

VOLUNTEERING IN AFRICA

An overview of volunteer effort in Africa and its potential to contribute to development

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Women in the village of Ikaatini, Kenya gather for a meeting to discuss the need for water collection capabilities in their village.

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The Swedish Red Cross (SRC) is a non-profit organization and a member of the International Red Cross Movement which consists of national societies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Volunteering in the Swedish Red Cross is based on people's humanitarian engagement and forms the foundation of the organization. The actions of the volunteers in the name of the Swedish Red Cross is intended to alleviate and prevent human suffering, protect life and health, create respect for humanitarian values, promote mutual understanding and friendship, and facilitate cooperation and peace among people. The Swedish Red Cross work consists of both national (in Sweden) and international operations. Internationally, the organization supports both long-term humanitarian capacity building programmes as well as emergency programmes in countries with disasters, conflicts and protracted humanitarian emergencies.

The study was a collaborative initiative between the Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg and the Swedish Red Cross.

The views expressed and information contained in this report are not necessarily those of or endorsed by the Swedish Red Cross. The contents of the report remain the responsibility of the authors.

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Copy editing: Joey Kok, The Word Stylist

Layout: Ebrahim Karim, University of Johannesburg Graphics Department

ISBN: 0-86970-731-9

Contents

FOREWORD	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1. Introduction	8
2. Volunteering in Africa – historical context	9
3. Conceptualising volunteering in the African context	11
3.1. Critiquing definitions of volunteering for the African context	11
3.2. Conceptualising volunteering from a social development perspective	12
3.3. Types of volunteering	13
4. The context of volunteering in Africa: socio-economic, political and demographic trends	15
4.1. Africa's economic and social trajectory	15
4.2. The political climate in Africa	18
4.3. Demographic trends	19
5. Volunteer policy, funding and the aid environment in Africa	21
5.1. Funding and the aid environment in Africa	23
6. The extent and nature of volunteering in Africa	26
6.1. The nature of volunteering	27
6.2. A diversity of forms of volunteering	28
6.3. Volunteering amongst youth	29
7. Strategic directions in volunteering in Africa	30
7.1. Shifting motivations for volunteering	30
7.2. The role of volunteering in fostering community resilience and development	31
7.3. Youth volunteering	31
7.4. Volunteering and social inclusion	32
7.5. Mobilising the private sector and those in employment	32
7.6. Volunteer Management	33
7.7. Volunteer development	34
8. Conclusion	34
References	36

FOREWORD

This publication stems from collaboration between the Swedish Red Cross Society and the Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg. The project was made possible with funding provided by the Swedish Red Cross Society.

As part of their efforts to support and celebrate the involvement of local volunteers, the Swedish Red Cross has invested in better understanding the landscape of volunteering in Africa. The study involved two components – an independent component conducted by the Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg, focusing on trends in volunteering in Africa which resulted in this publication; and an in-country study focusing on the activities of Red Cross and Red Crescent in five African countries in relation to volunteer involvement. The latter study was conducted by staff of the Swedish Red Cross and resulted in a complementary report to this publication entitled “Africa Volunteering Study – an overview of the state of volunteerism in African Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.”

In combination, both reports seek to better understand the landscape of volunteering in Africa, focusing particularly on the activities of community-based volunteers. The reports are intended to inform not only the activities of the Swedish Red Cross as they seek to support African Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, but also the activities of local volunteer involving organisations and international NGOs seeking to promote volunteerism on the continent.

This publication is intended to:

- Highlight the actions of community-based volunteers,
- Track the emerging trends in Africa and the implications these may have for volunteer action on the continent, and
- Serve as a resource for volunteer involving organisations and those seeking to support volunteerism in Africa.

We are indebted to the Swedish Red Cross Society for their support of this study, and to the following African Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for their input: The Burundi Red Cross Society; The Ethiopian Red Cross Society; The Kenyan Red Cross Society; the Malawian Red Cross Society; The Mali Red Cross Society; The Namibian Red Cross Society; The Somali Red Crescent Society; The Sudanese Red Crescent Society; The Ugandan Red Cross Society and The Zimbabwean Red Cross Society. We also wish to thank Volunteer and Service Enquiry Southern Africa (VOSESA) for their contributions to this report.

ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
CIVICUS	World Alliance for Citizen Participation
CSI	Corporate social investment
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IAVE	International Association for Voluntary Effort
ICT	Information and communication technology
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPO	Not-for-profit organisation
RCRC	Red Cross Red Crescent Movement
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
VIO	Volunteer involving organisation
VSO	Voluntary service overseas

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is growing interest by governments, the African Union, international agencies, civil society organisations and development actors in promoting volunteering in African countries to contribute to national, regional and local social and economic development. It is widely contended that volunteering in Africa has a long history underpinned by cultural notions of belonging, togetherness and caring for one another that continue to sustain community life in present times. This document is a summary of a larger review of the situation of volunteering in Africa, which is based on an extensive literature study consisting of both published and unpublished material. The paper provides insight into the current situation of volunteering in Africa, the changing trends that are likely to shape volunteering in the future, and the challenges and opportunities in promoting volunteering. It also contributes to increasing our knowledge of volunteering and how to build and strengthen volunteering as a tool to promote citizen involvement in local development in Africa.

The roots of volunteering

The idea of giving of oneself for the benefit of others has its origins in early African associational life, which had a strong normative and moral basis. Volunteering today is a fusion of many different traditions based on cultural and religious beliefs, charity and philanthropy, nation building in the post-independence period coupled with contemporary notions of volunteering for Africa's development, civic engagement, service, and as an expression of global citizenship. These ideas continue to shape the thinking and practice of volunteering today.

Defining volunteering

Volunteering is generally accepted (UNV, 2012) to be defined as an activity that is:

- conducted out of free will,
- done with little or no financial reward and
- performed for the common good.

However, its application in African countries is questioned. Given widespread human insecurity in Africa, volunteering may be more a necessity, a means of survival and a way of engaging in a livelihood while simultaneously serving others. It is therefore apparent that a rigid application of these principles without due regard to the social, economic and political context in which volunteering occurs might be inappropriate. Organisations engaging with volunteers need to take this into account when mobilising and deploying volunteers to respond to social, economic and environmental needs and challenges in African countries.

Types of volunteering

Different types of volunteering were identified that are relevant in African countries. These are first, community-based volunteering, which consists of volunteering in formally structured programmes as well as volunteering that is informally structured, localised and involves serving people who are living in similar circumstances to themselves e.g. providing mutual aid, care and support. Second is international volunteering, which has grown as a result of the increased movement and communication flows between people and countries; this types of volunteering involves a movement largely by people in the Northern countries who volunteer in the South. There is scope for increasing diaspora volunteering and volunteering between African countries. Professional volunteers are a third type, which encompasses volunteering by skilled individuals and volunteering by employed persons as part of a company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme. Retired volunteers are also included in this category. All of these volunteers provide valuable skills and expertise and need to be recognised for their contributions to social development.

Volunteering and social development

A social development approach to volunteering informed the review. This approach takes the standpoint that involvement in the productive economy to increase tangible and financial assets is an important way of enhancing people's welfare and promoting community development (Patel, 2003; Patel, 2005). It also emphasises the agency and the development of the capabilities of individuals (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2001). Volunteer programmes that are designed with this lens in mind are essentially pro-poor and people-centred in orientation and promote participatory development and individual and community empowerment. Collaborative interactions between the state, voluntary organisations and the private sector are advocated. Playing a key role in promoting equity, government action includes service, protective and regulatory functions. Social development is essentially a pluralist approach, focusing on "strong government action and partnership between individuals, groups, communities, civil society and the private sector" (Patel, 2003:96). A social development lens provides a useful

framework for thinking about the role and contribution of volunteering in development in the African context. The key features of the approach and principles could also guide programme design, implementation and evaluation at a local community level.

Volunteering is a valuable asset in African countries. Although in isolation it is limited as an intervention strategy, when it is integrated into country level social development strategies, it has the potential to have a greater impact in improving the lives of people at local level and engaging citizens in development efforts.

Volunteering and the African context

Africa has and is experiencing rapid changes in a number of areas, which may have implications for the role of volunteering in society. Such changes include:

- rapid economic growth occurring alongside persistent poverty, unemployment and inequality;
- resultant social and economic exclusion of those living in poverty, particularly young people who face very high levels of unemployment;
- a very large youth population, with comparatively fewer older members of the population;
- an increasingly urbanised society, with over 70% of the African population predicted to live in urban areas by 2050, characterised by large urban poor informal settlements;
- a political environment that in many parts of Africa is increasingly stable, with commitments to multi-party democracy but with continued conflict in particular areas;
- state civil society relationships that are increasingly beneficial for organisations working in service delivery areas but continue to be characterised by distrust for politically motivated organisations; and
- increasing access to information and communication technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones.

These changes herald both opportunities and challenges for the promotion of volunteering. Organisations involving volunteers need to consider the ways in which these trends manifest locally and how they shape volunteer involvement.

Policy environment

A significant number of African countries have policies, either separate or forming part of other social policies and strategies, and legislation to support volunteering. This is a significant development that should be supported. However, institutional and human resources, dedicated budgets and infrastructure are needed to give effect to these policies. Where political and administrative leaders support volunteering; large numbers of volunteers have been mobilised to serve in various ways. For volunteering to flourish in African countries, constructive state civil society relations are needed, including enabling policies. Open democracies are crucial to creating an environment that is receptive to volunteering. The barriers to international and regional volunteering need to be addressed in order to facilitate the smooth movement of volunteers between countries.

Aid and funding

While international development aid in Africa continues to be under pressure due to the unstable global economic climate, resource flows are still significant. There are also opportunities to be tapped such as private philanthropy, religious philanthropy and corporate foundations through CSR initiatives. Organisations engaged with volunteers in Africa are increasingly experiencing problems with raising funds for their core activities as donors shift to project funding. Smaller volunteer programmes struggle to raise funds, as donors prefer to support larger established national and international NGOs. This continues to be a challenge that needs to be constantly managed.

Extent and nature of volunteering

Although there are no estimates of the contribution of civil society organisations to social development in most African countries, there is evidence that civil society initiatives are significant, ranging from a low of 0.8% of GDP in Morocco (Saidi, Toepler & Salamon, 2004) to 2.9% in Tanzania (Kiondo, Ndumbaro, Sokolowski & Salamon, 2004). These figures suggest that civil society organisations, the main vehicles for engaging volunteers, make an important contribution to economic development. However, research is needed to assess the contribution of volunteering to economic and social development. Such research might aid advocacy efforts of volunteer involving organisations (VIOs).

Most of the African countries for which data are available demonstrate high levels of commitment to volunteering. Where informal volunteering was included in the estimates, volunteering as a percentage of the overall population was much higher. For instance,

volunteering was the highest in Nigeria (83% of population) and 81% in both Senegal and Uganda. This is in comparison to countries that only assessed volunteering in formal programmes, which had lower numbers of volunteers ranging from a low of 1% in Egypt to high of 11% in Tanzania. There are no accurate estimates of informal volunteering although the review indicates that it might be substantial. Overall, the African countries for which data were available have a high commitment to volunteering. Most volunteering happens through community-based networks of support and reciprocity. This form of volunteering is often unaccounted for and unrecognised. However, it plays a very important role in building the resilience of communities. Here again, more research on the size and scope of informal volunteering is needed.

Some of the benefits of volunteering at community level that emerged from the literature review are the meeting of basic needs, provision of social support and care, infrastructure development, community asset building, strengthening of livelihoods and the development of social capital. Volunteering is therefore a key resource to be leveraged to promote people-centred development.

Investing in volunteering

There is a need to invest in volunteer development that meets the needs and desires of a population and recognises the value of volunteers in contributing to local and national development priorities. This development must happen at a national level but also at an organisational level in terms of volunteer management. Organisations involving volunteers identified the need to invest in volunteer management. The volunteer management cycle involves recruitment, training, orientation, monitoring, feedback and rewarding of volunteers as well as being available to support and address the varied challenges that volunteers face in the course of their work. Diversity management and a gender sensitive approach are also advocated. In addition, organisations that involve volunteers need to recognise and value the role that volunteers who are not connected to formal programmes play in their communities. Opportunities need to be found to support or connect with and mobilise such volunteers, possibly through more formalised mechanisms. The realities of drawing volunteers from resource poor settings and the risk of exploiting or further burdening them need to be seriously considered. A policy at the organisational level is needed on the payment of stipends. It is also important to take account of the context in which volunteering takes place; where there is high unemployment, for instance, more short term and ad hoc forms of volunteering may be prevalent as servers view it as a stepping stone into employment. The building of volunteer management capacity remains a key challenge to promoting efficient and effective volunteer programmes with high social development impacts. A limited number of large empirical studies were found that evaluated volunteer programmes. There is also need for the increased use of ICTs to promote volunteering. Finally, volunteer policies to guide organisations in the management of volunteers, including increased funding from both government and the private sector, are considered crucial. The establishment of strong networks between VIOs, particularly those working in similar sectors, could encourage joint training programmes and the setting of parity in stipends. Such networks may also offer the opportunity of 'sharing' rather than competing for volunteers.

Strategic directions in volunteering

A selected set of issues, challenges and gaps that could inform strategic directions of volunteering in the future were identified. These are of particular importance to VIOs for setting priorities and for future planning.

Of significance is that volunteering has a long tradition in many African countries and continues to play an important role in social development. This is a strength that needs to be harnessed in volunteer programming. The social development approach provides a useful lens to inform strategic thinking and programming for volunteering. Volunteering is not an end product but a vehicle to achieve agreed social development outcomes that will lead to substantial improvements in people's lives.

Given the socio-economic, political and human development challenges in many countries, as well as the demographic and economic trends that Africa is experiencing, there is a great deal of potential for aligning volunteering efforts with the social development needs and priorities of African countries and for innovation in social programming with high developmental impacts. For instance, increasing urbanisation over the next decades and the need to respond to urban poverty and inequality remains an important development priority, as will the needs of those vulnerable to illness, those living with impaired physical and mental capabilities and those who are excluded from access to employment or to pursuing their livelihoods. Innovations in how to mobilise urban-based volunteers in addition to rurally located volunteers in order to meet shifting needs must be considered. In addition, thinking about how to invest in and engage young people, who make up a substantial proportion of the population in the present and the foreseeable future, is necessary. This remains an urgent priority. But engaging with young populations, and indeed engaging with volunteers who are increasingly motivated by individualist, as opposed to communitarian, values requires consideration of how to meet the needs of such volunteers. Identifying the benefits of volunteering to both server and served is important.

Volunteering, and particularly community-led, informal forms of volunteering, has the greatest potential to involve people at local level in a range of social and community development efforts. Not only is it important in meeting human development needs, in fostering citizen participation and in people-centred development, it could also contribute to the building of financial assets, entrepreneurial capacity, social capital and institutional development and participation in community governance. Community level social interventions delivered by

volunteers in a partnership with other local actors could be an important source of social support and in advancing community resilience. Investing in volunteering at community level makes good strategic sense.

In this regard, the report highlights the potential and challenges for investing in volunteering. There is a need to develop and strengthen national governments' enabling policies and to overcome the barriers to volunteering. The shift to project funding, a lack of support for the core operations of volunteer programmes as well as the global economic crisis have had an impact on organisations engaged with volunteers. However, opportunities continue to exist for such organisations to access funding from philanthropic and potentially from growing local companies through CSR spending, or through engaging volunteers who are employed in employee volunteer programmes.

A key message of the report is that Africa has a strong culture of volunteering and a diversity of volunteering opportunities and programmes. This suggests that there is a multitude of ways to engage with volunteers and to invest in volunteer development, particularly at the local level, to promote development.



D. Emmanuel Wheinye

Robert Kpadoe – a blind carpenter from Buchanan town in Liberia assists with building a home.

1. Introduction

Governments, the African Union, international agencies, civil society organisations and development actors have all shown growing interest in promoting volunteering in African countries to contribute to national, regional and local social and economic development. It is widely contended that volunteering in Africa has a long history underpinned by cultural notions of belonging, togetherness and caring for one another that continues to sustain community life in present times. Despite these commitments and the rhetoric about the importance of volunteering for social development, little is known about the current situation of volunteering in Africa, the changing trends that are likely to shape volunteering in the future, and the challenges and opportunities in promoting volunteering for greater development outcomes. This paper aims to contribute to increasing our knowledge of volunteering and how to build and strengthen volunteering as a tool to promote citizen involvement in local development in Africa.

This review of the situation of volunteering in Africa is based on an extensive literature study consisting of both published and unpublished material. The paper addresses different sets of issues and questions. The first issue is related to how history, socio-cultural, economic and political contexts as well as funding and the aid environment shape volunteering in different countries. Changing demographic trends and how global changes impact African countries and their interaction with international organisations also have a bearing on the direction of volunteering. A second focus concerns the definitions and the assumptions that inform the term volunteering and its usefulness in the African environment. Key approaches to volunteering are also discussed as well as the types of volunteering initiatives that are emerging from practice. A third focus of the paper is the extent and nature of volunteering in African countries and what enabling policies exist to promote volunteering and the barriers facing volunteer involving organisations (VIOs), which may be local, national or international civil society organisations. We were particularly interested in understanding state civil society relations and how they contribute to optimising volunteers in development action. Finally, key trends that signal a change in the direction of volunteering in the African context are identified and discussed.

The paper begins with a history of volunteering followed by how it might be conceptualised in the African context. It then moves on to discuss the contemporary context within which volunteering occurs, including state civil society relations. Thereafter the extent and nature of volunteering is discussed, including the policy, legislative and funding environment in selected African countries. Based on opportunities and gaps identified in the previous sections, the penultimate section identifies and considers strategic directions in volunteering emerging in African countries and concludes with pointers for investing and promoting volunteering in Africa.

The literature study

An extensive literature review of material addressing volunteering in Africa was conducted. Both published¹ and unpublished literature was reviewed. This decision was taken for two reasons. Firstly, published literature in the field of volunteering that focuses specifically on volunteering in Africa is limited. Secondly, civil society organisations have gathered a wealth of information on volunteering. While some of this literature is practice-oriented (such as handbooks and guidelines), a great deal of it is based on rigorous research that has not been published in peer-reviewed academic publications and is often overlooked. Both types of literature published between 2000 and 2012 were therefore included in the review. In addition, the literature review also attempted to identify socio-demographic, economic and political trends that are emerging globally and that are pertinent to African countries currently or in the future. Published literature was identified through a comprehensive search of relevant article databases such as Google Scholar, Sage Journals Online, SpringerLink, Wiley Online Library and EBSCOhost, to name a few. These databases provide links to published journal articles in a vast range of journals including but not limited to those focusing specifically on volunteering including *VOLUNTAS* and *Third Sector Quarterly*. Box 1 below lists the search terms used.

Volunteering and Africa; Community-based volunteering in Africa; Self-help in Africa; Mutual aid in Africa; Information and communication technology and volunteering; Volunteering and modernity; Modernity and values; Urbanisation trends in Africa; Civil society and volunteering; Civil society in Africa; Private sector involvement in welfare/development/philanthropy in Africa; Legal frameworks for volunteering in Africa; Youth and volunteering and Africa; Volunteering and health/education/livelihoods/youth development/gender empowerment/institution building/capacity development/social cohesion/social capital; Volunteer development practices and Africa; Civil society funding trends in Africa; State and civil society relationships and Africa.

Box 1: Search terms used to conduct literature searches on various databases and search engines

¹ Published literature in this study refers to academically published, peer-reviewed material as well as material that is formally published through a publishing house whether peer-reviewed or not.

Unpublished literature was identified through searches conducted on Google and various volunteer specific websites including the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) website, the website of the International Association for Voluntary Effort (IAVE), and World Volunteer Web (an initiative of the UNV in partnership with eight other organisations). In addition, the review team sought material from the websites of recognised volunteer research organisations such as World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS), and Volunteer and Service Enquiry Southern Africa (VOSESA). Online conference papers from workshops and conferences focusing on volunteering were also accessed.

The searches revealed a great deal of information in particular areas of interest. For instance, the fields of research on state and civil society relationships and the strength of the civil society sector in Africa are vast. In contrast, the area of volunteering is largely under-researched, with most information on this topic contained in the form of handbooks and guidelines for practice in developed country contexts. Much of the information about volunteering in Africa was available in unpublished resources from a few organisations. This demonstrates the need for growing scholarly research and publishing on volunteering in Africa.

Review team members were assigned review areas and were tasked with reviewing the material found. Each team member then developed an overview of the material reviewed, identifying cross cutting themes and trends in Africa as well as specific examples.

A limitation of this review is that the complex and multidimensional nature of volunteering in different countries could not be adequately captured, as our focus was on the overall situation and emerging trends. Africa is a vast continent with wide ranging variations in contexts and experiences. Lastly, while the phenomenon is well documented in the literature, there is limited evidence-based research of a quantitative nature at country level and across countries. We were thus not able to substantiate some of the claims made. Many countries lacked data and do not count volunteering in their statistics. Much of the literature is also of a qualitative and a conceptual nature, and much of the information flows from case studies or the use of smaller samples, which were nevertheless useful for the purposes of this study. There is need for more research in this field in Africa. The paper should thus be read bearing these limitations in mind.

2. Volunteering in Africa – historical context

The idea of giving of oneself for the benefit of others has its origins in early African associational life, which had a strong normative and moral basis. Different words are used in different cultures to describe this idea. One such word is *kujitolea*, the Kiswahili word for service, meaning the giving of oneself for the benefit of others. A similar concept, *ubuntu*, derived from Bantu culture, is cited to illustrate the historical origins of mutual aid and support in fostering humanness (*botho/ubuntu*). Similarly, in Botswana various terms are used to describe this ethos including *boithaopo*, which describes volunteering and refers to the act of helping other people; *tirelo* (something that is done for others) or *go thusa batho*, which simply means helping others (Rankopo, Osei-Hwedie & Moroka, 2007). Traditional cultural beliefs and practices encouraged collective responsibility, solidarity and reciprocity. These ideas were fundamental to expressing an individual's humanity through



Bintou Ibrahim Omar (50) fetches water for her family and fellow community members at the well in Elhado in the Northeast region of Kenya. Every day, she travels 2–3 times a day, 2 km each way. There are 2 wells operating in the area, which has vastly increased the population of the city.

Jakob Dall/Danish Red Cross

his or her social relations with others, an idea which was fundamental to the social cohesion of pre-colonial societies that relied on mutual aid, kinship and community support to meet human needs (Patel & Wilson, 2004).

The present-day idea of youth service can also be traced to cultural practices where youth were organised into age sets that were mobilised for the defence of the community and the development of infrastructure such as road building, which was popular amongst the Igbo of Nigeria (Enemu, 2001) and also in Kenya (Khasiani, 2001). In some instances, such practices continue to underpin the principles of national youth service programmes across Africa (Obadare, 2007). Another example is the traditional practice, in some Southern African countries such as Zimbabwe, of working in the fields of those who are not able to tend to their crops due to external eventualities such as sickness and death. *Zunde ra Mambo* is an ancient volunteering practice according to which members of a village volunteer to work in the fields of their neighbours for one day per week.

Dating back to the 16th century, the advent of colonialism in Africa resulted in the adaptation of the socio-economic and political organisation of these societies to meet the needs and interests of the colonial powers. The rise of industrialisation in 19th century Europe resulted in competition between these countries in their search for raw materials for their respective markets. British and European colonial powers sought to extend their influence in African countries to support their need for commercial expansion, and these powers also assumed a racial, intellectual and spiritual superiority over the subjugated peoples. This resulted in the disruption and breakdown of traditional forms of life and the imposition of new religious beliefs and values (Oxford, 2006). Pressures were thus placed on kinship and community support systems while the simultaneous denigration of indigenous cultural practices resulted in the erosion of the service ethos over time.

As traditional societies changed, they adopted the religions of the colonial powers and were forced to modernise, which led to the breakdown of subsistence economies, urbanisation and increasing impoverishment of indigenous peoples coupled with the colonial governments' neglect of welfare provision. Because the colonies were required to be self-sufficient, welfare concerns were considered to be best left to religious initiative and philanthropy. Here, international charity and welfare organisations were able to make humanitarian and philanthropic contributions. Many of the latter organisations, such as the Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) movement and Save the Children, retain national branches in some African countries today. In the latter part of the colonial era, as social problems and civil unrest escalated, there was a gradual expansion of public provision (Midgley, 1995). As formal public provision in social welfare evolved in Sub-Saharan Africa, they tended to be fashioned on British and European colonial systems with a strong focus on remediation, institutional care for children, paternalism, and a piecemeal stop-gap and reactive approach to social provision (Patel & Wilson, 2004).

The nationalist independence movements of the mid-20th century challenged foreign dominance, which culminated in the independence of many Sub-Saharan African countries. In some countries – Tanzania, Uganda and Botswana, for instance – independence was achieved through gradual and constitutional devolution of power, while in others, it followed armed struggles; Kenya and some Southern African countries are examples here. It was also during these independence processes that many African-based branches of colonial country Red Cross societies became independent national societies.

During the colonial period, ethnic conflict underlay much of the tension in African societies; ethnicity became the agent for the accumulation of wealth and power, leading to conflict that took on an ethnic form. New nations had to be created from deeply divided and conflict-ridden societies; these conflicts and divisions continued into the post-independence period. The independence struggles provided a context for grassroots participation in opposition movements. Civic activism coupled with growing social and community involvement were particular features of South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle. In this way, political engagement, democratic values and bonds of solidarity across race, ethnicity, class and gender lines were fostered. This demonstrates that civic engagement based on volunteering time, knowledge and skills can be of a political nature and points to the fact that in many African countries volunteering and political activism were often two sides of the same coin for opposition movements.

Volunteering was also facilitated by national and international organisations that significantly contributed to African development and nation building in the post-independence era (Fowler, 1998). The nature and scope of the voluntary sector in national social development varied across countries depending on their history of colonialism, traditions and approach to public policy. For instance, the Kenyan and Tanzanian governments built on African self-help or *harambee*, which was based on the idea of voluntary participation in development. Many post-independence governments built on their cultural experiences of youth involvement in community development to inform their national youth service programmes. While these positive developments of promoting voluntary participation in development are acknowledged (Hyden, 1995), with some exceptions, many African governments turned against civil society organisations after independence and attempted to co-opt these organisations by bringing them under the control of political parties. In the aftermath of independence, deeply fragmented multi-ethnic societies, patronage politics and dependent economies that continued to serve the metropolises coupled with weak institutions and growing popular discontent erupted in conflict and civil wars in some of the countries. In some instances these wars lasted for many years and destroyed the basic fabric of these countries.

In summary, service and volunteering for the public good – shaped by cultural beliefs, values and practices of kinship support, mutual aid and reciprocity that contributed significantly to the social cohesion of individual societies – has a long history in Africa. The advent of colonialism

brought new values and beliefs such as religious motivations for service and volunteering. The resultant social, economic and political changes in many African countries placed great pressures on indigenous systems of support and increased the responsibility of individuals, families and communities in meeting human needs. Other actors – such as the church, philanthropy and rudimentary state provision – emerged in response to growing needs and increasing resistance to foreign rule. While indigenous systems of support were increasingly under strain and eroding, some practices and beliefs about volunteerism continue to exist today while others have been refashioned to respond to present conditions (for example, youth service programmes and faith-based volunteering) (Patel, Kaseke & Midgley, 2012; Patel, 2007). Lastly, this brief historical overview also suggests that volunteering and voluntary service initiatives are most likely to flourish in enabling democratic environments and those in which there is a socio-cultural ethos that supports volunteerism. Pressure from civil society for reform could lead to restrictions on volunteer programmes by African governments that are not well disposed to civic activism. These themes remain pertinent in the contemporary context.

3. Conceptualising volunteering in the African context

Most definitions of volunteering are based on an understanding of volunteering in developed countries. While these definitions might be usefully applied in different countries, it may not be entirely applicable in developing country situations. In this section of the report we first consider commonly accepted definitions of volunteering, and thereafter the concepts are critiqued with reference to the African context. The section then considers theoretical approaches to volunteering and civic service, concluding with the social development approach, which is useful for this purpose.

While there are a number of international definitions of volunteering, most consider three fundamental principles to be important (UNV, 2011a):

- That the activity is undertaken out of **free will**, that is, that the person is not forced or legally obligated to engage in the activity. While social obligations may play a role, the person should nevertheless be free to engage in the activity.
- That the activity is **not undertaken primarily for financial reward**, although some financial compensation might be involved since volunteering does often involve costs to the individual volunteer.
- That the activity is undertaken for the **common good**.

The International Labour Organisation and Johns Hopkins University's study of global volunteering and civil society provides a further definition: "Unpaid non-compulsory work; that is, time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organisation or directly for others outside their own household" (Salamon, Sokolowski & Haddock, 2011: 225). These same three considerations are evidenced in a typology of volunteering advanced by the UNV (2010:9-10). Here volunteering is:

- **An activity or work:** volunteering is a contribution in kind (that is, time, skills or services) and should be distinguished from donations in goods, cash, or other valuable assets.
- **Done by people:** volunteers may act individually, as groups or through associations and other formal organisations; but in all cases, a volunteer is a human being.
- **Done willingly:** individuals must make a free choice to volunteer. If an individual is compelled or coerced, then he or she is generally not considered a volunteer.
- **Done without pay:** in some contexts volunteers would not be expected to receive any kind of monetary compensation whatsoever, while in other places volunteers might be entitled to stipends intended to help cover their living expenses or reimbursements of expenses incurred (such as the cost of travelling back and forth to the volunteer location).
- **Done to promote a cause or help someone outside of the volunteer's household or immediate family:** volunteer activity is usually done to benefit the larger community, an organisation representing community interests, a public body, or the common interest. While the individual volunteer's household or family might benefit from the volunteer work, some other person outside the family should benefit as well.

The above definitions are commonly used to define volunteering and are broad enough to account for a wide range of different volunteering experiences. However, they do tend to mask the myriad of volunteering activities that form part of everyday social life and that are rooted in social expectations. Such informal forms of volunteering are often overlooked and are not necessarily considered as volunteer activities. The assumptions undergirding different understandings of volunteerism require closer examination, considered below.

3.1. Critiquing definitions of volunteering for the African context

Although the above definitions can account for various types of volunteer activity, five key assumptions were identified and debated in the literature. While these are not necessarily peculiar to Africa, these debates feature rather prominently in the literature on volunteering in Africa.

The first assumption relates to the level of formality of volunteering. It is often assumed that volunteering is an act of service conducted through formal mechanisms, for example volunteer programmes or organisations that mobilise and use volunteers in their development activities. A great deal of voluntary activity, however, occurs outside formally structured volunteer programmes/organisations and form part of associational life in communities; this kind of volunteer activity may take the form of mutual aid and self-help activities (Patel, 2007). Often such activities are integral to the social fabric of communities, and community members themselves seldom view them as volunteering, rather viewing them as 'the way things are done here'. Consequently, local and community-based volunteering and activism are often overlooked and are not included in estimations of the size of the sector in many African countries.

This was a key finding of the five-country study on volunteering in Southern Africa conducted by VOSESA (Patel, Perold, Mohamed & Carapinha, 2007). The same study also demonstrated that the majority of volunteering occurs by poor volunteers serving people of their own class, community and ethnicity. Caprara, Mati, Obadare and Perold (2012) and Everatt, Habib, Maharaj and Nyar (2005) confirm this trend in Africa, which stands in contrast to trends in developed country contexts, where volunteering is often assumed to be the preserve of wealthier volunteers serving poor or less fortunate beneficiaries.

A second assumption relates to the notion of free will. Because voluntary activities are often embedded in community norms and values, they tend to be motivated by social expectations rather than by free will. The assumption is that if one is financially or physically able to assist others in the community, then one should do so. Voluntary acts are thus very much driven by a sense of obligation and duty rather than by the altruistic notion of free will (Everatt et al., 2005).

A third reason why volunteerism in African countries challenges the dominant definitions of volunteering lies in the expectation of payment. Beliefs and practices about one's social obligations to provide unpaid services voluntarily in one's community are still evident in communities in different African countries. However, as more formal programmes are emerging that pay stipends and also in a context of mass poverty, unemployment and the rising care responsibilities due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, there is evidence of increasing expectations of payment for volunteering in formal programmes. Russell and Wilkinson-Maposa (2011) therefore question the applicability of the notion of free will in the African context. For many volunteers, some form of income in the form of stipends or reciprocal giving is expected given these realities. The Regional AIDS Initiative of Southern Africa (VSO-RAISA) argues that in the African context, there is often an expectation of monetary or non-monetary compensation amongst volunteers (VSO-RAISA & VOSESA, 2011) especially when activities are associated with registered non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or government programmes (VOSESA, 2012). Volunteering also carries costs for individuals – both direct (such as transport or the provision of food/medicine to sick individuals) and indirect (such as lost opportunities to search for work or the need to pay for childcare). It is thus accepted practice in many organisations to pay stipends or reimbursements to cover these expenses. Where stipends are paid, these may become the motivating factor for volunteer involvement, particularly where this may be the only source of income. This suggests that the lines between employment and volunteering, from the perspective of the volunteer, may become blurred.

Fourth, while one may assume that volunteering should contribute to the common good, it may also offer opportunities for financial gain for the volunteer, or it may provide the prospect of gaining in skills and enhancing the employability of the volunteer (UNV, 2011a), particularly amongst young people (Wijeyesekera, 2011). This suggests that individual motivations may be as important as motivations regarding the common good.

Finally, the definitions presented above are often devoid of political motivations for volunteering, and voluntary activities are often assumed to be apolitical. In the African context, particularly during the independence movements of the 1950s and 1960s and the South African anti-apartheid movement, volunteers were the backbone of political movements. Thus volunteering may be considered to include activism. As is argued by IAVE, UNV and CIVICUS in a joint publication (undated), while activism and volunteerism are often considered to be separate activities, both in fact foster human participation in the achievement of development outcomes and are key forms of civic participation that go beyond participating in elections only. However, volunteers and volunteer organisations may view themselves as not being politically motivated, while activists usually do. Volunteering thus involves a wide range of activities that needs to be valued and recognised. Therefore, "Volunteerism is as diverse as the individuals who volunteer" (IAVE et al., undated:3).

The defining principles of volunteering that are widely accepted internationally should be critically evaluated when applied in social development programmes in Africa because they have a direct bearing on programme design and in the assessment of impact. VIOs will need to define the term based on the contextual realities and on what is feasible for them, including their organisational values and mission. Having considered how volunteering can be defined, we now turn to a discussion of the approaches to volunteering.

3.2. Conceptualising volunteering from a social development perspective

Volunteering can be viewed in different ways depending on the perspective one has of the ways in which actors in society – the private sector, state and civil society – are perceived. We take the view in this paper that the state is the key political actor through which resources and services are distributed in society. In contrast to the state, the primary purpose of the private sector is the pursuit of profit through

the sale of goods and services, although there is increasing acknowledgement of the contribution of corporations to social, economic and environmental responsibility. Civil society is understood to refer to the associational life that occurs beyond the private realm of the home but outside of the activities of either the state or the private sector. It may refer to informal associational life as in community life, but more often it refers to NGOs and not-for-profit organisations (NPOs). The civil society space is very wide ranging, and organisations within it can be more or less formal in their formation and structures. In this paper the terms 'third sector', the 'not-for-profit sector' and 'civil society' are used interchangeably.

According to Baldock, Manning and Wickerstaff (2007), relationships between these sectors of society can be viewed from different perspectives. A conflict perspective emphasises the tensions and conflicts between the state, the private sector and civil society. A conflict or critical analysis of society suggests that the private sector is dominant in society and serves the interests of the state and the capitalist class. From this viewpoint, volunteering is viewed as a mechanism to strengthen democratic participation, promote social development, social justice and social change (Patel, 2003). A conservative approach, rooted in neo-liberal economics, also emphasises the strong role that the private sector plays in society and promotes freedom of the market with a minimal role for the state in the economic and the social sphere. The meeting of human needs is therefore left to the private sector in the form of private education, private healthcare and those areas in which civil society organisations, rather than the state, are considered to be the main deliverers of services. Voluntary initiative thus becomes a key safety net for the poorest in society, which is often disconnected from the realities of structural unemployment and pervasive poverty and inequality that characterises many African countries.

In contrast to the above, the institutional approach identifies a stronger role for the state in service delivery and in development. From this standpoint, the state is best placed and best resourced to deliver services equitably. Volunteering in this conception of society may be fairly institutionalised and may occur through the state or through prominent organisations strongly connected to the state. In addition, there may be strict regulation of such activities through the state. State led youth service programmes are examples of how volunteerism can be promoted through state institutionalised arrangements. In this conception, volunteerism may be seen as an important expression of citizenship and social cohesion (Patel, 2003). The pluralist approach (Baldock et al., 2007) tends to emphasise collaboration between state, private sector, civil society and individuals. While pluralists recognise power differentials between development actors, they focus on the potential for collaboration rather than on conflict and tension as critical in promoting human development (Baldock et al., 2007). Some pluralist thinkers tend to underscore a minimalist role for the state while others stress a leading role for the state in social development but in a collaborative partnership.

Volunteers are therefore considered to be a resource and an asset in communities; this view resonates with the social development perspective of volunteering. In addition, the social development approach takes the standpoint that involvement in the productive economy and increasing tangible and financial assets is the best way to enhance people's welfare and community development (Patel, 2005; Patel, 2003). It emphasises the agency and capabilities of individuals (Nussbaum, 2001; Sen, 1999). The design of social development programmes is pro-poor in its orientation, people-centred, promotes participatory development and individual and community empowerment. Thus collaborative interactions between the state, voluntary organisations and the private sector are advocated. Government action includes service, protective and regulatory functions. It plays a key role in promoting equity. Social development is essentially a pluralist approach, focusing on "strong government action and partnership between individuals, groups, communities, civil society and the private sector" (Patel, 2003:96). The social development perspective therefore provides a useful framework for thinking about the role and contribution of volunteering in social development in the African context. The key features of the approach and principles could also guide programme design, implementation and evaluation at a local community level.

In summary, this paper takes a broad view of volunteering, which acknowledges the multiple ways that people volunteer, particularly through informal practices such as mutual aid activities. Further, volunteering is conceptualised from a social development perspective. We use the UNV (2011a) definition of volunteering, although we recommend that the assumptions underpinning the definition be evaluated for their relevance in an African context. We now turn to a discussion of the types of volunteering.

3.3. Types of volunteering

A diversity of types of volunteering and volunteer programmes was identified in the literature study. These types are described in this section.

Community-based volunteers: These are volunteers who serve within their own communities and refer to the geographic location where volunteer activities occur. The term 'community' is a complex one and could also be subjectively understood, such as when a group of people feel they are connected, and may imply a sense of identity and belonging. Thus, a group of volunteers from a wide range of areas may share an identity such as the Girl Guides, which is an international movement of young women aimed at promoting leadership and responsible citizenship. Girls who belong to the movement may see themselves as being a community because they have a shared vision, values and goals; sometimes they have shared circumstances or experiences. However, conflict, diversity and social divisions in and amongst communities are not overlooked. The term may also refer to people with a common interest who are connected through online means. Although the term

is popularly associated with a locality, the boundaries of a community are, however, never fixed, and it could be a rural village, a suburb, a slum. Community-based volunteers are usually localised serving other people who are living in similar circumstances to themselves and may include mutual aid, the provision of social care and support, and self-help forms of volunteering but may or may not be connected to a structured volunteering programme. A good deal of the volunteering that happens in communities is also associated with faith-based motivations to volunteer and may occur through places of worship such as churches, mosques and temples. Community-based volunteering is most prevalent in Africa and is discussed further in Section 6.

International regional and national volunteers: Globalisation has increased movement and communication flows between countries. Access to information and communication technology (ICT) is a feature of Africa's increasing interconnection with the globe although it is not equitably distributed. Connection to the ICT network is most established in the centres of ICT development in the United States, Japan and the urban centres of China and India, where technological development and production take place. African countries have far more limited access to ICT; internet connections are mostly available to middle and high income earners. While cell phone access is increasing, it is still far below the rates in developed countries (World Bank, 2011). Global interconnections have also resulted in increasing interest in international volunteering in Africa in cases where volunteers choose to serve in a country other than their own. The movement of volunteers is generally from a developed to a developing country. With the shift to greater regionalisation in the world, there is also increasing movement of volunteers within regions, a phenomenon that has given rise to regional volunteering programmes that support volunteering between countries. International organisations such as UNV as well as national government volunteer or service programmes in some countries also recruit volunteers in their home country to serve in parts of the country other than the area where they live. In these cases, volunteers are recruited to manage programmes that are spread around the country and thus may at times serve within their own communities and at other times serve in other parts of their own country. Placement organisations sometimes refer to such individuals as 'national volunteers'. National youth service programmes also typically recruit young volunteers to serve in different parts of their home country. The nature of international volunteering and the related challenges facing VIOs are discussed in Section 5.

Professional volunteers: This is a category of volunteers who are highly skilled and wish to share their expertise to benefit others. Some professional volunteers commit their lives to volunteering rather than to seek employment. They rely on their stipends and allowances and forgo the salaries they may have been able to earn in the labour market. They are often highly skilled and trained. Sometimes referred to as 'skilled volunteers', professional volunteers also include individuals who serve within their chosen profession for a period of time such as medical doctors, lawyers, ICT specialists or nurses. Such volunteers may serve for longer or shorter periods, depending on the organisation they volunteer with and their own ability to commit to volunteering outside of their employment. Skilled volunteers bring their level of training and experience to the volunteer space and often provide much needed capacity within organisations and communities.

By distinguishing between volunteers who are skilled and those who are unskilled, there is the danger that one might devalue the contribution of less skilled volunteers. Also, volunteers who perform certain tasks over a long period, such as those providing home and community-based services for people affected by HIV and AIDS, may become skilled in that activity. While the 'skilled volunteer' category is helpful to refer to professionals with formal qualifications who meet scarce skills in African countries, it should be used sensitively and should not denigrate the contribution of volunteers who perform different and much needed activities.

Employed volunteers: These are people who are engaged in full or part-time employment in the open labour market but who choose to volunteer in addition to their formal employment. They may volunteer over weekends or on a day off, over a holiday period, or may choose to take time off from their job in order to volunteer. They are typically specifically trained and qualified and may serve in their area of expertise or in a completely different area. The term 'employed volunteers' may seem strange to single out. In developed countries most volunteers are likely to be employed or retired, and as such the distinction is one that is taken for granted. In developing contexts many volunteers do not have employment. 'Employed volunteers' is not the same as **employee or corporate volunteers**. This type of voluntary activity is associated with programmes established by companies or NGOs that encourage their staff to share their knowledge and expertise to benefit others often during working hours. Their voluntary service is thus recognised by the company as part of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives and may even form part of their career track (VOSESA, 2011) and may or may not be structured around their specific professional skills. There is increasing scope in African countries for this type of voluntary initiative in the private sector to contribute to social development; this is discussed further in Section 7.1.

Retired volunteers: This group refers to volunteers who were employed but have since retired. They may volunteer either in their area of professional practice or in a different area. It must be noted that when such terms are used, they often assume that such volunteers are from a particular class given their relationship to formal employment. These terms do not typically refer to volunteers who may be employed in sectors requiring low skills and who are in low paying jobs. When such volunteers serve, they often do so in their own communities, or they may serve in a country other than their own. Retired volunteers, on the one hand, are typically connected to formal volunteering programmes that are recognised, come with protection and support, have structured systems of reimbursement for costs, and that afford the volunteer a level of status and esteem (Van Groenou & Deeg, 2010). The volunteer experience therefore provides opportunities for growth and self-actualisation. On the other hand, there are those who are highly engaged in community-based volunteering, such as in the provision of care

and support, who may be unconnected to a formal volunteer programme or organisation. In these instances they volunteer out of a social obligation to care for community members and the regenerative experience.

Formal and informal volunteering: ‘Formal’ forms of volunteering often occur through VIOs, which rely in part or fully on volunteers to meet their stated aims and objectives. These organisations may be large, formal organisations with strong institutional capacity and formal mechanisms to manage volunteers. Others may be informal organisations that enlist volunteers on a more ad hoc, informal basis that tends to be localised. ‘Informal volunteering’ tends to be used to describe activities that are based on networks of exchange, social obligations or social hierarchies. Increasingly, VIOs are drawing on the capacity of informal volunteers. Religious motivations are a major driver of formal and informal volunteering (CIVICUS, 2011a). However, volunteering is most certainly not the exclusive domain of religiously motivated individuals. It is nevertheless a key contributing factor to the high levels of volunteering in particular countries, so much so that in the CIVICUS Civil Society Index, volunteering through religious organisations was specifically excluded in order to ascertain the extent of other forms of volunteering (CIVICUS, 2011a).

In addition to these broad categories of volunteering, it is worth noting terms that are commonly used amongst volunteer involving organisations in order to ensure that there is a common understanding of such terms.

Volunteer development: The term volunteer development refers to activities that operate at different levels namely policy, individual and organisational levels. At the policy level it refers to national level interventions in the form of policies and frameworks that seek to recognise and support voluntary activity in a country. Volunteer development is also used to denote the development of volunteering as part of a state-supported and protected societal ethos. At the individual level, volunteer development may refer to the development of the individual volunteer through training and skills development, for instance. Finally, volunteer development may refer to organisational practices of VIOs that seek to ensure that organisations are able to attract, recruit, support, train, retain and reward volunteers – that is, how to manage volunteers effectively, also known as volunteer management. The emphasis here is on investment in building strong, committed volunteer pools that will assist organisations in meeting their goals. In this paper volunteer management is used to refer to such practices, while volunteer development is used to refer to the wider practice of promoting volunteerism in the society at large.

To sum up, volunteer programmes and volunteer practices differ depending on the particular context. But the terms do not speak to the complexities of the situation of volunteers, the choices they make of where to serve, their motivations and their identities. Having conceptualised volunteering, we now turn to understanding how volunteering has historically evolved in Africa.

4. The context of volunteering in Africa: socio-economic, political and demographic trends

The previous sections provided an overview of how volunteering was shaped by Africa’s history of colonialism and the evolution of its systems of social provision. This was followed by a discussion of how volunteering is conceptualised; its underlying theories; the types of volunteering that emerged in a globalising world such as international volunteering; and the role of ICTs in increasing connections between people, countries and regions (Giddens, 2008; Harvey, 1990). Globalisation has provided new opportunities for volunteering. However, it has also resulted in increasing disparities between countries and regions accompanied by new forms of social exclusion and rising inequality alongside economic growth and increasing wealth for some (Castells, 1998).

In this section, we now turn to an assessment of the general socio-economic, political and demographic trends in Africa and their implications for volunteering for social development.

4.1. Africa’s economic and social trajectory

For most African countries, political independence in the middle and latter part of the last century did not necessarily result in stable economic conditions. In fact, Africa faced a series of economic crises, including the African debt crisis of the 1980s. Africa’s struggles with economic growth were largely linked with the challenges of the historically extractive nature of trade with Africa under colonialism. These struggles persisted into the post-colonial era and were exacerbated by the imposition of economic conditions of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, including decreases in state spending on subsidies through structural adjustment programmes. This complicated Africa’s trade in the competitive global market (Webster, 1990) and resulted in the continent being labelled ‘the hopeless continent’.

Many of these trends continue, despite certain developed countries and emerging economies retaining interest in Africa’s rich natural and mineral resources. However, economic developments in Africa have generally been good and prospects positive since the turn of the new millennium. From 2000 onwards, Africa’s economies have consistently been growing faster than those of almost any other region in the

With high numbers of young people in the population, youth volunteering and involving volunteers in youth development efforts is a key strategic direction in Africa.



world (*The Economist*, 2011). In 2010, “Over a quarter (28%) of countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa region achieved growth rates above 6%, with several countries rivalling growth rates in fast growing developing countries such as China, India and Brazil. Overall, 60% of countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa region achieved growth rates of about 4% [...], and in only about 5% of economies were growth rates below 2%” (World Bank, 2011:3). The momentum has, however, slowed mainly as a result of the contraction of economic activity in North Africa due to political unrest and the lingering effects of the recent global economic and financial crisis. However, most African countries are sustaining a strong economic drive, and growth prospects remain optimistic (World Bank, 2011). These positive developments can largely be ascribed to three overall, and interrelated, trends: 1) rising commodity prices, 2) increasing trade between Africa and the rest of the world, and 3) strong domestic demand.

In terms of rising commodity prices, most African countries rely heavily on one or two commodities for export; such commodities include crude oil, foodstuff, industrial agricultural commodities, metals and minerals. The higher demands and hence higher prices for many primary commodities on the international markets have naturally boosted export earnings for economies with such resources. Several countries have benefited from exports in natural resources such as oil and minerals. However, some of the fastest expanding economies on the continent (for instance, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Burkina Faso) can attribute their positive economic growth outputs to non-resource-based economic growth such as livestock export (in Ethiopia for instance). The continuous reliance on a narrow export base and a relatively small manufacturing sector still makes African economies vulnerable to price fluctuations on the international markets. Furthermore, although not true for agricultural production, economies driven by primary production tend to benefit only a small enclave within the larger economy, leaving large parts of the population under- or unemployed (*The Economist*, 2011; World Bank, 2011; UNECA, 2010).

Africa's trade with other countries – including exports to other developing countries, particularly the emerging markets in Asia such as China and India – has increased tremendously, thus boosting economic growth on the continent. For instance, while African trade to Brazil, Russia, India and China accounted for just 1% of trades a generation ago, trade with these countries today makes up 20%. Still, African countries could capture more of the Asian markets, for instance through the expansion of manufacturing. Intra-African trade is also still very limited (*The Economist*, 2011; World Bank, 2011; UNECA, 2010).

Domestic demand has also impacted on the positive economic growth. Thus, many countries have increased public spending on major infrastructure projects that, together with increased foreign direct investment, have helped boost Africa's productive capacity. An emerging middle class, stemming from rising incomes and urbanisation, also pushes up domestic consumer demand and therefore becomes an important source of growth (*The Economist*, 2011; World Bank, 2011; UNECA, 2010). Africa has not yet fully taken advantage of the possibilities of regional trade. Despite the economic communities of West Africa (Economic Community of West African States – ECOWAS), East Africa (The East African Community – EAC) and Southern Africa (Southern African Development Community – SADC), trade has not been particularly strong inter-regionally (Yang & Gupta, 2005). However, there may be more possibilities for such trade given discussions taking place about greater integration of the different economic communities.

Higher rates of economic growth have not necessarily had the kinds of developmental impacts that many economists and development thinkers may have hoped for. Many African countries still cluster at the bottom of global indicators on gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, political stability, democracy and good governance as well as on various social indicators. Thus, the majority of Africans still struggle with poverty, hunger and disease, and even though there are some positive trends in terms of social and human development, progress is slow and uneven, and many countries will not achieve internationally agreed development goals such as the Millennium Development Goals (*The Economist*, 2011; UNECA, 2010).

This is likely due to the fact that while increased economic growth may have led to a small emerging middle class of Africans who are securely employed and an even smaller elite with a tremendous earning capacity, the majority of the population is excluded from benefiting from this economic growth because of high levels of unemployment, alongside rising prices.

While rising commodity prices have been good for exports, such developments also cause upward trends in food prices, which can have negative consequences for low-income households with already limited resources. Coupled with the fact that economic growth has largely *not* been driven by labour-intensive production (Mbeki, 2009), unemployment – particularly amongst the youth – remains a serious problem across the continent. Some also argue that the pressure to compete in international markets often results in the informalisation of employment, leading to greater insecurity (Chen, 2012; Webster, Lambert & Bezuidenhout 2008). This means that while Africa has seen impressive economic growth in most regions, this growth has also meant deepening insecurity and the exclusion of large sectors of the population (Mosoetsa, 2011) as well as persistent or increasing inequality. South Africa currently has the highest Gini coefficient amongst countries measuring inequality, and along with Namibia, Sierra Leone, Lesotho, the Seychelles and Botswana, it constitutes one of the most unequal countries in the world (World Bank, 2012). This means that while a few enjoy the fruits of economic growth, most continue to live in conditions of economic and social exclusion, struggling to survive. The combination of rising food prices, unemployment and economic exclusion may be a source of unrest, social tension and political conflict (UNECA, 2010). Climate change and devastation caused by natural disasters have also impacted negatively on food production (Parry et al. 2004).

Social development interventions are geared to addressing the human costs of the economic situation on vulnerable groups; the building of community, individual and household assets; income generation and livelihood and employment strategies; social support and care to respond to the impact of the HIV and AIDS epidemic and improved access to health; educational performance; improvements in food security; and infrastructure development. Local economic and social development programmes rely on different types of volunteers to build human capacity and to support vulnerable groups such as orphans and vulnerable children and women, as well as youth development programmes. Political conflict in many African countries has had a significant impact on human development, which is discussed below.

4.2. The political climate in Africa

Alongside Africa's economic growth, it has also witnessed gains in political stability and security. Since the turn of the century, more and more countries on the continent have been able to secure multiparty democracies, bringing an end to long standing dictatorships, authoritarian and one party regimes. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, South Africa and Kenya can all be counted amongst those African countries that have transitioned, sometimes with fragility, into democratic institutional arrangements. Because many countries on the continent have sustained significant levels of economic growth, optimism and investment confidence have been raised. Africa now also has some of the fastest growing economies, a repository of the most needed natural resources and the most untapped markets. Though the much hailed economic growth has not necessarily resulted in more equitable distribution of resources and increased investment in infrastructure and social services, it has had the benefit of integrating the continent back into the global economy, thereby ending its marginalisation.

However, a great deal of political violence was also seen over the last decade or two. The Arab Spring in North Africa, violent regime transition in Côte d'Ivoire, the creation of a new state of South Sudan, the continued security crisis in the Great Lakes region and the capture of northern Mali by Islamist extremists all point to the reconfiguration of political power and the persistence of old conflicts. While political dynamics are still shaped to some extent by the interests of the World Bank, the United Nations (UN) and other international bodies, respect for popular sovereignty in specific countries and preference for African solutions to African problems within regional and continental institutions are gaining in acceptance. In terms of relationships between state, the private sector and civil society, the last two decades have also witnessed a great deal of change.

State – civil society relationships

For civil society organisations to be effective, and for the work of their volunteers to be meaningful, it is important that civil society organisations and activists have collaborative relationships with other actors and that they operate in an enabling legal environment. Governments in Africa have often had ambivalent relationships with civil society organisations. On the one hand, governments accept – even embrace – the role of civil society actors in providing social services. In the area of socio-economic development, civil society actors are often perceived to play a crucial role – if not even a substituting role in cases where the state is weak in offering flexible and appropriate services at a local level. On the other hand, governments are often suspicious, sometimes even hostile, towards more politically oriented organisations that work to promote human rights issues, for instance, or advocate on sensitive issues such as corruption. In the latter case, civil society organisations are often viewed to be in opposition to the government, which may in some cases partly be fuelled by a history of independence struggle and/or direct support from Western donors eager to promote democratisation, thus bypassing governments in the process (Banks, 2012; USAID 2010; Moyo, undated).

In other cases where the relationship between government and civil society is minimal, often prevalent in countries with very weak or failed states, governments may interact with civil society organisations in contradictory ways. The relationship might be collegial and collaborative with service delivery organisations, and the government may consult these organisations on various issues. In contrast, the relationship with advocacy-based groups may be adversarial, with government attempting to minimise the influence of such groups.

It is worth mentioning that the relationship between governments and civil society organisations vary across countries in Africa. Some countries, like South Africa and Ghana, have relatively stable democracies with reasonably amicable relationships between government and civil society organisations, while countries such as Guinea and Zimbabwe are less stable politically, and many civil society organisations may be viewed with suspicion and are at times perceived to advance foreign interests (USAID, 2010; Moyo undated).

Thus, civil society organisations tend to be cautious in their relationships with government. A close relationship with the state can be beneficial in many ways, allowing the organisation the recognition and respect to carry out its services effectively. But too close a relationship may undermine the legitimacy of the organisation, particularly in situations where the state is not trusted by its citizens or where the state manipulates the relationship with the organisation to serve its own interests. Civil society relationships with the state are therefore complex, changeable and highly dependent on the orientation of the state at any given time. From a pluralist perspective of volunteering, the private-sector-state-civil-society relationship can be mutually beneficial and one in which all actors work together for positive outcomes, but from a critical perspective, relationships are often perceived to be state dominant, which could limit the space for civil society organisations to influence government (Baldock et al., 2007). This is important where organisations wish to influence policy and legislation on social development and volunteering.

Although data on the economic contribution of civil society organisations are not available for all African countries, Table 1 provides an indication of the variable but substantial contribution to GDP and to employment (the equivalent of full time employment that includes volunteers) of volunteering in some African countries. Disaggregated data for volunteers were not obtainable.

Country	Percentage of GDP	FTEs including volunteers	Source of information
Morocco	Civil society activities account for \$270 million or 0.8% of GDP	It employs 160 000 FTE employees of which 83 364 (or just over half) are FTE volunteers.	Saidi, Toepler and Salamon (2004)
South Africa	Civil society activities account for \$1.7 billion or 1.3% of GDP	It employs 645,000 FTE employees, including 316,995 FTE volunteers.	Swilling, Russell, Sokolowski and Salamon (2004)
Uganda	Civil society activities account for \$89 million or 1.4% of GDP	It employs 230,000 FTE employees, including 137,097 FTE volunteers (i.e. volunteers account for 59% of the civil society workforce)	Nyangabyaki, Kibikyo, Barya, Sokolowski and Salamon (2004)
Egypt	Civil society activities account for \$1.5 billion or 2% of GDP	It employs 630000 FTE employees including 17,335 FTE employees (note that this accounts for only 3% of the civil society workforce).	Kandil, Toepler and Salamon (2004)
Kenya	Civil society activities account for \$269.7 million or 2.5% of GDP	It employs 290,948 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees of which 113, 873 are FTE volunteers.	Kanyinga, Mitullah, Odhiambo, Sokolowski and Salamon (2004)
Tanzania	Civil society activities account for \$260 million or 2.9% of GDP	It employs 331,000 FTE employees including 250,000 FTE volunteers (i.e. volunteers account for 3/4 of the civil society workforce).	Kiondo, Ndumbaro, Sokolowski, and Salamon (2004)

Table 1: Estimations of civil society activities as a % of GDP

4.3. Demographic trends

In terms of demographics, the two major trends that Africa faces pertain to age of population and location of population.

Age-related demographics

More than any other region, Africa has an abundance of young people, with 70% of the population younger than 30 years (UN, 2011a). Young people aged 15-24 years make up 20% of the population, 40% of the workforce and 60% of the unemployed. The working age population is expected to continue to grow rapidly on the continent (World Bank, 2011). Such trends hold great potential as a young working age population can advance economic growth through participation in labour markets and as consumers (IRIN, 2007; World Bank, 2007). Youth can also be drivers of transformation through support for innovation, reforms and modernisation.

Yet, it must be noted that a large youthful population exists with relatively fewer older people on the continent, due to lower life expectancies in Africa than in other parts of the world. This means that older people's guidance, skills development, training and mentorship of younger people may be more limited in the African context. The population trend is only likely to 'normalise' – that is to reflect similar levels of younger and older cohorts in the population pyramid – by 2060, according to the UN (2011b). This is primarily due to declining fertility rates on the continent. The population pyramids for Africa from 1980-2060 in Figure 1 demonstrate this trend.

In addition, given that many of the young people that make up Africa's youthful population are unemployed, this large youth population can also be a source of instability due to social and economic exclusion (Demographic Trends, 2008; Agbor, Taiwo & Smith, undated). Consequently, the case for social investment in young people in Africa through educational, skills-based and service-related investments is advocated and is discussed further in section 6.3.

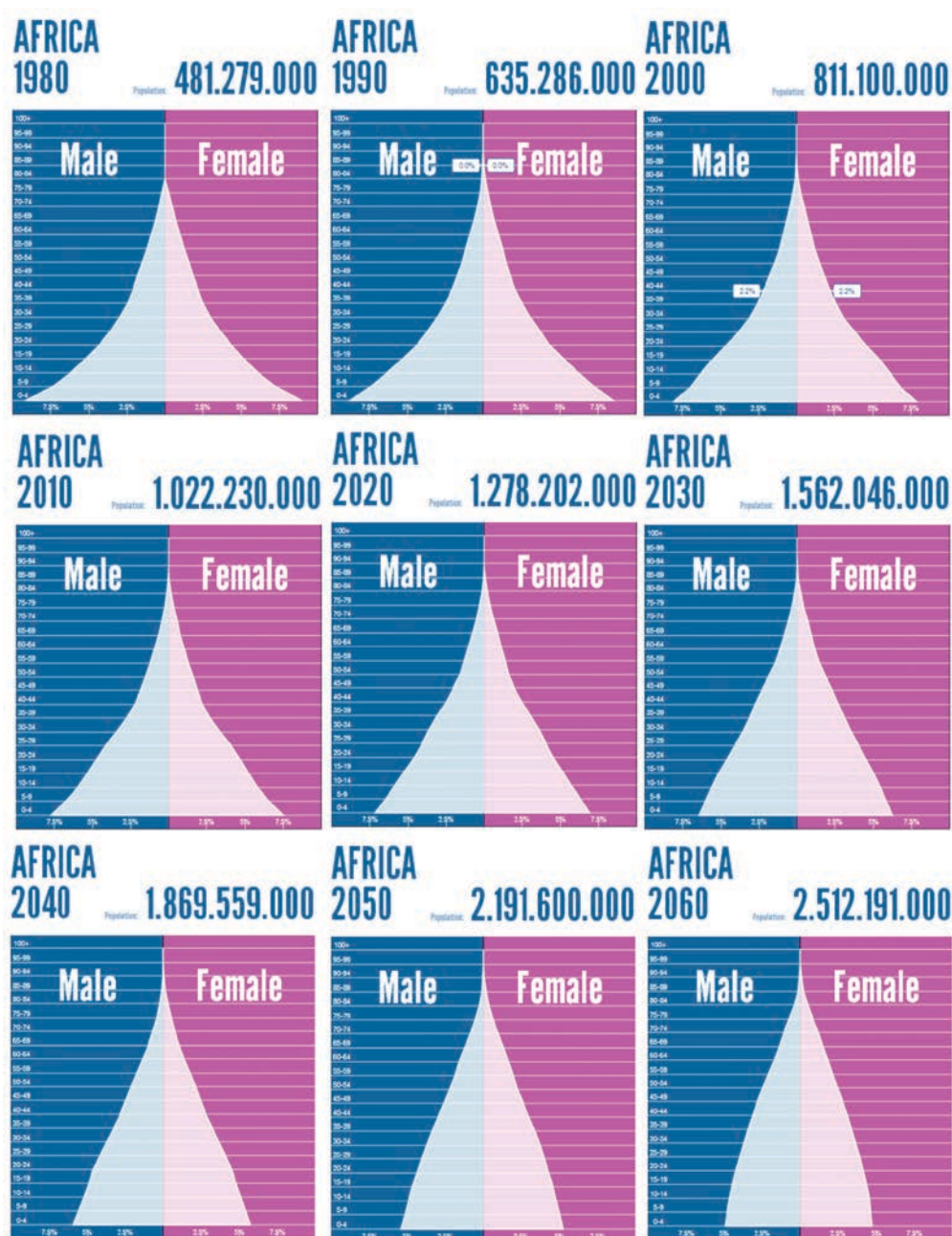


Figure 1: Population pyramids for Africa 1980-2060 demonstrating age cohort shifts (UN, 2011b)

Location-related demographics: urbanisation

As in other parts of the world, most of Africa has experienced rapid urbanisation, although by no means the most widespread urbanisation in the world, as Figure 2 demonstrates.

According to the UN Habitat (2010), 40% of Africa's population in 2010 resided in urban areas, and the projection is that by 2050 just over 61% of the population will live in cities. The Southern and North Africa regions, where it is projected that by 2050 over 70% of the population will be living in cities, largely drive this trend. In both regions, more than 50% of the population are already living in urban areas.

Urbanisation can present an opportunity for development, as cities are the main drivers of economic productivity. A strong relationship seems to exist between urbanisation and GDP growth. However, in parts of Africa, urbanisation has not always been paired with industrial and commercial development with the resultant access to jobs (UN Habitat, 2010). Urbanisation also presents a range of challenges. While it has been suggested that rural poverty is deeper than urban poverty, when the costs of living in urban areas are taken into account, the experience of poverty is actually more evenly distributed across rural and urban areas (UN Habitat, 2010). This is visually represented by the high numbers of informal or slum dwellings that characterise Africa's mega-cities; people moving in from rural areas in the hopes of better economic opportunities typically inhabit these informal dwellings (Akrofi, 2006). While urban living usually means better access

to infrastructure and services, these areas attest to the fact that this is not always so. However, the idea that urban areas bring greater opportunities (Wrong, 2010) is well established, thus driving urbanisation.

These demographic trends present challenges for volunteering and social development policies and programmes that need to keep abreast of how best to invest in Africa's youthful population and the associated challenges of increasing urbanisation. VIOs need to take cognisance of these trends in the prioritisation and design of their programmes while not overlooking the needs of children, older persons and those living in rural areas.

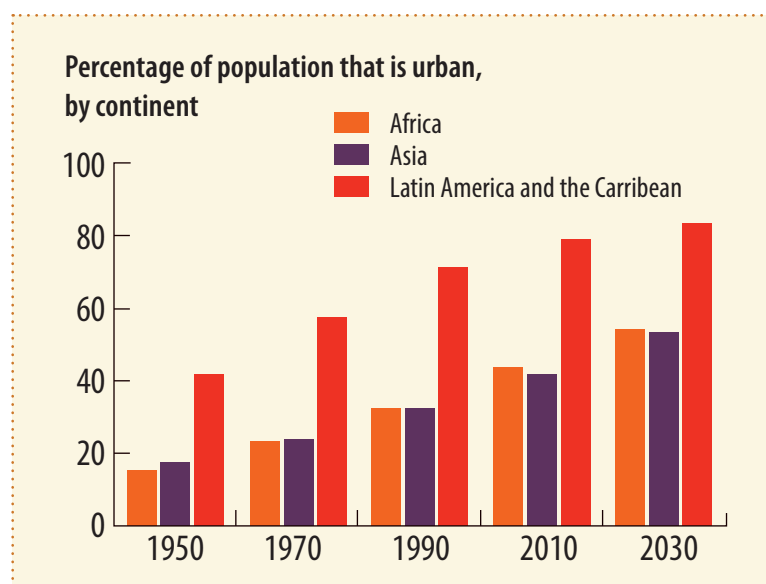


Figure 2: Percentage of population that is urban, by continent 1950-2030 (UN, 2001)

5. Volunteer policy, funding and the aid environment in Africa

Internationally there has been increasing recognition that states should take appropriate steps to facilitate voluntary action and promote the development of civil society organisations. In line with this, international actors, often with the UNV in the lead, have sought to promote the development of laws, statutes as well as legislative toolkits that can assist governments in establishing appropriate legal frameworks (IFRC, 2011; IFRC & UNV 2004). Large international VIOs such as the RCRC movement, UNV and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) have played key roles in supporting these efforts at national levels. Table 2 outlines which African countries have national level policies, white papers and legislation. Eleven out of the 20 African that were reviewed have formal volunteer policies, with only Burkina Faso having legislation governing working conditions, health and safety standards and co-ordination between government and NGOs. Nigeria, Rwanda and South Africa have national youth service policies. In some countries, welfare policies, such as South Africa's White Paper for Social Welfare, make provision for promoting volunteering, but limited funding is allocated to support volunteer programmes. While the government of Zambia supports volunteerism in its welfare policy, roles and responsibilities of government and NGOs are not clearly defined. Very few countries have formal national structures responsible for volunteer promotion; the office of the president of Rwanda plays a leading role in this regard in the country, for instance. This overview indicates that there is growing emphasis in many African countries on formalising policies on volunteering either as part of their overall welfare policies or as stand-alone policies.

Country	Volunteer policy/National framework	Source of information
Benin	Has a policy on volunteerism	UNV, 2011c
Burkina Faso	Act No. 031-2007/AN (2007) provides a comprehensive definition of national volunteerism, mandates health and safety standards for working conditions of volunteers and establishes the permanent "National Program of Volunteerism in Burkina Faso" to promote coordination and communication between government and civil society	IAVE, 2011
Cape Verde	Has a policy on volunteerism	UNV, 2011c
Kenya	Has a national volunteer coordinating committee, which includes representatives from VIOs. It is in the process of developing a national volunteer policy	IAVE, 2011
Liberia	Has a policy on volunteerism	UNV, 2011c

Country	Volunteer policy/National framework	Source of information
Malawi	There is no policy that directly governs volunteers, though there is some advice available in some sectors of government	IAVE, 2011
Mali	Has a policy on volunteerism, which is strongly critiqued by CS	UNV, 2011c
Mauritius	There is no National Volunteer Policy, although there is a Corporate Social Responsibility Committee that is legally bound to provide funding of 2% to NGOs. The allocations are not uniform.	IAVE, 2011
Mozambique	Has a policy on volunteerism	UNV, 2011c
Namibia	Has a draft policy on volunteerism	UNV, 2011c
Niger	Has a policy on volunteerism	UNV, 2011c
Nigeria	Nigeria has a National Volunteer Service, National Youth Council and National Youth Service Corps Graduate Scheme but does not have a national volunteer policy	IAVE, 2011
Rwanda	Government of Rwanda initiated the National Volunteer Framework two years ago, which operates under the auspices of the president's office. It aims to promote the spirit of volunteerism with values rooted in Rwandan culture. Falling under the Youth Ministry, there is also an internship programme for new graduates. However, there is no national volunteer policy	IAVE, 2011
South Africa	The 2010 FIFA World Cup led to the development of the World Cup Volunteer Policy, which may encourage the eventual adoption of a broader national volunteer policy. South Africa also has a White Paper on National Youth Service and promotes volunteering through the national education curriculum. The White Paper for Social Welfare advocates volunteering.	IAVE, 2011
Tanzania	Tanzania's 2007 National Volunteer Policy was the product of shared consultations and studies conducted by the national government, the UNV office in Tanzania, domestic civil society organisations and the international donor community – these stakeholders now play a major role in the implementation of the new policy	UNV, 2011d
Togo	Has a volunteer policy	UNV, 2011c
Uganda	Has a volunteer policy	Uganda Red Cross, 2011
Zambia	Policy and legislative frameworks for NGOs operating in Zambia are yet to be developed. While the government supports volunteerism, the Social Welfare Policy is not clear on roles and responsibilities of government and NGO service providers in the delivery of volunteer services	IAVE, 2011
Zimbabwe	There is no overall policy or legislation on volunteerism, but the Private Voluntary Organizations Act, 1996 provides a framework for voluntary organisations to participate in welfare provision. Civic service is also incorporated in health, sports and education policies. The National Plan of Action for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children also incorporates volunteerism.	IAVE, 2011

Table 2: African countries with volunteer legislation or frameworks in place

There appears to be scope for the development of volunteer policies and for shared learning between countries about appropriate institutional frameworks to support volunteering and in the creation of supportive environments for NGOs to flourish. In many African countries, individual constitutions guarantee the right to association. There is, however, concern that increasing regulation by national governments could signal a return to autocratic practices and a backlash against democratisation (Moyo, 2010).

Civil society organisations across Africa face many legal barriers that relate both to specific NGO legislation and regulations as well as to other laws and regulations not directly targeted at civil society organisations but only, for instance, at limitations to media freedom and internet access (USAID, 2010; Elone, undated). In terms of barriers, the registration process in many countries is stringent, bureaucratic and cumbersome. Rules and procedures are complex and difficult to follow, laws are often outdated, there may be vague grounds for denial of registration, and it can be difficult to appeal an unfavourable decision. Re-registration and renewal is often a long procedure, and the registration process is often centralised in the capital city, which makes it particularly difficult for organisations in rural areas to register (USAID 2010; Moyo, 2010; Elone, undated).

There are also barriers to operational activity. Legal constraints can restrict the types of activities in which civil society organisations and their volunteers can engage. For instance, NGOs may be barred from working in areas that are seen as politically sensitive, and/or the government may establish oversight agencies that instruct organisations to coordinate their activities. Invasive oversight measures can also take the form of interference in internal management and place burdensome reporting requirements on them (USAID, 2010; Moyo, 2010; Elone, undated).

Further, there are challenges with regard to resources. NGO legislation in some countries constrains the ability of organisations to raise sufficient funds. Hence some countries (for example, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia) are instituting legislation that restricts the amount of foreign funding organisations can receive for certain activities such as work on human and democratic rights. This seriously hampers the ability of organisations to function, as only limited funds can be raised from local sources. Other legal provisions also limit the organisations' ability to financially sustain themselves. Even though some countries provide tax exemptions and other financial incentives for NGO activities, the procedures are sometimes so complicated that organisations are unable to take advantage of them (USAID, 2010; Moyo, 2010; Elone, undated).

The above restrictions to civil society organisations also influence the working environment of staff and volunteers of these organisations. In addition, in Africa there is limited attention paid to the legal status of volunteers. While this might in fact allow volunteering to flourish (given that legislation may be too cumbersome), it also means that volunteers face certain constraints and risks that are not always recognised. For instance, there may be little distinction between 'genuine volunteerism' and use of 'volunteers' as exploited labour by paying them stipends instead of paying market related salaries and by circumventing labour legislation, as has been the case in certain instance in South Africa (Patel, 2010). In addition, because volunteers are not considered to be paid employees and are not governed by a separate legal framework, they may not be covered in cases of injury in the course of executing their duties.

For international and regional volunteers there are often substantial difficulties related to acquiring appropriate visas and residence permits (IFRC & UNV, 2004). In the absence of legal protections, the recognition of volunteers is often left to the volunteer-involving organisation, many of which (particularly large international VIOs and national VIOs connected to international networks) have excellent frameworks and systems of governance. However, many other organisations, particularly those struggling with organisational capacity and often relying on volunteers, do not have such policies in place. This means that it is often local and informal community-based volunteers, who are already vulnerable, that are unprotected. Developing national level legal frameworks may be one solution, already adopted in Namibia. However, working with VIOs to develop or improve internal volunteer management systems and policies may also be a constructive way to ensure that volunteers are supported and protected.

5.1. Funding and the aid environment in Africa

A broad spectrum of organisations, such as bilateral and multilateral donors, larger NGOs and faith-based organisations as well as charities and philanthropic foundations fund social development and volunteer programmes. Given the multiplicity of actors working on many



different levels across and within nations, it is difficult to gather reliable information and provide a firm overview of funding sources to the third sector (Agg, 2006). It can be said, however, that the majority of funding for civil society in Africa has come from outside the continent. It is therefore not surprising that the best records in terms of funding for the civil society sector can be found through the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) (www.oecd.org/dac), which collects data from their member organisations. These data cover official development aid (ODA) in OECD countries only but have some clear limitations. For instance, though covering many different areas of support, funding for the NGO sector is not always clearly distinguished from other funding activities; that is, donors may declare a disbursement as humanitarian relief while it may also be classified as a grant to an NGO. It is therefore possible that actual funding to the NGO sector (as reported from the donor side) is underreported (Agg, 2006).

In the following we rely on the DAC sources of ODA, but it is worth pointing out that civil society organisations are able to tap resources from numerous other avenues. While OECD members allocated US\$15.5 billion to the civil society sector worldwide in 2009, NGOs themselves were able to raise US\$22 billion from non-public sources in the same year (as reported by OECD country governments). At the same time, it has been estimated that private philanthropic aid from only 14 developed countries amounted to US\$49 billion in 2008 (OECD, 2011). Volunteer organisations therefore need not rely solely on 'traditional' donors for support but might be able to raise funds from other philanthropic sources. This does require substantial information, capacity and networks, which put many African organisations, particularly at the local level, at a disadvantage.

The level of ODA reaching the civil society sector has grown in the last decades, covering about 13% of total aid disbursements in 2009 (OECD, 2011). The majority of bilateral aid channelled through NGOs covers the areas of humanitarian assistance, service delivery and governance. In a recent survey DAC donors indicated that the most important reason for funding and working with NGOs was organisations' ability to reach a specific development objective linked to service delivery rather than the enhancement of the NGOs' own institutional or development capacity (OECD, 2011).

Local organisations in developing countries receive far less funding than do international NGOs and, particularly, NGOs based in a donor country. Thus, donors provide around five times more aid to NGOs based in their own (the donors') countries than to international NGOs and local NGOs. Local organisations can often access funding through NGOs based in developed countries who act as intermediaries, but, in general, funding to local organisations (whether directly from donors or through NGOs) is mostly provided as earmarked funding for specific projects and services. Core support, such as infrastructure and staff, is generally out of reach for such organisations. Many donors are reluctant to provide funding for core support, and only large, well-established national and international NGOs tend to be able to access such funding (Agg, 2006).

The civil society sector is often viewed as having weak financial viability, particularly in the African context. Few NGOs are able to generate significant income outside traditional donor funding – this is more so in low-income and conflict-prone countries with relatively young NGO sectors. A few countries (such as Kenya, South Africa and Senegal) have established NGO sectors and organisations that are better able to attract funding from other means such as through corporate philanthropy, collecting membership dues and pursuing economic activities. However, in general, the civil society sector in Africa relies on donor funding that is often project-oriented, and, commonly, many NGOs rely on a single, external source for funding. Community-based organisations, though often very active, struggle to receive direct donor funding, mainly due to a lack of networks with funding organisations and the knowledge and capacity about how best to access funding (USAID, 2010). It is these organisations that often rely heavily on community-based volunteers but perhaps do not have the resources to ensure that volunteer management systems are in place.

Civil society actors are obviously independent actors in their own right. However, in institutions where they strongly rely on funding from external sources (rather than their membership base or community), their ability to formulate their own priorities, plans and strategies may be jeopardised (OECD, 2011). In terms of bilateral donor funding, many locally based civil society actors, including volunteer organisations, may be involved in two types of relationships – directly with donors and/or with NGOs based in a developed country. Furthermore, as the donors often prescribe the projects, locally based organisations direct their activities to fit an externally formulated agenda. This situation compromises the otherwise acknowledged and valued ability of civil society organisations to run flexible and bottom-up driven programmes that meet the needs of the communities they serve (Banks, 2012; Birdsall & Kelly, 2010).

Many donors prefer to fund activities of locally based organisations through NGOs based either in their own country or internationally. There are good reasons for this, including high transaction costs for donors in dealing with many small organisations and the ability of larger, better established NGOs to meet often difficult donor requirements (OECD, 2011). Larger NGOs also have expertise in a specific area and can draw smaller organisations into a partnership, where local organisations can strengthen their capacity while providing local knowledge and networks. However, local organisations often become programmatic partners that must deliver certain kinds of services without any direct control over resources and limited influence and involvement in programme focus and direction. This way, the actual transfer of capacity and skills is often limited (Birdsall & Kelly, 2010).

A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's hand holding a black pitchfork, using it to work the soil in a garden bed. The soil is dark brown and clumpy. In the foreground, there are several green leafy plants, possibly lettuce or similar salad greens, growing in rows. The background is slightly out of focus, showing another person in a light blue shirt and dark pants, also working in the garden. The scene is set outdoors in a sunny, open area with some trees and a fence visible in the distance. The lighting is bright, suggesting it's daytime.

Community members assist one another in a community gardening project. Mabopane, Pretoria, South Africa.

Organisations based in developed countries (also termed international NGOs (INGOs)) have, given their high capacity and expertise in project sourcing, comparative advantage over their local counterparts in terms of accessing funds both directly from donor countries as well as through local project funding in countries in the South. Hence, there is a power imbalance, as INGOs tend to control funds. This hierarchical relationship can cause resentment amongst local organisations for numerous reasons. INGOs themselves are often large and bureaucratic and appear from the local perspective much like a donor with prescribed activities and requirements. There is also often a large discrepancy in wages and benefits between Northern and Southern NGO salaries, which can be a source of tension (Agg, 2006).

Called the African Grantmakers Network (AGN), a network of existing and emerging African philanthropic institutions was established in 2009 to promote transformative and sustainable philanthropy on the continent. The 2012 AGN assembly held in Johannesburg, South Africa, bears testimony to a growing and vibrant movement of African philanthropy (Smith, 2012). Participants were encouraged to include in the notion of philanthropy a giving culture and the entrepreneurial spirit of Africans as opposed to simply defining it in terms of money. A key challenge discussed at the conference was the fact that aid and philanthropic funding for African causes has historically 'not come from African hands' – this despite the fact that there is no shortage of resources in Africa. Therefore the AGN hopes to build a continent-wide culture of cooperative African philanthropy, in which local individuals and institutions invest in African causes (Du Toit, 2012). It is hoped that the increasing attention to African philanthropy will soon help African organisations achieve greater independence and sustainability.

6. The extent and nature of volunteering in Africa

The deeply rooted cultural motivations for volunteering mean that active volunteer participation is a common phenomenon in African countries. While volunteer involvement through mutual aid and reciprocity is a mainstay of African communities, it is not easily documented or measured. This is contrary to the situation in more formally organised non-profit and charitable organisations that are documented to some extent. A recent CIVICUS survey on volunteering patterns in Africa (CIVICUS, 2011b) shows that 76% of the respondents volunteered in socially oriented organisations, which is well above the global average of 23%. Only 31% claimed to volunteer in politically oriented organisations. This is still above the global average of 14% (CIVICUS, 2011b).

Table 3 provides information pertaining to levels of voluntary activity as a percentage of the total country population in various countries in Africa for which data were available. The data were drawn from two major studies on voluntarism and the civil society sector – one by CIVICUS (2011a) and the other by the International Labour Organization and Johns Hopkins University (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2004). The information collected in the latter source was standardised based on an assessment of the number of full time equivalent jobs that volunteers hold in a year. This number was then statistically manipulated to provide an estimate of the total number of people volunteering, expressed as a percentage of the population. In the CIVICUS study, individual country research teams engaged in a participatory process of measuring volunteering. Thus, the definitions of volunteering range widely across the country reports, with some including both formal and informal voluntary activities and others including either one of the two. The numbers contained in Table 3 are not comparable but provide an overall impression of the extent of volunteering in 16 African countries.

Country	% of population who volunteer	Notes	Source of information
Egypt	6.4%	Volunteering through formal programmes only	CIVICUS CSI (2011b)
Egypt	1%	Excludes volunteering through religious organisations. Formal volunteering only	Kandil et al. (2004)
Ghana	56.5%	Indicates those who volunteer at least once a year	CIVICUS CSI (2011b)
Guinea	13.8%	Volunteering through formal programmes	CIVICUS CSI (2011b)
Kenya	6%	Volunteering through formal programmes	Kanyinga et al. (2004)
Liberia	70.4%	Includes informal volunteering	CIVICUS CSI (2011b)
Morocco	4%	Excludes volunteering through religious organisations. Formal volunteering only	Saidi et al. (2004)
Mozambique	39%	Indicates those who volunteer at least once a year	CIVICUS CSI (2011b)
Nigeria	83%	Includes informal volunteering	CIVICUS CSI (2011b)
Rwanda	21.4%	Volunteering through formal programmes	CIVICUS CSI (2011b)
Senegal	81.2%	Only 15.7% of these volunteer in formal programmes	CIVICUS CSI (2011b)
Sierra Leone	14%	Definition of volunteering is unclear	CIVICUS CSI (2011b)
South Africa	9%	Conservative estimates. Includes formal volunteering only	Swilling et al. (2004)
Tanzania	11%	Volunteering through formal programmes	Kiondo et al. (2004)

Country	% of population who volunteer	Notes	Source of information
Togo	28.6%	Does not include informal mutual aid activities	CIVICUS CSI (2011b)
Uganda	81%	Includes informal volunteering	CIVICUS CSI (2011b)
Uganda	23%	Volunteering through formal programmes	Nyangabyaki et al. (2004)
Zambia	31%	Defined as social volunteering	CIVICUS CSI (2011b)

Table 3: Extent of volunteering as a percentage of population in various African countries³

Most of the African countries for which data are available demonstrate high levels of commitment to volunteering. Where informal volunteering was included in the estimates, volunteering as a percentage of the overall population was much higher than in countries where informal volunteering was excluded from the estimates. For instance, volunteering was the highest in Nigeria (83%) and Senegal and Uganda (81% for both countries). All three countries' figures included informal volunteering data. This is as compared to countries that only assessed volunteering in formal programmes, which ranged from a low of 1% in Egypt to high of 11% in Tanzania. There are no accurate estimates of informal volunteering, although Table 3 suggests that more research is needed in this area. Overall, the African countries for which data were available have a high commitment to volunteering.⁴ It is also apparent from other cross-national research that formal (or structured) and informal or (locally driven) volunteering tend to co-exist with little evidence that the one form is likely to 'crowd-out' the other (Einolf, 2012). This overview of the extent of volunteering is supported by findings from a global study on formal civic service that included volunteering in 57 countries; Sub-Saharan Africa was ranked third out of the seven regions in the world (McBride, Benitez & Danso, 2003). North America had the highest number of formal civic service and volunteering programmes followed by Europe/Central Asia with South Asia having the least number of programmes.

6.1. The nature of volunteering

Volunteer programmes are a response to the human development context in Africa. Based on data from a five-country study in Southern Africa, health, particularly HIV/AIDS programmes, and human and social service programmes were most prevalent in the volunteering sector, followed by social and community development programmes, education, and services for children and youth (Patel et al., 2007). This concurs to some extent with research findings of 44 programmes in 16 Sub-Saharan African countries where the service areas included community/infrastructure development, cultural integration, personal development, environmental protection, education, employment/economic development and human services (Patel & Wilson, 2004). The majority of servers in the latter study were young people between the ages of 15 and 30, although this varied depending on the nature of the programmes. For instance, the age profile of volunteers engaged in home-based care for people affected by HIV/AIDS were older women (40 years and above); this age profile appeared to be due to the demanding and stressful nature of the work (Patel & Wilson, 2004). Two types of volunteer programmes exist, namely those that are led by governments, such as youth service programmes in Nigeria and Kenya, and those led by NGOs. Local communities, especially poor and rural communities, were most frequently cited as beneficiaries, followed by youth and children (Patel & Wilson, 2004). Recent research confirms the key role civil society organisations and community associations such as cultural, and religious associations play in service delivery on the African continent (CIVICUS, 2011b). Fewer people volunteer in political organisations (CIVICUS, 2011a; Patel, 2003). A smaller number of organisations are made up of members with a higher socio-economic status; these are more formal in character and tend to be more politically oriented with a focus on issues such as human rights, civic education and democracy advocacy (Banks, 2012; USAID, 2010; Anheier & Salamon, 1999; Hearn, undated).

Although the bulk of volunteers, especially those active in community-based volunteering, are disadvantaged persons (Patel et al., 2007), involvement of different classes varies across types and goals of programmes and across countries. For instance, in Egypt, formal employment is strongly associated with voluntary involvement (CIVICUS, 2005), and in Zambia it was found that work and searching for work limited the time available for involvement in voluntary activities (ZCSD & CIVICUS, 2010). Again, it is likely that when only formal volunteering is analysed, the involvement of unemployed and poor people in informal voluntary activities may be overlooked.

Gender patterns of involvement vary widely across the continent. While in Egypt and Tanzania more men are involved in volunteer activities (FORDIA & CIVICUS, 2011; CIVICUS, 2005), in Rwanda, women and men are more evenly represented (CCOAIB, 2011). These trends may mask the extensive involvement of women in informal voluntary activities, which are often perceived to be part of a woman's social role thus going unrecognised and under-reported.

³ Where information from both reports was available for a particular country, the country information is reported twice.

⁴ Even in countries like Egypt, where the reported level of formal volunteering is low compared to other countries, a strong culture of community involvement and mobilisation underpins the groundswell of citizen action in the country, as was indicated by the Arab Spring.

6.2. A diversity of forms of volunteering

A diversity of volunteering forms exists internationally. We now turn to types of volunteering that are currently particularly relevant in African countries and the challenges these types face when it comes to volunteer development. We first consider community-based volunteering, which is most prevalent in Africa but nevertheless under-researched and unrecognised. International volunteering is the second type that is discussed as it takes different forms and is particularly significant in the context of globalisation. It also provides rich opportunities for volunteers to contribute to social development in Africa. Finally, youth volunteering is considered especially because African countries face significant challenges in relation to the social inclusion of young people and building their human capabilities.

6.2.1 *Community-based forms of volunteering*

Given that Africa, despite its impressive recent economic growth, for the most part continues to face low development outcomes, a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and high unemployment figures, informal volunteering by community members plays a vital role in community survival as there are no notable differences between the socio-economic profile of the beneficiaries and volunteers of this form of volunteering (Patel, 2007). For instance, the large household survey conducted by Pelsler, Burton & Gondwe (2004) in Malawi showed that two-thirds of volunteering activities were community-based. Community-based voluntary service is a vital safety net in circumstances in which the state does not or is not able to provide the required social services and social protection mechanisms (Everatt et al., 2005). In addition, Chaskin (2003) argues that these types of volunteers provide valued social support and contribute to enhancing community resilience. Volunteering in one's own community increases local level participation, social capital through increased social networks, as well as knowledge and learning about how to solve community needs and build local community level institutions and capacity (Miller et al., 2002). In countries where there is a lack of employment, community volunteers who are deployed by VIOs are also sometimes paid stipends for volunteering. Stipends go some way toward compensating volunteers for their time and for the costs incurred in the course of volunteering. This is particularly pertinent in community volunteering where the volunteers come from the poor communities they are serving. For some community volunteers, stipends are an important source of livelihood and survival and in these situations can be a motivation for volunteering. Stipends are in most cases well below market related wages and are often viewed negatively; they are sometimes considered exploitative, as volunteers do not have recourse to better sources of income (Wilson, 2007). However, volunteers sometimes receive training, work experience and access to social networks, which may be a bridge for them to exit unemployment and economic exclusion (Lough & Sherraden, 2012). However, little is known about the potential of the volunteer experience in increasing the employability of volunteers although there is some evidence to this effect (VOSESA, 2011).

Acts of voluntarism, despite being central to the survival and well-being of large sections of Africa's population, are seldom recognised and their contribution to the economy is not accurately assessed (CIVICUS 2011b; Everatt et al. 2005; Patel, Kaseke and Midgley 2012; Salamon 2011). Informal volunteering in one's own community is often not counted, and this kind of volunteering is estimated to be substantial, as reflected in Table 3. Research is needed to assess the size and scope of informal community-based volunteering in Africa. However, cognisance needs to be taken of the gendered nature of both informal and formal community-based volunteering. Understanding is needed of how the social obligations of community members to one another increase the burden of care on already struggling individuals (Patel & Mupedziswa, 2007), particularly women who carry the largest burden of care within the home and community (VSO-RAISA & VOSESA, 2011; Patel, 2009a).

Further, in the debates on the roles of the state and communities in social development, community-based volunteering is at times perceived to be a substitute for state provision and might lead to the abrogation of state responsibility for public welfare. Ideally, volunteerism and voluntary initiative should play a complementary role and work in a collaborative partnership with both formal and informal organisations of both a public and a private nature. From a social development perspective, Patel (2005) and Midgley (1995) contend that partnerships of this kind meet human needs and promote participation. However, mutual aid amongst the poor often falls short of addressing the root causes of poverty and thus is typically not transformative in nature (Habib, Maharaj & Nyar 2003).

How then might community-based volunteering contribute to social development that meets the tangible needs of beneficiaries and contributes to social transformation? This presents a major challenge for VIOs. Some pointers emerge from this review for the design, implementation and evaluation of community-based volunteer programmes. There is a need for greater gender sensitivity in the development and implementation of volunteer programmes. Volunteers should be viewed as a resource and an asset in local development. They should not be exploited as a form of cheap labour, and due consideration needs to be given to their working conditions, the meeting of health and safety standards and the opportunity costs associated with volunteering. VIOs are also encouraged to develop policies for the payment of stipends. Training of community volunteers could also enhance the quality of service delivery. In poor communities and situations of high unemployment, volunteering is also an opportunity to develop skills that may be transferable to the workplace that may be particularly appealing to youth volunteers (UNV, 2011b). It is also important, in the assessment of outcomes of social development programmes that rely on volunteers in disadvantaged communities, to assess the impact of the programmes on the volunteers as well as on the beneficiaries and their communities.

6.2.2 International volunteers

In the context of development challenges facing Africa, international volunteers are increasingly attracted to volunteering on the continent (Graham, Mavungu, Perold, Cronin, Muchemwa & Lough, 2011). It is evident from the literature review that there are no accurate statistics of the number of international volunteers in Africa although they might be more prevalent in countries that have a tradition and experience of volunteering. The phenomenon may also be more common in countries where there are international organisations and where local bodies have linkages with such organisations (Patel & Wilson, 2004). Traditionally, international volunteers were generally highly skilled individuals and volunteers from international organisations such as the UNV, but a more recent trend is for young volunteers from developed countries to engage in voluntary service activities in developing countries including Africa (Graham et al., 2011).

While smaller numbers of Africans volunteer in countries other than their home country on the continent, they do make up a further segment of the volunteering population in Africa. Regional or African volunteers offer opportunities for inter-cultural learning and South-South knowledge exchange. Diaspora volunteerism is also a new development that involves experts (doctors, for instance) from emigrant communities undertaking short-term assignments in their countries of origin. Relatively little is known about the potentially important role that these different types of international volunteers might play in social transformation and development. Given the significant number of people from developing countries living abroad,⁵ the role of diaspora volunteering merits further attention (UNV, 2011a). International volunteers contribute to capacity building in organisations (Moleni & Gallagher, 2007) and provide skills that are otherwise limited in the local context (Perold, Graham, Mavungu, Cronin, Muchemwa & Lough, 2012). In an attempt to start mapping the presence of international volunteering in Southern Africa, VOSESA developed an online survey that was successfully sent to 201 volunteer-sending organisations, the majority of which are based in Northern countries. The survey revealed that the five most common activities in which international volunteers engage are education (64%), human and social services (56%), health services (39%), community development (34%) and disability (28%) (VOSESA, 2010).

Further, research indicates that there are also numerous challenges with hosting international volunteers (Caprara et al., 2012; Perold et al., 2012; Graham et al., 2011) as it requires capacity to manage volunteers efficiently and effectively. It may also place additional demands on VIOs such as pressure on management time and unforeseen financial commitments. Despite these challenges, international volunteering is growing in the era of globalisation, opening up new opportunities for volunteers to contribute to social development, sustainable environmental development and the common good beyond nation states.

6.3. Volunteering amongst youth

National youth service programmes have been well documented in countries such as Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa (Obadare, 2007; NYDA, 2012). According to Johnson, McBride and Olate (2007), youth service – a long-term, formalised programme of voluntary service for young people – could contribute to the social and economic development of the servers and the communities in which they serve. A key challenge is to ensure youth volunteering programmes are specifically designed to build skills and job readiness of young servers (Pritzker & McBride, 2006) and meet development objectives. Wijeyesekera's (2011) research amongst young volunteers in Tanzania showed that they wanted to serve to make a difference and to increase their knowledge and skills. Volunteering gave them a sense of independence; they felt respected and recognised by peers and other community members. For some, volunteering made a political statement, as they wanted to 'do something about the government not fulfilling its responsibilities'. A knowledge seminar convened by the South African National Youth Development Agency with 65 South African youth also found that the prospect for personal development through volunteering is appealing to young people. However, alongside expressing an interest in developing skills and gaining work experience, volunteering could promote social cohesion and give young people a sense of fulfilment and empowerment (National Youth Development Agency, 2012).

The challenge is to devise well-designed, managed and implemented youth volunteer programmes that seek to meet the developmental needs and interests of a diverse population of young people. However, youth volunteering and service is not uncomplicated. Many youth service programmes in the region have been criticised for becoming too centralised, militaristic and nationalist in orientation. The Malawian Young Pioneers (Moleni & Gallagher, 2007) and the Zimbabwe National Youth Service (Kaseke & Dhembha, 2006; Shumba, 2003) are cases in point. Research is needed on how best to leverage youth volunteering for development that engages young people in finding solutions to the social and economic challenges facing them (National Youth Development Agency, 2012).

To sum up, this section discussed the nature of volunteering with reference to the profile of the volunteers and the areas in which they serve. Three types of volunteering programmes were discussed that address three key challenges facing African countries: the need to support local initiative and the efforts of people themselves in meeting community needs; leveraging and building human capacity in areas where there are scarce skills; and, lastly, engaging young people in social development through volunteering and service to their communities and the society at large.

⁵ For instance, the USA has 1.1 million residing practising medical professionals from developing countries, of which over 120,000 come from Sub-Saharan Africa (UNV, 2011a:32)

7. Strategic directions in volunteering in Africa

This review of volunteering in Africa identified a range of contextual factors, opportunities and challenges that are pertinent to VIOs, policy makers, volunteers and beneficiaries as they imagine, think about and plan for growing volunteering in Africa. These are firstly, that volunteering has an old tradition in many African countries and continues to play an important role in social development. This is a strength that needs to be harnessed in volunteer programming. The social development approach provides a useful lens to inform strategic thinking and programming for volunteering. Volunteering is not an end product but a vehicle to achieve agreed social development outcomes that will lead to substantial improvements in people's lives.

Second, the socio-economic, political and human development challenges in many countries provide rich opportunities for aligning volunteering efforts with the social development needs and priorities of African countries and for innovation in social programming with high developmental impacts. Increasing urbanisation over the next decades and the need to respond to urban poverty and inequality remains an important development priority, as will the needs of those who are vulnerable to age and illness, those who have impaired physical and mental capabilities, and those who are excluded from access to employment or livelihoods. The social and economic consequences of political conflict and violence in some countries and their continuing effects on people's lives also remain relevant.

A third factor that should inform future strategic thinking is the investment in young people who make up a substantial proportion of the population in the present and the foreseeable future. This remains an urgent priority. Fourth, the review also highlights the need to develop and strengthen national governments' enabling policies and to overcome the barriers to volunteering. The shift to project funding, a lack of support for the core operations of volunteer programmes, as well as the global economic crisis have had an impact on VIOs and their potential to raise funds from Northern donors. However, there are still opportunities for VIOs to access funding from philanthropic and other sources. Finally, the diversity of volunteering types and programmes that were reviewed suggests different ways of engaging volunteers in social development depending on the goals and outcomes of the programmes and the changing motivations of volunteers. Against this background, we identify a selected set of issues, challenges and gaps that could inform strategic directions of volunteering in the future.

7.1. Shifting motivations for volunteering

Motivations to volunteer tend to be influenced by various factors, including but not limited to the kind of volunteer, where the volunteer lives, and the demographics such as the age of the volunteer. Over an individual's lifespan, these motivations to volunteer may also change. There is increasing evidence that individuals volunteer less out of a moral duty to the collective good and more because of the statement it might make about who they are or how it might contribute to their own sense of self (Yeung, 2004; Angel, 2003; Dekker & Halman, 2003; Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Hacket & Mutz, 2002; Anheier & Salamon, 1999). Thus, volunteering tends to be more ad hoc, sporadic and short term as people engage in different activities (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003). Some might be attracted to more popular activities (Safrit & Merrill, 2000; Bennett, 1998; Gaskin, 1998) such as climate change. These changing trends in the motivations of volunteers have been



Community members assist one another in a community gardening project. Mabopane, Pretoria, South Africa.

identified in developed countries but appear to be less marked in developing countries where individual and collective motivations are more likely to co-exist (Heelas, 1996). Dual motivations may be more prevalent in communities and societies where mass consumerism and the expansion of neoliberal capitalism have been late in arriving, such as in many parts of Africa, and where religious belonging, and cultural or community identity remains strong (Angel, 2003). Given the strong community and religious motivations of volunteering, it is likely that collective motivations are still strong amongst African volunteers, particularly in rural areas. However, as more and more people are drawn into the capitalist economy through employment and access to ICT, such shifts in motivation may become more of a feature in the future.

The above scenario has implications for volunteer development. How do VIOs ensure that their recruitment strategies appeal to the motivations of people who are interested in self-development and exciting new opportunities while still retaining a commitment to a service ethos? Or, should VIOs seek to counter this trend by inculcating a culture of service and collective obligation of people from an early age? This merits deliberation especially in youth service programmes. While collective motivations may be more morally justifiable, individual reflexive motivations may still be rooted in some form of altruism (Rehberg, 2005). Young volunteers, for instance, are far more likely to be reflexively motivated (Wijeyesekera, 2011), while rural-based volunteers and those motivated by religion are perhaps more influenced by collective motivations (Ruiter & De Graaf, 2006). The diversity of motivations for volunteering needs to be considered by VIOs, as do the implications thereof for eligibility criteria and for volunteer recruitment, retention and management strategies. Finding ways of matching volunteer motivations with particular programmes might also be required, and also providing volunteers with variable opportunities that interest them while still retaining a large network of volunteers. Support and development opportunities for volunteers need to speak not only to the needs of beneficiaries but also to volunteers' desire for individual development. Training may also be appealing to such volunteers, and peer support that gives them an opportunity to share their experiences may also appeal. Invoking memories of collective power and mobilisation in a post-conflict society has aided the growth of volunteering; the Burundi Red Cross experience is a case in point (Barconi et al., 2011). The challenge facing VIOs is to take the changing and variable motivations of volunteers into account in their programming.

7.2. The role of volunteering in fostering community resilience and development

As discussed in sections 3 and 4, formal and informal community-based volunteering is an important feature of African social development programmes. Informal volunteering appears to be substantial, but little is known about its nature and scope. More research is needed in order to better utilise this resource for social development at local level. This form of volunteering has the greatest potential to involve people at local level in a range of social and community development efforts. Not only is it important in meeting human development needs, fostering citizen participation and promoting people-centred development, it could also contribute to the building of financial assets, entrepreneurial capacity, social capital and institutional development and participation in community governance. The idea of community resilience is receiving increasing attention as it focuses on building the adaptive capacity of members of a community to overcome collective adversity; through this process, local communities grow in their capacity to find solutions to local needs. Community level social interventions delivered by volunteers in a partnership with other local actors could be an important source of social support and in advancing community resilience (Chaskin, 2008). It also could build and strengthen local leaders and promote democratisation and social transformation. However, the issues in and challenges to mobilising volunteering for community resilience and development need to be addressed. These are related to fair compensation of volunteers for the costs of volunteering, the payment of stipends, the training of volunteers to improve the quality of services and development interventions, increased gender sensitivity in volunteering, and adherence to adequate health and safety standards.

7.3. Youth volunteering

Although young people are divided by age, class, gender, religion, ethnicity and interest, they share a common experience in the life cycle as they transition from childhood into autonomous adulthood (Furlong, 2009; Arnett, 2004). This brings with it particular challenges and opportunities. As referred to in section 6.3, investments in young people may result in positive benefits to the young person as well as to the nation in terms of taking advantage of the potential of the demographic dividend (Ashford, 2007). A lack of support and investment in young people may result in high economic costs to society such as ill health and unemployment in the longer term (IRIN, 2007; World Bank, 2007). Volunteering is therefore a possible social investment strategy for young people that engages them in productive activity while building skills and experience that will promote job readiness (UNV 2011b; Moore McBride, 2009).

Given the high youth unemployment rates in many African countries, this may be a viable option for channelling the energies of unemployed young people into positive engagement with society's development challenges. Youth volunteering thus becomes a particularly important strategy in a context of high youth unemployment that is perpetuated both by slow growth in the job markets as well as low levels of education and skills development (Patel, 2009b). A youth development approach to voluntary service programmes that recognises their assets and the values they can contribute, and that works alongside young people was found to yield positive development outcomes (Patel, 2009b). Youth volunteering is therefore of strategic significance in the African context and creates opportunities for innovative interventions.

7.4. Volunteering and social inclusion

The rapid economic growth that has been experienced in parts of Africa has not been evenly distributed. High levels of poverty and inequality exacerbate the experience of social and economic exclusion. Where people are not able to participate in society meaningfully via the market, and where political opportunities for participation are limited, the routes towards connectedness within society are limited (Rispel, Molomo & Dumela, 2008). What opportunities does volunteering provide to overcome social exclusion?

According to Caprara et al. (2012), volunteering has the potential to contribute to the building of social capital, which refers to social relations between individuals, families and communities. It also refers to the social ties, trust and belonging to one's community, which in turn contributes to social cohesion (Putnam, 1995). In addition, volunteering also contributes to bridging social capital, which refers to building social relations and networks between groups of diverse social backgrounds, classes, cultures and nations. Thus, regional volunteering across borders in Africa and between African countries and other parts of the world could also foster a sense of global citizenship. Families that hosted volunteers also reported friendships across borders as one of the greatest benefits for the participants (Mati & Perold, 2012).

Volunteering was also found to have positive outcomes for both participants and communities in the fields of conflict resolution and peace building. Building social cohesion, a sense of belonging and a willingness to cooperate within communities are central efforts to peace building at the local level (Caprara et al., 2012). Lough and Mati (2012) argue that community-centred development initiatives are central to conflict prevention because they attempt to solve problems through engagement and participation and thus build social relationships. For UNV (2011), volunteering is a key mechanism to enhance such participation, cooperation and engagement. Race, ethnicity, gender, class, religion, nationality, disability and social stigma also cause social divisions, social exclusion and marginalisation. All these factors have a bearing on social exclusion and the marginalisation of these social groups from the mainstream of communities and societies. Volunteering can also aid in bridging these divides, especially where the volunteers themselves come from diverse backgrounds and profiles.

This type of bridge building was evident in South Africa during the xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals in urban communities in 2008. Volunteer support extended across communities as wealthier individuals began to volunteer in poorer neighbours, and white and Indian volunteers began to connect with black volunteers in their efforts. The anti-xenophobia march in Johannesburg crossed boundaries between people of different classes, races and national identities (Graham, Perold & Shumba, 2009). IAVE et al. (undated) also argue that there are numerous examples of the ways in which volunteers, when they volunteer beyond their community, are able to make connections with people that are different to themselves and with whom they would never have otherwise connected. According to Lough and Mati (2012) these are important bridging activities that are central to conflict prevention, peace building, social cohesion and social stability. However, volunteering on its own is not a panacea to the conflicts and tensions that often characterise communities. It is, however, a tool, and a way of engaging people in promoting social inclusion.

Volunteering can also contribute to the promotion of gender equity, provided programmes are designed and structured in ways that will advance this goal. Where women are engaged in volunteer efforts within and beyond their communities they demonstrate their skills, knowledge and commitment to other members of the community. Participation in development activities could become an empowering mechanism, particularly in communities where public participation of women is limited (Caprara et al., 2012; IAVE et al., undated). However, given the patriarchal norms and values that tend to characterise most parts of Africa and that shape which activities involve men and which involve women, volunteerism without a clearly motivated goal of promoting gender equity can lead to the reinforcement of gender inequalities and gendered beliefs and norms. Thus, volunteer programmes could reinforce gender divisions, or it could provide opportunities for the empowerment of women and for transforming unequal gender relations (Campbell, Gibbs, Nair & Maimane, 2009).

7.5. Mobilising the private sector and those in employment

The private sector has not traditionally been perceived to be a key actor in achieving socio-economic development. In many African countries there is limited interaction between the private and civil society sectors (USAID, 2010). Yet, globally, private sector companies are increasingly recognising that they have a social responsibility to the society and the communities in which they operate and that they have to respond to the impact of their businesses on the environment. This is also occurring as a result of growing pressure from civil society and governments for corporations to play a wider role in social, economic and environmental development (UNRISD, 2004). Advocated by private sector forums and multilateral agencies, these commitments are beginning to be reflected in company policies. At the international and national levels, different governments have developed mandatory and voluntary instruments – including incentives, codes of conduct and non-statutory policies – to encourage companies to embark on CSR initiatives.

Corporations are now expected to contribute a proportion of after tax profits to social responsibility initiatives, and in South Africa, most national and multinational companies use the guideline for CSR contributions of 1% of net profit after tax, which amounted to ZAR6.2 billion in 2010/2011 (Dialogue, 2011). Data were not available for other African countries, although multinational corporations do report on their social responsibility programmes. This is an area for further investigation. CSR could therefore be a source of funding for volunteer programmes in African countries. In addition, there is also scope for collaboration of VIOs with companies that have operations in particular communities.

Increasingly, employee volunteering (also sometimes termed 'employer supported volunteering' or 'corporate volunteering') is a growing expression of CSR in which companies, through their employees, engage in socially responsible activities (VOSESA, 2011). Such activities are seen to have clear benefits for communities in gaining access to skills, resources and technical know-how. But companies are not engaged in development activities purely for the good of society. Companies benefit from their participation in CSR initiatives by increasing brand recognition and their positioning in the market. Their employees also benefit personally by contributing their knowledge and skills, and these initiatives usually also increase staff morale and motivation and help employees acquire new skills and experience that lead to a more committed and productive workforce. CSR activities also enhance the profile and image of the company and strengthen the relationship between the local community, consumers and employees (Twigg, 2001; VOSESA, 2011).

There is need for more research to understand the nature and extent of private sector involvement, including the involvement of small businesses in social responsibility activities in Africa. It is probable that CSR in most countries is piecemeal and uneven in its development across countries and that CSR activities are not sufficiently aligned with development needs at the national and community levels. Nonetheless, a growing number of examples of CSR initiatives can be found, particularly amongst large national and multinational companies. In addition, some organisations provide structured programmes to support companies' volunteering activities (UNV, 2011a; VOSESA, 2011). Two recent conferences on volunteering in Southern and East Africa enjoyed significant support from and participation of major companies in those regions (ACVAPD, 2012; VOSESA, 2012).

There are therefore grounds to take seriously the role that the private sector can and does play in engaging with civil society (organisations and governments) more generally, and with regard to volunteering more specifically. However, it is also important to remember that the primary goal of the private sector is profitability and that there are a number of factors that inhibit the involvement of companies, such as: lack of resources and infrastructure within companies, lack of information and time, lack of support from top management, and lack of an enabling legislative environment. In particular, it has been pointed out that businesses' decisive commitment to engage in CSR activities depends largely on a committed and motivated leadership. It has also been emphasised that most businesses prefer to join activities rather than taking the lead. These factors should be taken into consideration when considering how the private sector can best engage in volunteer activities (Twigg, 2001; VOSESA, 2011).

7.6. Volunteer Management

The growing interconnectedness of Africa in the world, and the burgeoning NGO sector suggests that there is great potential for investments in volunteer management. Not only is this good practice for organisations involving volunteers, it is also a key mechanism through which organisations can maximise the potential of volunteering in order to reach greater goals.

Volunteer management is the promotion of an internal organisational environment that optimises the recruitment, mobilisation, support and retention of volunteers. Optimisation of volunteer management has often amounted to establishing volunteer management systems with the aim of securing a higher rate of volunteer satisfaction and retention as well as more effective delivery of services by volunteers and organisations. Many VIOs do not have initiatives in place to ensure these outcomes, according to a South African study on volunteer management (VSO-RAISA & VOSESA, 2011). This means that volunteering is not systematically planned and managed but rather approached on an ad hoc basis. This may in part be due to a lack of awareness of the needs of volunteers, but it is more likely due to limitations in capacity and human resource constraints. The review found that most organisations were aware of the volunteer management cycle and sought to implement its standard practices. However, virtually all the organisations felt that their volunteer management practices needed improvement.

The volunteer management cycle involves recruitment, training, orientation, monitoring, feedback and rewarding of volunteers as well as being available to manage challenges that volunteers may face as they arise. All of these activities, depending on how many volunteers an organisation involves, take a great deal of time as well as some level of experience and skill. The civil society sector in Africa tends to struggle with human resource capacity and funding constraints. This is particularly the case for relatively new community-based organisations. While these organisations may be well connected to the community and well placed to meet community needs, they are often not organisationally and financially strong. Investments in volunteer management are often viewed as non-essential expenditure items (De Vita, Fleming & Twombly, 2001). Thus, volunteer management is often simply added to the workload of staff members rather than viewed as a distinct management function that warrants dedicated attention. However, larger well-established NPOs and those organisations that are connected to international networks are often better resourced and capacitated to manage volunteers. This is often the case in organisations that depend on a strong volunteer base for the delivery of services, such as the RCRC.

In addition, the complexity of managing volunteers from diverse backgrounds needs to be acknowledged, and training should be provided in these aspects of management, as should the expertise needed to use international volunteers efficiently and effectively (Lough, Moore McBride, Sherraden & O'Hara, 2011). There is also a need for policies and procedures on the payment of volunteer stipends and working arrangements; these were discussed previously. Programme management should also be conducted with gender sensitivity. Quality assurance of volunteer work is also needed, as is training. Challenges were identified include investing in the training of volunteers and in increasing stipends in resource constrained organisations (VSO-RAISA & VOSESA, 2011; Russel & Schneider, 2000).

VIOs made some recommendations that could enhance the ability of organisations to invest in volunteer management. These included introducing a clear volunteer policy within their organisations and obtaining increased funding from both government and the private sector as well as a national policy framework on volunteering with well-defined volunteer programmes to address the challenges they face (VSO-RAISA & VOSESA, 2011). In addition, organisations need to acknowledge that in the context of high unemployment, volunteers may view volunteering as a stepping-stone to employment. This should be celebrated rather than lamented, and strategies to engage employed volunteers need to be considered. There may also be a need to establish strong networks between VIOs, particularly those working in similar sectors, to encourage joint training programmes and to set parity in stipends. Such a network may also offer the opportunity of 'sharing' rather than competing for volunteers.

A key opportunity for investing in volunteer management lies in the growth of ICT. Increased access to ICT has beneficial implications as ICT can be used in programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Increased access to ICT is needed to bridge the 'digital divide' (DiMaggio & Hargittai, 2001) and can enable VIOs to better connect with and mobilise volunteers and also provide support to a broader corps of volunteers. ICT has also allowed the emergence of e-volunteering or online volunteering, an alternative form of volunteering for those who are too busy or too far away to physically connect with volunteering opportunities. Online volunteering may involve online advocacy to build popular support for particular interventions or projects. It could also involve experts/consultants providing advice and services online on a voluntary basis; these services might include legal advice, translation and technical and research support to beneficiary organisations (Schier, undated). There are of course inherent risks in such volunteering since the lack of face-to-face contact limits the management and accountability that VIOs have over such volunteers. Nevertheless, volunteering by means of ICTs could offer VIOs an important possible resource. The use of ICT in the Arab Spring uprisings points to the power of social media to mobilise activists and volunteers (Stepanova, 2011). But social media platforms such as Facebook also provide bases for volunteers who are reflexively motivated to share their contributions and achievements in ways that contribute to their 'project of the development of the self'. However, it is worth considering groups of people who are disconnected from this 'network society' (Castells, 2011) such as those living in rural areas and older cohorts of the population that may be excluded should VIOs use ICT exclusively.

In conclusion, there is an urgent need for building capacity in volunteer management and overcoming funding and human resource constraints. Organisations need to invest in volunteer management in order to optimally engage volunteers in social development programmes. Inter-organisational collaboration, use of ICT and partnerships with the state and the private sector are likely to enhance volunteer development.

7.7. Volunteer development

Enabling policies are needed to advance volunteerism for social development in Africa and to support civil society organisations engaged in mobilising local and international volunteers. In this regard, many international organisations and networks with branches in Africa – such as VSO, the UNV and the RCRC movement – have worked to build national platforms to influence the recognition of volunteering at national level, either formally through the development of policy frameworks or through networks of VIOs that can share information and good practice. Such initiatives are important, given that many VIOs identified a lack of legislation at the national level to be a key constraining factor in the recruitment and placement of volunteers (VSO-RAISA & VOSESA, 2011).

8. Conclusion

This review of volunteering in Africa provides insight into the origins and cultural significance of volunteering, which has a strong moral connotation. The idea of volunteering for the benefit of others has deep roots in early African associational life. Volunteering today is a fusion of many different traditions of volunteering based on cultural and religious beliefs, charity and philanthropy, nation building in the post-independence period coupled with contemporary notions of volunteering for Africa's development, civic engagement, service and as an expression of global citizenship. While there is general consensus about the UNV definition of volunteering as comprising three main principles – free will, little or no financial reward, and that it should serve the common good – its application in African countries is questioned. Given widespread human insecurity in Africa, volunteering may be more of a necessity, a means of survival and a way of earning a livelihood while simultaneously serving others. It is therefore apparent that a rigid application of these principles without due regard to the social, economic and political context in which volunteering occurs might be inappropriate. VIOs need to take this into account when mobilising and deploying volunteers to respond to social, economic and environmental needs and challenges in African countries. This is also important when assessing volunteers' motivations for serving and when setting policies on the financial compensation of volunteers and on their working conditions. VIOs are faced with the dilemma of wanting to respond to social development issues in resource scarce environments and in situations where governments and donors do not fully acknowledge the contribution of volunteering to human development. This lack of acknowledgement is partly due to the low visibility and acknowledgement of the actual contribution volunteering makes to the economy and society. Although there are no estimates of the contribution of volunteering to social development, in most African countries there is evidence that the contribution of civil society initiatives is significant, ranging from a low of 0.8% of GDP in Morocco (Saidi et al., 2004) to 2.9% in Tanzania (Kiondo et al., 2004). More research is needed to demonstrate the contribution of volunteering to economic and social development in order to support the advocacy efforts of VIOs.

Volunteering is a valuable asset in African countries that should be harnessed in a people-centred, participatory, empowering and a collaborative approach to social, economic, political and sustainable development. By itself it is limited as an intervention strategy, but when it is integrated in country level social development strategies, it has the potential to have a greater impact on improving the lives of people at community level and on engaging citizens in development initiatives. We have also learnt from the review that a significant number of African countries have policies, either separate or forming part of other social policies, strategies, and legislation, to support volunteering. This is a significant development that should be supported. However, institutional and human resources, dedicated budgets and infrastructure are needed to give effect to these policies. Where political and administrative leaders support volunteering, large numbers of volunteers have been mobilised to serve in various ways. While international development aid in Africa continues to be under pressure due to the unstable



Maggie Mbovu: "Before we planted to have a little bit to eat for our families, but now, that I'm part of the community gardening project, my life has changed. I am doing very nicely, It is hard work, but I enjoy it", says Maggie Mbovu one of the community farmers who benefits from a market gardening scheme in Cape Town South Africa.

Kristin Palltza

global economic climate, resource flows are still significant. There are also opportunities to be tapped such as private philanthropy, religious philanthropy and corporate foundations through CSR initiatives amongst others. For volunteering to flourish in African countries, constructive state civil society relations are needed. Clearly, open democracies are crucial to creating an environment that is receptive to volunteering.

But, a critical success factor for volunteering in Africa is the quality of management capacity to develop, implement and evaluate the programmes. Recruitment, retention and training of volunteers to improve the quality of services are other challenges that need to be addressed, as is the need for greater gender sensitive approaches to volunteering. International volunteering continues to grow in the global era, although here again there are no accurate statistics on the nature, extent and contribution of foreign volunteers, whether they are skilled professionals or young people seeking opportunities for personal growth as well as the opportunity to serve others. Not only do VIOs need to be skilled in the recruitment, placement and retention of international volunteers, they need to have the sensitivity to manage and integrate them into foreign environments that make the experience mutually beneficial for all parties. In order for this to occur seamlessly, policies need to be in place in both sending and receiving countries. There is scope for the expansion of regional volunteering, that is, between African countries and volunteering diaspora.

Community-based volunteering facilitated by formal organisations local, national or international VIOs and governments is growing in many African countries. The size and scope of the sector is not known as many countries do not have the management information capacity to assess this, but across the 16 countries reviewed, the percentage of the population engaged in volunteering ranged between 4% and 83%. Countries with higher volunteer participation rates also included informal volunteers who were informally organised and were more likely to be locally based and serving in their own communities. This phenomenon appears to be significant in African countries, but here again, very little is known about the size and scope of informal volunteering. It is our contention that this is a substantial resource and an untapped asset that should be more effectively harnessed for development. More research is needed to assess the potential contribution of informal volunteering.

Some of the benefits of volunteering at community level that emerged from the literature review are the meeting of basic needs, provision of social support and care, infrastructure development, community asset building, strengthening of livelihoods and the development of social capital. Youth service programmes are well established in some countries, and there is much to learn from cross-country experiences of what does and does not work. Volunteering by young people provides a significant opportunity for African countries to find alternative pathways for youth to contribute to social development but also for skills development to promote job readiness, entrepreneurship and to build their social and financial assets. African countries have large youth populations; an investment in youth volunteering programmes could have positive economic returns for societies in the long term. Thus, a focus on youth development and a response to the challenges of increasing urbanisation in African countries are strategic directions that could be included in future thinking and planning of volunteer programmes. The value of volunteering to promote social inclusion in divided and conflict-ridden societies also presents new opportunities in social development. Finally, the social development approach makes good sense in thinking about volunteering at a conceptual level, in identifying strategic directions for future programming and in connecting volunteering to local, national and regional development in different parts of Africa.

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Volunteers provide education to people on HIV/AIDS. The work of peer educators helps to address the challenge of HIV/AIDS in West Africa.



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