

**PROCEEDINGS OF WORKSHOP ON
*VOLUNTEERISM***

HELD ON 24th-25th JANUARY, 2002

AT

NGONG HILLS HOTEL, NAIROBI.

ORGANIZED BY

**THE INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT
POLICY AND PRACTICE (INDEPP)**

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Introduction and Background

INDEPP sent out one Research Assistant to each of the Provinces of Kenya during October and November 2001 to conduct research on volunteerism, as follows:

<u>Province</u>	<u>Research Assistant</u>
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Coast	Ms. Grace Njogu
Eastern	Ms. Rhoda Kaluki
Nairobi	Mr. Patrick Mwangi
North Eastern	Ms. Priscyllar Wamiru
Nyanza	Mr. Michael Ouma
Rift Valley	Ms. Stella Nyarangi
Western	Ms. Evalyne Wanyama

After the data-collection exercise, the research team busied itself collating and analyzing these data in an attempt to answer the basic research questions. This was done between November and mid-January. Experiences and specific provincial findings were shared among the team members in in-house seminars and workshops.

As the time for the workshop drew near, invitations were sent out to the Provinces to invite one Provincial Participant each (from among those persons who had been interviewed by the particular Research Assistant), as well as to organizations within Nairobi who were considered stakeholders in the field of volunteerism.

The individuals and organisations listed on the following page are those who attended and participated in the two-day workshop held at the Ngong Hills Hotel:

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WELCOMING REMARKS BY THE DIRECTOR, INDEPP

Prof. Roberta Mutiso, Director of INDEPP, welcomed the participants to the workshop and asked the participants to introduce themselves. After self-introduction, the Director went ahead and gave a brief background of INDEPP and its work: INDEPP is a training, research, and consultancy institute dealing with development issues from a biblical perspective. Formed in 1994, it was the result of her vision for filling a gap in the national development process. INDEPP is committed to making a difference in the lives of Kenyans by exploring some of the areas neglected by other research organizations, and in particular the *perspective* they use.

As far as the Workshop was concerned, the Director said, INDEPP hoped to open a window on an integral aspect of the life of Kenyans which had hitherto been largely ignored. Volunteerism is part and parcel of the fabric of Kenyans' lives, and illuminating it would help us understand ourselves even better.

The research was formulated as basically exploratory, and involved the sending out of research assistants to all eight provinces of Kenya; in each province, two districts were selected. The research Assistants spent two months conducting interviews, organizing workshops, and holding focus group discussions with the local populace. In addition they used observation and participant observation methods to gather more data.

The format of the first day of the Workshop would be to receive reports from the Research Assistants, followed by brief comments by the respective provincial representative. This would be followed by a general discussion involving all participants.

PART I: SUMMARIES OF PROVINCIAL REPORTS:

In all the eight provinces, a total of sixty individuals were interviewed, that is, thirty in each of the two districts selected in the province. However, each district had its own uniqueness that affected the findings in one way or the other.

1: Bungoma District:

This is a district that is inhabited by the Bukusu, Tachoni, Sabbaot and Gisu. The main economic activity is agricultural production, although this is not doing well because of inappropriate economic policies and what was said to be the 'political alignment' of the inhabitants – being within the opposition stronghold of FORD Kenya. On the other hand, the roads as well as the general infrastructure are fair, and there is a high presence of non-governmental organizations.

The commonest form of volunteerism that the majority of the inhabitants had taken part in was harambee. This ranged from the traditional communal child rearing and communal cattle dipping to the modern cash contributions for schools and other social amenities. Participation in these kinds of voluntary activities was geared towards realizing improved living standards, health and the general development of the community.

While discussing their views on compensation, or the question of whether Kenyans want to be paid for everything they do, half of the respondents felt that yes, this is true: Kenyans do want to be paid for everything they do; while the other half believed that it is not true: Kenyans do not necessarily want to be paid for everything they do. Respondents felt that volunteerism was not sustainable in the long run because of looming poverty, lack of incentives and the lack of government support efforts. Volunteers also cited frustration in the course of their work due to lack of transport, lack of appreciation and lack of trust. Organizations that work with volunteers cited unreliability, abuse of courtesy and unsuitability as some of the problems they experience on their side.

In her concluding remarks, the research assistant for Western Province pointed out that there is need to improve economic conditions in order to encourage more people to volunteer.

2. Mt. Elgon

This is a relatively newly-carved-out district, and thus shares mainly the same ethnic composition as Bungoma, except for the Teso, who inhabit this district. The main agricultural activity is as that of Bungoma. The quality of infrastructure is poor, with not even a single all-weather road in the district. There are also very few NGOs in the district. However, there are many community-based organizations. The respondents in this district did not differ from those in Bungoma in their responses on the forms of volunteerism, views on compensation, the sustainability of volunteerism, and the experiences of organisations in working with volunteers.

3. Kuria District

The main ethnic group in this district is the Kuria, whose main economic activity is agricultural production. There is considerable NGO activity in the district, although the quality of infrastructure is poor. The commonest form of volunteerism was found to be harambee efforts towards virtually everything. One unique result of the local input into voluntary activities was a decrease in insecurity and a decline in illiteracy among the girls.

Respondents were of the opinion that most Kenyans do not necessarily want to be paid for everything they do, because they have already had to do a considerable amount through volunteerism. They cited several churches and buildings of one sort or another, but the most outstanding were the District High Court and the District Commissioner's Office, which were built through community voluntary effort. The respondents felt that volunteerism was sustainable through faith in God. Many of them pointed out that volunteers were motivated by their own abilities and also because of their religious convictions.

4. Homa Bay District

The main ethnic community here is the Luo who, apart from agricultural production, engage in fishing. The quality of the infrastructure is good, and the commonest form of volunteerism is, again, harambee. The Luo contribute towards all the other mentioned causes in other districts but much more so towards sanitation. The respondents held similar views on compensation as those of respondents in Bungoma and Mt. Elgon. They felt that in order to make volunteerism sustainable, there was need for more awareness to be created. One major setback to the voluntary spirit was the prevalence of the HIV/aids disaster, they felt, although the picture was not so bleak because nearly all of the respondents were fortified by their deep religious conviction.

In his concluding remarks, the Research Assistant for this area noted that there was need to create awareness on aspects of volunteerism in the district, and to initiate or strengthen linkages between NGOs/donors and the Government in recognition of the role of volunteers in the national development.

5. Taita Taveta District

The main inhabitants are the Taita and the Taveta, but other communities such as the Kamba, Kikuyu, and the Kamba are also found in the district. The main economic activities are agriculture and sand harvesting. The quality of infrastructure in the district is fairly good, although the roads become impassable during the rainy season. The presence of NGOs is high.

The main form of volunteerism in Taita-Taveta District is harambees towards the education of girls, orphans, and other needy children. The majority of the individuals interviewed agreed that Kenyans do want to be paid for everything they do. Organizations interviewed cited unreliability and unsustainability as some of the problems they associate with the use of volunteers.

6. Lamu District

The Bajun, Pokomo, Kikuyu, and Kamba inhabit this district. Their main economic activity is tourism, but the quality of infrastructure is poor, with the main mode of transport being the donkey or walking. NGO presence is low, with a dominating presence of GTZ.

The main form of volunteerism is harambee towards the building of water tanks and houses for one another. Other forms of volunteerism mentioned were contributions and the physical presence of individuals at social activities such as weddings. However, volunteers cited lack of tools, lack of transport, insecurity and poor roads as obstacles towards their work. Organizations, for their part, cited unreliability and unsustainability of voluntary involvement as hindrances in their work with volunteers.

Views on compensation differed between individuals and organizations; individuals felt that they did so much for free, thus disagreeing with the statement, while organizations agreed, citing many economic hardships. The respondents felt that with God's intervention, many people would continue volunteering.

7. Kirinyaga District

The district is dominated by the Kikuyu, who engage in agriculture and business. The quality of infrastructure is fair, and the presence of NGOs is low. The commonest form of volunteerism is harambees towards health care. Views on compensation differed from those in Lamu, in that individuals agreed that Kenyans want to be paid for everything they do--citing unemployment and poverty--while organizations disagreed--citing considerable examples of free work.

The problem of early benefitters, lack of role models, and individualism were cited by the respondents as factors discouraging volunteerism in the district. The respondents felt that volunteerism would not be sustainable unless the community could be economically empowered to do so.

8. Murang'a District

This District was found to be similar to Kirinyaga in most respects, except the problems cited as those that discouraged volunteers. Respondents mentioned politicization of the harambee movement, religious intolerance, misguided and insensitive Government policies that are not prioritized according to peoples felt needs, and apathy among the poor as factors that were already beginning to affect the level of voluntary effort in the District.

9. Kariobangi Division

This is a multi-ethnic urban-oriented community whose inhabitants engage in many different income activities and enjoy a fairly-good infrastructure with a high presence of NGOs. The majority of the inhabitants are low-income Kenyans. Like the rural areas, the commonest form of volunteerism is harambee due to the socialization process, and the people's religious affiliations. Respondents said that they are motivated by self-advancement, the desire for self-gain, and also the desire to coexist peacefully and to improve living standards.

Volunteers also mentioned that they are being discouraged by insecurity, lack of trust and poor management of resources. Thus they implied that the future of volunteerism was bleak due to social disintegration in their area. The researcher also recommended that more awareness be created through the writing of appropriate articles designed to inform the public about the importance of volunteerism.

10. Kibera Division

This division is similar in many respects to Kariobangi division. However, the organizations using volunteers felt that volunteers are key factors in realizing organizational growth, capacity-building, and in improving the lives of the locals.

Respondents said that Kenyans are willing to volunteer, but lack of opportunities and economic problems hampered them. The majority did not agree with the statement that Kenyans want to be paid for everything they do, but they said that economic problems hinder them from volunteering. Lack of trust and mismanagement of resources also make

the majority of people in the community hesitant to give resources for communal management.

The research assistant in his concluding remarks mentioned that awareness creation should be done to popularize volunteerism. Income-generating projects should be started to support volunteers. Community members should also be consulted before implementation of projects, so as to know what they can contribute on a voluntary basis.

11. Isiolo District

This district is home to the Borana, who practice pastoralism and minimal farming as the main means of livelihood. The quality of infrastructure is poor, and there is a high presence of NGOs in the area. The commonest form of volunteerism is harambee towards health and education.

The majority of the respondents agreed that Kenyans want to be paid for everything they do, but they disagreed on the sustainability of the practice of volunteerism itself. Half of the respondents felt that it is not sustainable; while the other half felt that there is room for the growth of volunteerism. Volunteers cited religious differences, tribal factions and tension, and early benefitters as some of the problems that are discouraging volunteerism.

In her concluding remarks, the Research Assistant mentioned that a system of networking and cooperation among volunteers should be started, as well as a national forum to protect, guide, and regulate voluntary groups, so that volunteerism can be institutionalized.

12. Embu District

This is the home of the Aembu who practice agriculture as a source of both income and food. The quality of infrastructure in the district is fair, and there is high presence of NGOs. The commonest forms of volunteerism are social activities and harambee towards health and education.

The majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement that “Kenyans want to be paid for everything they do,” although the organizations interviewed believe that Kenyans do want to be paid for everything they do. Slightly more than half were pessimistic about the sustainability of volunteerism, saying that it would either decrease or die out altogether since traditional forms such as midwifery and circumcision were already extinct. While working for organizations, volunteers tend to be frustrated and marginalized by the regular staff, who treat them with suspicion.

13. Garissa District

Garissa is the home to the *Somalis*, *Boranas* and the *Malatoke*, who practice pastoralism. The quality of infrastructure is very poor, costly and inadequate. Insecurity and illiteracy are high, with underutilized education facilities. The main forms of volunteerism are religious-related, and religious commitment is the top motivator in all they do. Respondents tended to believe that Kenyans want to be paid for everything they do, citing economic factors as reasons for this. Networks have been formed among voluntary groups, and this was seen to be a pointer to the future of volunteerism in the district. The spirit of volunteerism is being threatened by religious tension and economic hardships.

14. Wajir District

Wajir district is home to the Somalis and the Boranas, who are like their counterparts in Garissa District. The infrastructure is poor, and the most practiced form of volunteerism is religious and social services. According to the 78% of the respondents interviewed, there is a future for volunteerism in the district. But the volunteers themselves said they face insecurity due to *shifita* activities, and dependency on relief food.

15 Laikipia District

(There was no report from this District, but the provincial representative had the following remarks):

He pointed out that people in the district were involved in volunteer activities, but needed role models to encourage them to continue in the course of their work. Social causes that need people to be involved voluntarily should be “marketed” aggressively. Examples of such causes he pointed out were AIDS, illiteracy, and dirty streets.

According to the Provincial Representative, the American Government for example had been able to calculate how much it saved in terms of billions of dollars by use of volunteers. In Kenya, the Government should realize that volunteers are a catalyst for economic development and, by so doing, save the country lots of money. Bodies should be established to illustrate the potential benefits of volunteering, and this could be a good motivation to volunteers.

Citing Maslow’s theory of the hierarchy of needs, the Representative pointed out that for people to volunteer, their basic needs must first be met. Will a hungry person volunteer to clear garbage? Hardly!

The common attitudes of people within the District towards volunteerism is *hakuna chabure; kula na kulipa ndio mtindo wa kisasa*. For those who choose to volunteer, they are considered foolish and wasters of time.

There is a lot of suspicion towards those who volunteer, people expect to be surprised, if at all, at a later date by the effects of voluntary activity. However, many people are still motivated by African socialism, religious belief, and also the desire to join politics which, according to the participant, is selfish.

16. Baringo district

Baringo District is the home of the second and present President of Kenya. The inhabitants of this district are the Kagimor, Arror, Lembus, Pokor, Pokot, Njemps (Iichamus), and Endorois. The main economic activity of families in the district is livestock keeping – that is, cows and goats. Those who practice farming depend on irrigation. The presence of NGOs is high.

The commonest form of volunteerism in this area was said to be harambee, and the formation of and belonging to CBOs and other self help groups. Nearly all the respondents had taken part in a voluntary activity because of their desire to achieve development in the area. These individuals felt that participation in voluntary activities had increased though the forms had changed due to the presence of donors and other NGOs. In addition, they felt that due to faith in God, participation in volunteerism would increase. Two thirds of the people the research Assistant talked to mentioned religious obligation and self-satisfaction as the inspiring factors for volunteers.

In the course of their activities, the respondents experienced various constraints, including but not limited to economic considerations and political interference. In addition, half of them reported familial and logistical problems.

On the issue of compensation, many of the participants agreed that Kenyans want to be paid for everything they do because the White settlers and Asians had introduced them to the concept of money. They added that corruption and the need to compensate for time spent in doing something non-remunerative were factors that increased the need to be paid for all that one does. Also social disintegration was mentioned as a contributing factor.

In the Research Assistant's concluding remarks, she mentioned that the future of volunteerism was doomed unless several strategies were put in place. These include:

1. Encouragement
2. Promotion of self-dependency
3. Creation of awareness
4. Promotion and proclamation of faith in God
5. Promotion of traditions and cultural practices that encourage volunteerism
6. Introduction of a youth service scheme in schools, in churches, in the home, etc

7. Exemplary living

PART II: DISCUSSION (BASED ON PROVINCIAL REPORTS)

The discussion was started off by a Provincial Representative who was a community worker in Kirinyaga district, who noted that she saw love as the motivating factor for volunteerism. She also noted that volunteerism was not a new phenomenon in her community as people traditionally used to volunteer and work in each others' farms *ngwatio* or *gitati*. In elaborating, she mentioned that this was the time when young boys and girls would take turns to work in their parents' and neighbor's farms, clearing bushes and thatching houses for each other. The community also cared for orphans and widows. Clan members or other well-wishers supported the needy.

The participant described the introduction of *Maendeleo ya wanawake* in the 1950s as a foreign idea to organize women into groups for community service. However, during the same time, the idea of *ngwatio* was revived in the form of Mabati self-help groups. These groups could purchase iron sheets and roof houses for each other. This marked the transition from grass-thatched houses to iron-sheet roofs. The community self-help groups worked together and were devoted to their work and worked hard to build schools and churches, sometimes with the help of government intervention in the form of Community Development Assistants (CDAs).

In her concluding remarks, the participant noted that:

- There was need to teach the members of the community more organization skills required to manage and sustain community-based projects. This she said needed government intervention to assist in training and sensitization.
- There was need to motivate people more through education and eradication of poverty and ignorance.
- There was also need for Government intervention in the form of more funds.

The participant also noted that the spirit of volunteerism had changed into a commercial activity where people are aware that most projects have donor funding and therefore expect to be paid some money for work even if it is supposed to be voluntary.

Is volunteerism on the decrease or on the increase?

There was a difference in opinion in the reports from organizations and those from individuals. However, in general it was agreed that volunteerism is on the increase. This was demonstrated by the many activities that are being performed as voluntary without them being identified as volunteerism. They are performed voluntarily as a matter of necessity or as a part of life, without any fuss.

Examples of such activities are cleaning religious places of worship and taking in relatives and other disadvantaged people like orphans. At this point the Facilitator drew the attention of the participants to the need to be clear as to whether self-help activities could be counted as volunteer work or not. This led to further discussion: it was pointed out that external organizations which claimed to be volunteer organizations had paid staff and yet they expected local members of the community to go and volunteer their services for no pay at all. This brought the discussions back to the question:

1. Do Kenyans expect to be paid for everything they do?
2. Is there a spirit of volunteerism in Kenya?
3. Is it true that there is a difference between people coming from outside and those from within Kenya as far as volunteerism is concerned?

From the discussion that proceeded, it emerged that in the West, volunteerism is actually a job, with descriptions and benefits. An example of the Peace Corps, who get housing and transportation, was cited. A local example of volunteers, who fill potholes, will actually demand money from motorists, at times with a menace.

Why would anyone volunteer to do work that should be done by the government from the taxes collected?

It was observed that at independence the government made promises to deliver services and goods which it has failed to deliver. This has brought about the realization and awareness that the government is increasingly causing people to start doing things for themselves, i.e., filling the gap left by this failure.

Is volunteerism a means to an end, or is it something that the human spirit craves to do? Can this be termed as volunteerism or something that has been forced on people, e.g., cleaning the streets, hospitals, and residential areas?

An observation was made that in western countries when the economy is good and things are working well, there is less interest in volunteerism. This is a way of filling in time, i.e, if people have no jobs at home they go out to other countries like Kenya to do voluntary work.

This brought the discussion to the following questions: -

Is volunteerism internally- or externally-driven? Is it because you really believe in it or because you have been socialized by others to do good?

At this juncture there was a point of clarification on "voluntary work" according to the Kenya Volunteer Development Authority (KVDA), which defined it as:

- A Social obligation
- Work done free of charge
- Where someone can pay to have the work done
- The giving of one's time.
- Work done while expecting an honorarium.

- Doing something for the purpose of self-development.
- In a situation of poverty or where people have been retrenched, people try to do a lot of things for themselves.

It was observed that NGOS might be exploiting members of the community by expecting members of the community to do voluntary work, while the NGO officials themselves are enjoying a relatively high kind of lifestyle as manifested by the big cars they drive when going to the community.

One participant observed that the government is leaning towards participatory development because it cannot meet the needs of the citizens. There is an increasing use of voluntary workers in Government/NGO projects. However there is a high dropout rate due to lack of motivation in the form of monetary or material compensation. Any methods used to motivate volunteers such as cash payments or food and accommodation should be able to be replicated in other NGOS.

Structural/formal v/s spontaneous/informal volunteer work

It was observed that the difference between local and external-oriented volunteer work was that the latter was part and parcel of the African community while the former, structured form of volunteer work was associated with foreign organizations. The former, though termed as volunteer work, was paid for. The question, then, that arose was: Why not assign the local people such work but pay them for it?

Most participants felt that it would be only fair to pay the locals instead of bringing in paid staff, while expecting the local people to work for free. It was agreed that western societies are not any more voluntary-oriented than Kenyans, but that volunteer work in the two societies is differently structured. It was also suggested that the western type of philanthropy should be encouraged locally. Many rich people should be encouraged to give freely.

Volunteer work in its structured form as transposed into the local context was seen to have come about as a result of the breakdown of social values that were representative of the

traditional spontaneous volunteer work. An example was given of the emerging old people's homes locally, while earlier there used to be support structures within the community for the old people, who were taken care of within the various local communities (this is still happening in some communities, though to a lesser extent).

The western-oriented form of volunteerism may therefore be seen to be more common because there are no spontaneous outlets. The reason some of the local communities' voluntary activities may not be seen as such is because they are intertwined with other everyday activities. There is therefore need to take into account the many activities that are done spontaneously.

The question then was asked: if volunteerism has been and is still there, how do we do more of it or how do we improve on it, or how do we go about saying that we need more rather than less?

Is it time Kenyans took stock of these things especially in response to the accusation that enough is not being done? What about those who take it that, it is the Government or City Council's work to do it?

RESPONSE

The situation has been complicated by the fact that Kenya is in a transitional period. The government starting from the colonial time had taken over the responsibility of the community's well being, but has not managed to sustain the services and therefore people are realizing that they have to start taking responsibility. Not all people, however, may have realized that and may still be expecting the government or the city council to do it.

This brought the discussion again to the Question of whether volunteer work is externally or internally driven. In this case it was seen to be externally driven by the circumstances people found themselves in.

It was also concluded that all human beings perform various aspects of volunteerism,

which takes different forms in different societies.

It was observed in the discussion that people who are comfortable and are not worried about their basic needs could afford to volunteer their time, skills and even money.

Suspicion and mistrust as an impediment to volunteer work kept on coming up, especially with the increasing number of NGOS. There were suspicions as to whether the initiators of the NGOS were genuinely doing it for the good of the community or to gain financial mileage while still calling upon the members of the community to come up and work for nothing.

It was suggested that there should be a uniform approach to volunteer work so that whatever method is used for motivation should be applied by all the groups. Volunteers should know that wherever they volunteer their services, the rewards would be more or less the same.

The facilitator at this point posed the question as to whether volunteerism was on its way out, having seen its best days?

From the research findings reports, it seemed like poverty is a hindrance to volunteerism. This was questioned during the discussion as it was observed that, so many communities had been left on their own by the government and they were increasingly taking up the responsibility of running their affairs.

Examples were given of the neighborhood associations, which were coming up to take security and cleaning responsibilities since the city council authorities had failed completely. In this case increasing poverty was seen as increasing forms of volunteerism. This brought up the question of whether Kenyans are really too poor to volunteer?

RESPONSE

This was seen as a question of the local communities having to own up the process of handling their affairs all over again. It was a question of taking responsibility and stopping to look up to others for help or to blame.

It was felt that volunteerism had come a long way from the community-oriented form through government intervention and failure. It was now time for the communities to take it up again, but it might need redefining, since it was no longer the same thing. It has changed from unstructured to structured volunteerism with incentives added. There was a need for redefinition.

REPORTS FROM GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Participants were divided into three groups and each group was assigned several questions, some of which were to be answered by all the groups, and some which were unique to each group. The notes that follow show the results of all the questions handled by the groups.

*Q.1 What are the forms that volunteerism takes, how prevalent is it and what is the trend?
- Which way is it moving?*

<u>FORMS</u>	<u>PREVALENCE</u>	<u>TREND</u>
Harambee	High	Down
Formation of self-help Groups	High	Up
Charity work e.g. wedding, funerals	High	Down
Community services	High	Down
Skilled services e.g. Healthcare	High	Up

Other forms of volunteerism identified but affecting only small groups include service in school and village committees, volunteering in Religious services, volunteering in the private and public sectors, as well as volunteers who give of themselves through personal convictions.

The question arose as to the value of direct volunteerism - one actually doing the work themselves, or paying for the services. For example people can choose to form security vigilante groups, or employ watchmen to do the work. It emerged that participants would consider both to be acceptable forms of volunteerism. However people are moving more towards structured formal activities.

Q.2 Do Kenyans want to be paid for everything they do?

This question was floated to all the workshop participants whose answer was a resounding "No!" Then, what drives people to voluntary work? Answers to this will varied from person to person.

Q.3 Has volunteerism changed at all over the course of your life?

The overwhelming feeling was "yes", volunteerism has changed over the course of most participants' lives. The forms of voluntary work have drastically changed. One is likely to see fewer truly communal weddings, but the building of roads, schools etc have increased. Communal activities such as weddings, burials have decreased.

Q.4 Is there any relationship between people, the place and voluntary activities?

This question generated yet more pertinent questions such as "Do ethnic factors influence volunteerism?" How do pastoral groups practice volunteerism? It was felt that the environment has a definite influence on the kind of voluntary activities that take place. Urbanized groups practice less volunteerism than rural people do. Cultural background and lifestyle also have an influential part to play. Religion is another factor, which will influence the kind of voluntary activities that take place. People who are deeply religious are bound to be more voluntary-minded because they see participation in voluntary activities as a service to God.

Q.5 What is the best way of studying volunteerism in Kenya?

It was generally agreed that the best approach would be to take case studies, getting real life experience stories. The cases should be representative of various social groups.

Other studies should include the way private commercial organizations are involved in voluntary work. At this point it was suggested that Kenyans should consider volunteering for work outside Kenya.

A Literature review would also be a worthwhile activity to see what is available. A thorough look through newspapers may also yield good and useful information.

Q.6 Is volunteerism on the increase or on the decrease?

The consensus was that volunteerism is actually on the increase despite the findings reported from the provinces. It was noted that in the city there was a marked increase in voluntary work by private commercial concerns such as banks, religious organizations and NGOs, informal groups are also increasing their participation. Neighborhood Associations are being formed to provide community security, sanitation and policing The Karengata neighborhood group was cited as a good example. It was also noted that there are free legal and counseling services available, dealing with a variety of problems.

In the rural areas, voluntarism has increased, but its form and focus have changed. Because of the collapse of the government system, people have been forced to fill the gap. Also there is increased awareness amongst the population.

Joblessness is also driving people to voluntarism where CVs can be improved as they fill in the time while looking for employment.

Q.7 Do people in this country understand volunteerism?

The answer was in the affirmative. Kenyans live the voluntary life without isolating individual acts and labeling them as such. The word may be alien but we practice voluntarism daily.

The facilitator summarized the sentiments aptly by saying that the workshop would open a door and shed light on something - volunteerism - taken for granted for many years. This is a positive contribution to the understanding of the Kenyan people. On this note the days proceedings ended.

Plenary Discussion.

Common good v/s individual gain in relation to volunteerism:

The plenary discussion took place at the beginning of the second of the workshop. The

day's events started with welcome from the Director, INDEPP, Professor Mutiso. She then started the discussion by posing the following questions, what drives people to volunteer their services? Do they do it for their personal gain or for the good of the community?

The following points were raised in response to questions

- In a community there are clearly some common good separated from the individual good gain.
- What benefit do people see in volunteerism to make or motivate them to volunteer? The benefits may not be clear to all while some may be ignorant and therefore need educating or information.
- Part of the tasks of those trying to get people to volunteer is to show them the expected good.
- Owning up the process as opposed to seeing it as belonging to the government and therefore not caring about it. Sometimes people have legitimate reasons for not caring.
- There is a need to make people own the idea. Is it one of their main priorities?
- If you want people to volunteer it should be relevant to the reality of their lives. The form of volunteerism should relate to their way of life.

Reasons for volunteerism

- What are the kinds of reasons you give to persuade people to get involved volunteerism?
 - i. It will benefit you, now or in the future.
 - ii. It will benefit others, now or in the future.
 - iii. May be both i) and ii) could be combined.

iv. It is part of our African traditions in that we are socialized to know we are out Brothers' keepers, an element of obligation and it is the right thing to do.

v. Because we are able.

A very emotional appeal - can be used to show that you can make a difference.

Methods

- The methods, which you use to persuade people, can make a big difference e.g. the Nation Newspaper appeal for food relief. How convenient is the infrastructure of carrying out the voluntary work?
- Voluntary target has to be real, in order to touch people's hearts - like the picture of the Turkana little girl in persuading people to give money for relief food, or the little boy Wambua who was photographed with his little sibling on the way to hospital when their mother died.
- Showing how even a small contribution can make a difference, making links and connections with their minds.
- Bring something to the awareness of people, and stir them from their complacency. Bring the problem to the people and show them how to tackle it.

PART III: THEMATIC PRESENTATIONS

After the plenary discussions the research assistants and other INDEPP staff presented reports based on thematic issues concerning volunteerism.

I Forms of Volunteerism.

1. Harambee, material and ideas for community development raising money for hospital bills, building bridges etc.
2. Technical Assistance in areas of Education health, sanitation, water communication

and infrastructure.

3. Voluntary groups - more in settled communities. It is generally not understood as a voluntary activity, but the activities engaged in are considered as voluntary. The problem of early benefactors is more common in areas with more Community Based Organizations (CBO) and self-help groups.

4. Social service - e.g. Building houses for widows, provision of free medical services. Building children's homes, Disaster responses etc.

(ii) Religious-related services - not so much reckoned as a voluntary activity but rather as an obligation.

5. Individual and self giving to the needy, giving resources such as land or paying school fees for bright and needy children.

6. Activism - This is advocating for a cause that one believes in, and it is done through demonstration and public meetings or rallies. Education and health-related services are more likely to attract giving.

Factors contributing to changes in the various forms of volunteerism:-

1. NGO - Government-Donor interaction in development activities.

2. Scarcity of resources leading to people coming together to solve their problems.

3. Social disintegration.

4. Emergence of HIV/AIDS and other challenges have lead to more people needing help while at the same time reducing the pool of those able to volunteer.

5. Poverty and economic hardship, volunteerism was reported to be on the decline in most parts but was reported to be on the increase in others.

- Where it has increased it was attributed to increased awareness, increasing youth involvement and other changing circumstances in the communities, which have large groups of educated but unemployed youth.

- A question was raised as to whether volunteerism was increasing or decreasing as the report from the assistants suggested both were happening. The response was that these were perceptions from individual interviewees but organizations reported an increase. One participant felt that volunteerism was actually not on the decline and gave an example of the council of elders, which is still going strong in Meru (Njuri Ncheke).
 - Communities are also putting up parallel structures to replace those where the government activities have failed, this is a kind of retreating back to what used to be.
 - Perceptions here and what is going on do not seem to tally, as there seems like there is a lot of voluntary activity going on.
 - While there are still the administrative council from the government there are still examples of traditional councils of elders, which run parallel to the government one e.g. the Njuri Ncheke in Meru as mentioned above.
 - Government is quietly recognizing that the local council of elders has a lot of influence on the local people so they are increasingly making use of them. Traditional land courts are also still functional and active.
 - With the advent of multi-partism, chiefs were appointed according to where their loyalty lay. The people are now starting to doubt the competence of chiefs and are falling back to the traditional councils.

II. Motivations for Volunteerism

- What is the driving force that causes individual groups, organizations, countries etc to engage in voluntary work?

1. Religious reasons.

2. Humanitarian reasons.
3. Political reasons.
4. Ideological reasons.
5. Self/self satisfaction
6. Socialization and reciprocity.

Comments

It was felt that in order to sustain volunteerism, fame and prestige was considered very important and should be shown by recognizing volunteers.

There was a question as to why there were so many women's groups and whether it means that women are more of volunteers than men? What motivates them to be so active in so many groups? Participation of women in voluntary activities may be traced to cultural social groupings - women are more gregarious than men.

Regarding patriotism, very few Kenyans do something because they are doing it for Kenya as compared to other countries. This is a rather deplorable situation, which should be discouraged. It is high time people stopped seeing themselves in terms of tribe and instead identified themselves as Kenyans.

II. The impact/Results of Volunteerism (Benefits and constraints)

Results

Better infrastructure

Food security

Cleanliness and improved sanitation

Increased awareness

Land issues are solved

Family planning and AIDS awareness

Self -advancement through acquisition of skill and talent development

Benefits for the Organization

- Growth to organization.
- Low costs.
- Sustainability of projects
- Gender awareness

Major constraints

- Lack of appreciation
- Lack of enough resources
- Abject poverty
- Lack of family support.
- Lack of trust by organization
- Lack of transparency by coordinators
- Insecurity and economic problems
- Political interference.
- Conflict of interests
- Commitment to work
- Balancing of voluntary and paid work
- Communication problems
- Lack of involvement in planning
- Lack of sustainability
- Language and cultural barriers.
- Negative perceptions of volunteers
- Lack of role models
- Corruption and graft
- Poor management of problems
- No clear policies from the government on volunteers.

How can volunteerism be quantified especially in relation to the nation's economic system?

- Number of man-hours.
- Impact assessment studies - which then requires that a baseline survey be done beforehand.
- In this connection reference was made to an Institute For Development Studies, University of Nairobi study done in March 2001.(A population Survey of Giving and Volunteering in Kenya by K. Mitulla, and Njagi ,March 2001).

The facilitator then posed some more questions as follows:

Supposing there was no volunteerism but the economy was thriving - would we need volunteerism or would it be missed? What is it that voluntary activity contributes to a system? Is it compensation for failure by the Government?

The participants felt that irrespective of the economic conditions, some aspects of volunteerism would still continue.

IV. Economic Considerations in volunteerism

The facilitator posed the question as to whether volunteerism is affected by economic considerations. Do both negative and positive economic conditions contribute to volunteerism?

Negative effects:

- Poverty is detrimental as far as volunteerism is concerned. People need to satisfy their basic needs first.
- Lack of resources to facilitate in transport.
- Cost of living makes people to ask for compensation
- Long hours in paid work.
- The unemployed may not be able to offer free voluntary service while the employed may have no time.

- Tourism discourages volunteerism as those who would volunteer get used to hand-outs from tourists.

Positive Effects

Economic hardships lead to the necessity to pool together and thus raising volunteerism.

- The realization that donor funding is available more to groups than individuals - hence the formation of many self-help groups .

It may not be possible for an exploratory study to draw very clear and distinctive lines as to the increase or decrease of volunteerism.

There could be a misconception that groups who are giving training are doing it for free.

- There is the case of community mobilisers, who get paid and expect volunteers to work for free and yet they have funding which they spend lavishly on big capacity vehicles.

Volunteers and facilitators should be seen to be working together to avoid mistrust.

The issue of volunteer workers getting unrealistic targets of work levels from the supervisors was raised. Volunteer work cannot be taken as a job since the volunteer must do some other work, which pays for her/his upkeep.

The way the NGOS operate seems like there is a problem. If these organizations have the welfare of people at heart, they need to set realistic goals, taking into account the way of life of the target community.

Some NGOS approach is not people-oriented or community-problem-oriented, the "wearer of the shoe knows where it pinches most". They should therefore not come to the community with ready-made models as lack of consultation results in conflict. This is because the community and the interventionists do not start on the same footing. This also leads to lack of appreciation from the community.

They should be working hand in hand with the community and not just spending money

and short-circuiting members of the community.

Control mechanisms for NGO working should also be put in place. Donors, the Government and all should be properly consulted and come to a level of understanding.

- How do you discuss poverty while showing off of huge vehicles which just blow dust to a poor villager?

Who then is the beneficiary of voluntary work? While Kenyans are willing to volunteer and even leave their work also and there is that show of might- you create very high expectations, which may not be fulfilled.

Kenyans have been bombarded by a lot of NGOS research but what gets done or what changes still remains minimal. There is the feeling that NGOS are more interested in research rather than in affecting changes. NGOS' activities are characterized by:

- Lack of coordination among the stakeholders.
- Mistrust from the local communities.
- The feeling that supposed benefactors are only being used.

Despite all the foregoing it was felt that NGOs and CBOs are doing a much better job than the government though there is room for improvement.

Volunteerism in the USA (presented by Professor R. Mutiso)

- In the USA volunteerism start very early with the children joining youth clubs.
- It is instituted to shape the Americans and inculcate values to the young as they grow up into good citizens.
- This continues through the education system at junior school and continues through high school and to college.
- Wherever you are, there are neighborhood groups and associations

- so that people do not live isolated lives. There are also voluntary activities in the neighborhood.

- Social service organizations, like Lions clubs etc.).
- Activism (cause-related activities) Political or medical causes.
- There was also a level of philanthropy, which implies - money - somebody with money sets a foundation.

This brought up the question as to what do wealthy Kenyans do with money they have in excess? Are they willing to donate to worthy causes: (even if it is from money-laundering).

Tax levies in the US are organized in such a way that it is profitable to give - as it is given before tax - encourage volunteer giving.

Philanthropy however is a western phenomenon.

- It is a form of giving money, not to benefit yourself or your own people, but people you do not know.

At this point it was pointed out that formalized ways of doing volunteer work in Kenya are coming up. There is already an NGO - Ufadhili - which is encouraging this. Local bodies already involved in philanthropy include:

Rattansi Foundation

Chandaria Foundation

Kianda Foundation

Lack of tax relief in Kenya was seen as a discouraging factor. It was also noted that in the Kenyan situation some Kenyans with excess money contribute to extended family members as well as building hospitals. The workshop was informed that in terms of tax incentives to bring the private sector on board the matter has been discussed but it has not

been finalized.

It was however noted that what is killing volunteerism is the way it has been abused by misappropriation of money meant to benefit communities.

It was observed that this problem is not unique to Kenya but in other countries, especially in the west

It is dealt with by the legal system.

A legal framework to coordinate the many groups in community work should help in catching up with the corrupt.

A participant posed the question as to what drives people into volunteerism in the USA apart from prestige.

Prof. Mutiso said that volunteerism in the USA is driven by patriotism, and the notion that voluntary activities help to improve on the idea of democracy - people contributing and identifying with their nation.

Definition of Volunteerism

Volunteerism as **activity without coercion and without expecting a monetary reward** was the working definition during the time of research.

What emerged from the research, however, were various definitions depending on who was being interviewed as the following examples show

Volunteerism - an activity towards God

-A sacrifice

-An activity for the good of others etc.

-A spontaneous act responding to an impromptu needy situation.

But - in whatever form - it involves giving - e.g. priests giving their lives to the church,

time, skills, resources, ideas, money or all of them.

What did the workshop come up with as the working definition of Volunteerism?

It was agreed that there is giving, what was not agreed on is the form of compensation.

- When you volunteer to take some accident victim to hospital for example, what kind of compensation do you expect from it?
- What about when Chandaria donates money with no other expectation but fame?

The following comments and questions followed:

- Why are the voluntary activities only done in front of the Camera?
- Volunteerism was also seen as planting a seed and that compensation in whatever form will be there but some benefits might come as a surprise.
- Looking at motivation might also define compensation.

The Biblical View was also raised: -

Why should you only do good to those whom you expect to do you good in return while you should do good even to your enemies?

In the biblical parable of the Good Samaritan, was the benefactor expecting any return?

Is appreciation compensation? Suppose they do not appreciate?

It is clear that questions continued to be asked on the form compensation.

REPORTS FROM FINAL GROUPS' DISCUSSIONS

During the last session of the workshop participants broke into groups to tackle some questions common to all, and some questions unique to each group. The report brings out

the results of the discussions.

Q.1 Do volunteers need to be given incentives and if so, in what form?

The meeting felt that the volunteers NEEDED to be given incentives.

Three broad categories of incentives were identified as follows

i. Tokens: Money, written Appreciations, certificates of services, money or allowances for Covering expenses like transport, lunch, equipment and tools including uniforms, T-shirts, soap, medical care etc.

ii. Training to improve skills.

iii. The opportunity to serve from deep within and the chance to volunteer was also seen as an incentive.

Q.2 Is there any need to have a policy/structure or network covering volunteer organizations?

The workshop felt there was need to provide legal status for sustainability of volunteer activities. Therefore a Government department or some other body should deal with it in order to enable some form of legislation as well as formal volunteer organizational network i.e. something similar to the NGO council.

Q.3. What would be the best way of reporting the results of the workshop and following it up?

The workshop identified a number of methods to be used to publicize the results of the workshop. These were:

- i. Publish the research results - as proceedings in both Kiswahili and English. A simplified version of highlights should also be done in Kiswahili.
- ii. Have workshops in areas where research was conducted, as a follow-up. It was noted that some of the respondents had wanted to know when the researchers would be going back to

their areas.

- iii. Pass proceedings copies to volunteer organizations, Government Departments, the media, branches of Kenya National Library Services, the Institute of Development Studies and Main Library at the University of Nairobi.
- iv. Programmes on Radio, T.V. and other media.
- v. Find out what is happening in other developing countries.
- vi. Establish a center for Volunteerism.

Q.4 What motivations do people have for volunteering?

The following were identified as some of the key motivations:

- i. For honor and recognition in the community.
- ii. For allowances such as food, transport, accommodation.
- iii. For training and the gaining of experience.
- iv. For social reasons - touring, joining new venture.
- v. To meet Religious obligations.
- vi. For humanitarian reasons.
- vii. To reciprocate actions taken on them by others.
- viii. From believing in a cause.
- ix. As spontaneous must help "issue e.g. helping accident victims.

Q.5 Do people need to be encouraged to volunteer and if yes, how?

- i. By creating awareness.

- ii. By giving incentives.
- iii. By showing a link between a need/ cause and the potential volunteer.
- iv. By including it in school curriculums.
- v. By getting role models to encourage people. Authority figures should lead the way.
- vi. By publicizing the need, as well as the result of voluntary work.
- vii. Through interpersonal encouragement.

Q.6 Can volunteerism be used as a tool for development?

The meeting felt that it could be used as a tool for development especially if it is well structured and transparent. Volunteerism replaces the absent government inputs. Also it has given rise to useful Community Based Organization (CBOS), which initiate projects. Volunteerism is also taking the place of employment for some people, while also building skills.

This question lead to a rather pertinent question: Could the Government be conning its citizens? On one hand Government encourages people to help themselves through harambee and other volunteerism, but on the other hand it continues to collect taxes from the same people. The taxes are not accounted for! Volunteerism can be used to fight social evils such as land grabbing, this could be done by communities organizing themselves and bringing the problem to the attention of the relevant authorities through demonstrations and other lobbying activities.

It was noted that in the early 1970s and early 1980s, harambee was a real spur for development. Then, it started being politicized and became a tool of oppression and intimidation (chiefs would confiscate chicken, goats etc.) People were literally forced to contribute. So could volunteerism be likewise abused once Government got involved. Will the sharks come out and subvert the spirit or use it for their own ends? Despite these doubts, it was felt that volunteerism is a good concept that should be encouraged.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Professor Mutiso explained that since this subject had not been previously studied, her Institute set out to conduct an Exploratory Study, which would start opening more research windows on the subject. Many questions still remained unanswered at the time, but those would be the subjects for further research. She thanked the participants for providing stimulating and insightful discussion on this very crucial but hitherto ignored activity. She also thanked all the participants for having taken time to attend the two-day workshop.