher Education, the Council on Foundations corporate committee, the United Way of America National Corporate Leadership Advisory Council, and the Executive Committee of the Pathways to College Network, an effort he helped found.

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**Nathan Pelsma**

Nathan Pelsma is a former VISTA volunteer who began his service experience with City Year in 1999. He worked on developing a program for corporate service days in Boston before he became a Program Manager with City Year Boston. Since then, he has worked with urban youth in after-school and in-school programs with Citizen Schools and as a teacher in Greensboro, North Carolina. Joining City Year again in the summer of 2002, Nathan spent three years as a Care Force Project Manager, in charge of managing corporate employee community service events to increase revenue for City Year. He currently manages City Year's relationship with three of its national corporate partners: Timberland, Bank of America, and CSX.

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**William S. Reese**

Bill Reese is President and CEO of the International Youth Foundation. He first joined IYF in May 1998 as its Chief Operating Officer. Prior to IYF, Mr. Reese was President/CEO for 12 years of Partners of the Americas. Before joining Partners in 1981, he served for ten years with the Peace Corps, first as a volunteer in Salvador, Brazil, and later as director of Brazil operations. In Washington, he was deputy director of the Latin American and Caribbean region. In 2004, the Administrator of USAID reappointed Bill chair of the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid, a position he has held since 1997. He served as Chairman of the Board of InterAction and currently serves on a number of boards, including Amigos de las Americas, Basic Education Coalition, and Women's Edge. Bill is a graduate of Stanford University.

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**Martin Sandelin**

Martin Sandelin is Vice President for Corporate Responsibility and Community Involvement at Nokia, which he joined in 1983. He has held various top positions at the company since that time, beginning with the head of communications of the Networks Business Group. He was then appointed Vice President, Investor Relations in 1994, and moved to Nokia's U.S. office in Dallas, Texas. During his tenure Nokia received several awards including Best European Investor Relations and Best Investor Relations by a non-U.S. company in the United States. In 2000 he moved back to Finland to assume a new position of Senior Vice President, Corporate Marketing. Prior to joining Nokia, Martin had a career in journalism in both print, radio, and the news agency field.

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**Dr. Nancy G. Terrel**

Dr. Terrel is currently the Assistant Superintendent, Communications, Continuous Improvement and Community Involvement for Broward County Public School System, a position she has held for five years. Prior to that she was the Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Accountability Director of Multicultural Education, Director of Educational Planning, Supervisor of Language Arts; Compliance Specialist for the Office of Equal Opportunity, Supervisor of Language Arts and ESOL, and served in several school-based capacities. Her education credentials include a Master of Arts in English from Samford University and an Ed.D. from Florida Atlantic University. Dr. Terrel is an appointee to Broward County Commission on the Status of Women, past president of Florida Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (FASCD), and member of the International Society for Educational Planning.

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**Linda F. Testa**

Linda Testa is a Senior Manager for Microsoft Community Affairs, overseeing Microsoft's Unlimited Potential initiative in the United States, and providing

strategy development, program management, and leadership to the Microsoft Community Affairs' teams. Linda was instrumental in creating and managing Club Tech, the company's technology initiative with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Prior to joining Microsoft in 2001, Linda was Senior Manager for Company Contributions at The Boeing Company. Linda was named Champion of Youth Award in 2005 by Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Linda graduated from the University of Washington with a Bachelors degree in Communications in 1984 and received a Certificate in Corporate Community Relations from Boston College in 2004.

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**Robin Willner**

Robin Willner is Vice President, Global Community Initiatives for the IBM Corporation. She joined IBM in March 1994 to design and implement Reinventing Education, a unique philanthropic initiative in K-12 school reform. This \$75 million global program now includes 25 grant partnerships with school districts and states throughout the nation plus ten international sites. In addition, Robin oversees a range of philanthropic and volunteer programs in the United States, including World Community Grid, online mentoring, literacy and work force development projects, and school-to-career programs. She also manages IBM's humanitarian response to disasters, including the December 2004 tsunami in south Asia and Hurricane Katrina. Prior to joining IBM, Ms. Willner served as Executive Director for Strategic Planning for the New York City Public Schools, where she oversaw all evaluation, research, testing and data collection activities in the nation's largest school district. As Deputy Executive Director of INTERFACE, a New York City-based not-for-profit agency, for more than a dozen years, she directed research reports on public policy in the areas of education job training, and child welfare. Ms. Willner serves on the Boards of Directors of the National Center for Educational Accountability, Grantmakers for Education and the Center for Education Policy.

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## **International Youth Foundation**

IYF believes young people possess the power to shape the future. To learn, work, thrive, and lead, they need access to programs and resources that inspire and challenge them. IYF is a global non-profit organization that makes this possible.

**We forge partnerships.** Today in 70 countries, IYF collaborates with businesses, governments, and civil society organizations that share a common desire to improve the life conditions and prospects of young people.

**We invest in what works.** With our in-depth knowledge of youth development and program management, we identify and adapt indigenous programs that have proven impact on the education, health, employability, and leadership skills of young people.

**We listen.** The voices and aspirations of the young are at the heart of our work, driving us toward continuous improvement and innovation.

Together, IYF and its partners build effective, sustainable, and scalable programs that positively impact the lives of young people worldwide.

IYF's *What Works* series examines cutting-edge issues in the youth development field and aims to provide practitioners, policy makers, donors, and others supporting youth initiatives with insights into effective practices and innovative approaches impacting young people worldwide.

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