

EVALUATION SUMMARY



Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of Policy and Evaluation

American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL)

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of the ACYPL Program in meeting its goal to enhance mutual understanding of political systems, foreign cultures, and ideologies among young American and foreign political leaders.

Key Findings

- **Greater Understanding of Foreign Affairs and the Host Country**
 - 98% of alumni surveyed reported that the ACYPL Program helped them gain a greater understanding of their host country's political issues, economic issues (92%), and social and cultural issues (95%).
 - 89% reported gaining a greater understanding of international issues, in general.
 - Alumni reported the host country contacts made during the program, and the resulting long-term international linkages, helped enhance and sustain their overall understanding of the host country, its institutions and its people, as well as helped them inform their colleagues and community about foreign issues.
- **Mutual Understanding**
 - 81% of ACYPL alumni agreed that the program helped them develop greater tolerance of alternative opinions and operating procedures.
 - 87% agreed that the program helped heighten their awareness of social and cultural diversity among nations.
 - Alumni and program administrators reported that the program improved mutual understanding between delegates and their host country counterparts, and between members of political parties traditionally at odds.
- **Multiplier Effect**
 - 100% of alumni reported sharing information with professional colleagues, family and friends (99%), and home community (98%).
 - 84% reported that they hosted subsequent ACYPL delegations and 78% nominated future participants.

Project Information: The American Institutes for Research conducted the evaluation from September 2000 to March 2002. Data collection took place in the United States and eight other countries. A written survey was completed by 171 of 357 alumni respondents (48% response rate) in Australia, China, El Salvador, India, Israel, Mexico, Poland, South Africa and the United States. Focus groups were also conducted with a total of 25 alumni in the four case study countries – Australia, China, South Africa and the United States. Pre- and post-program surveys were completed by 13 of 16 delegates (81% response rate) participating in two 2001 projects. In addition, in-person interviews were conducted with 13 program administrators in the four case study countries.

Program Information: The ACYPL Program, created in 1966, has sent more than 6,000 promising young political leaders, ages 25 to 40, from the United States and around the world to over 90 different countries on two-week professional exchanges. The ACYPL program is designed to give American and foreign participants a broad understanding of the host country's political system and institutions, economy, society and culture. The program is also designed to help facilitate discussion among young political leaders from around the world and provide a forum for open dialogue, mutual understanding, and the forging of long-lasting ties.

Contact Information: For more information regarding this evaluation, or to request a copy of the 94-page report, please contact the Office of Policy and Evaluation at (202) 632-6325, email ecaevaluation@state.gov, or by mail at State Annex 5, 2200 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20522-0505. Additional program information may be found at <http://exchanges.state.gov>.