



UN

Volunteers

inspiration in action

VALUING VOLUNTEERING IN AFRICA

Conference presentation
by the United Nations Volunteers programme

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The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling development challenges, and it can transform the pace and nature of development. Volunteerism benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, and by purposefully creating opportunities for participation. UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for recognition of volunteers, working with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing an increasing number and diversity of volunteers, including almost 8,000 experienced UN Volunteers, throughout the world. UNV embraces volunteerism as universal and inclusive, and recognizes volunteerism in its diversity as well as the values that sustain it: free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity.

The difference UNV makes is by demonstrating peace and development results and impact through volunteerism. UNV's comparative advantage is the ability and knowledge to bring about transformational change through volunteerism, community voluntary action and civic engagement through active partnerships with civil society, volunteer involving organizations, UN agencies and Governments. This is inspiration in action.

In 2011, UNV's additional priorities have been the marking of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers and the State of the World's Volunteerism Report to be launched on 5 December.

Valuing Volunteering in Africa Presentation

1. Throughout Africa there are strong volunteering traditions of mutual aid and self-help, service provision and civic participation, described by a diversity of words and concepts including *ubuntu*, *tirelo*, *vabatsiri* and *hunhu*. These represent essential capacities for communities and nations to pursue social, economic and environmental goals. Yet, volunteering is one of the least systematically researched topics in Africa, leading to a lack of sufficient recognition of its power to contribute to the achieving of national priorities, the Millennium Development Goals, and sustainable peace and development.
2. In the last month, UNV has been actively engaged with the UN DPI NGO Conference on Sustainable Societies Responsible Citizens in Bonn, the CIVICUS World Assembly in Montreal, and the IYV+10 Global Volunteer Conference in Budapest. With strong representation by a cross-section of development actors from civil society organizations (CSOs), governments, and the UN, discussions clearly pointed towards the aid effectiveness High Level Forum in Busan, the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the post MDGs agenda.
3. These discussions, whether they are focused on the environment, peace building, decreasing poverty, achieving the MDGs, increasing social cohesion and community well-being, or sustainable livelihoods, are increasingly highlighting the need for people-centred approaches—what a huge opportunity for the volunteering community!
4. In order to take full advantage of this opportunity, there needs to be more convincing evidence of the contributions of volunteering to sustainable peace and development. We need to strategically build the case at local, national, regional and global levels.
5. While with the State of the World's Volunteerism Report, we have been taking a global perspective, we welcome this opportunity to look at building the case for volunteering at the regional, sub-Saharan Africa level through the valuing of volunteering.
6. First, we must consider what we mean by “valuing” volunteering. Let's discuss that by looking at the recently published International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) study called *The value of volunteers: Imagine how many needs would go unanswered without volunteers*.
7. According to this study, in 2009 active IFRC volunteers donated nearly 6 billion US dollars in services worldwide, or nearly 90 cents for every person on earth. The economic value was determined based on asking every Red Cross/Red Crescent Society to determine how many volunteers served at least 4 hours in 2009. They asked how many hours they did volunteer, the field in which they did volunteer work, and what type of work they performed. 13.1 million was the total number of volunteers reported, or two in every thousand people around the world.
8. In sub-Saharan Africa volunteers contributed 117 million US dollars worth of services, with an average of 86 USD per volunteer. There are 1.5 million volunteers, more than the population of Swaziland or Mauritius. On average, for every one paid staff member, there are 327 volunteers, which is the highest ratio for any region of the world.

9. Obviously these figures on the economic value and the size, scope, range of fields, and diversity of activities are impressive ways to value volunteering. But the IFRC also notes that *in addition to providing value for donor dollars, volunteering for the Red Cross/Red Crescent generates social value for the community, for the organization and for the volunteers themselves*. So this study also adds qualitative testimonies and examples of social value, such as in East Africa, where Red Cross volunteers are modeling being responsible citizens and democratic involvement. They hold elections for their own leaders, have a constitution, election rules, and a conflict resolution mechanism. They involve the local community in doing things for themselves as well as advocating for the government to address the needs of the people. (IFRC, p.8, 23)
10. For what purpose are we valuing volunteering? Last month, at the CIVICUS World Assembly workshop on civil society assessment tools, it was emphasized again and again that the very important question of why, including for whom, you want to measure effects what and how you measure.
11. We would propose three main reasons to value volunteering:
- to influence global and regional decision-makers, national and local governments, and public policies;
 - to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of civil society and volunteering communities through self-assessments; and
 - to monitor, evaluate and report on the specific results and impact from volunteering.
12. Briefly, we would like to share about international methods that have been used in sub-Saharan Africa for each of these areas. These are:
- the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector and UN Nonprofit Handbook projects
 - the CIVICUS civil society index, and
 - the Handbook on the Methodology to Assess the Contribution of Volunteering for Development, which was developed by UNV and the FORUM
13. For more than two decades, Johns Hopkins University has been assisting countries to research their nonprofit sector using two methodologies—the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project and UN Statistics Division’s UN Handbook on Nonprofit Institutions in the System of National Accounts. Both are designed to provide cross national comparable statistical data which can inform decision-makers. They only profile structured civil society organizations and institution-based volunteering, not the more direct, non-formal volunteering seen during the Arab spring. Best known is the data on the contributions of civil society to the gross domestic product (GDP), but these studies also include descriptive data of the formal not-for-profit sector.
14. For example, in Kenya, civil society organizations were a 270 million US dollar industry in 2010, which represented 2.5% of the GDP. The civil society sector workforce of paid staff and volunteers is equal to 43% of the larger employer, the public sector; and exceeds employment in the utilities, construction, transportation, and manufacturing sectors. Almost 39 percent of the civil society workforce are volunteers with almost 1.0 million people or 6

percent of the population volunteering on average fewer than 6.5 hours per year. Civil society in Kenya provides an important human services role, especially in the area of community development and empowerment of disadvantaged segments of the population, such as women and rural poor. Nearly one fifth of volunteers provide inputs in Kenya's health care delivery.

15. We looked at four Comparative Nonprofit Sector studies in sub-Saharan Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, and Uganda) and one UN Nonprofit Handbook study by Mozambique, all conducted after 2000 in cooperation with governments.
16. Table on Civil Society GDP Contributions in 5 Countries in Africa: The civil society sector in Mozambique makes the largest contribution to GDP, with 6.2%. Mozambique employed a differ methodology, so it is the only one to specifically identify volunteering's share of the contribution to GDP.
17. Table on Civil Society's Workforce in 5 Countries in Africa: The proportion of volunteers in the civil society workforce of Tanzania is significantly larger than anywhere else. Mozambique had proportionally the least volunteers.
18. Table on Composition of Volunteers by Field in 5 Countries in Africa: This chart identifies in which fields volunteers in the five countries work. Mozambique had a high proportion of people volunteering in faith based organizations. In South Africa, expressive volunteering such as with sports and culture, and civic and advocacy activities were most prevalent. 4% of volunteers in Tanzania engaged in international activities.
19. Governments like receiving data, especially comparisons among countries and economic value. These studies can be highly relevant in informing the national debate and policy-making not only on issues directly focused on civil society and volunteering, but also how civil society organizations and volunteering can contribute to addressing specific national priorities, such as HIV/AIDS prevention, education, social cohesion, and rural development.
20. However, the very limited number of JHU related studies on civil society organizations and volunteering conducted since 2000 in sub-Saharan Africa indicate the challenges of the methodology. For six years, UNV partnered with JHU to support countries in the south to develop such reports. The limited resources and conflicting priorities of the responsible government entity as well as the pervasive lack of existing and reliable national databases on civil society organization needed for this study make this effort highly challenging.
21. Another limitation with the JHU methodologies is that the focus on scope and economic value fails to value other significant contributions of volunteering. In March 2010, ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) launched its Youth Volunteer Programme with support from UNV. The press release says that the volunteers will be deployed to countries in the region and will contribute to the consolidation of peace, national reconciliation, recovery and rehabilitation in crisis-affected communities. They will also help strengthen the capacities of local organizations; and promote the culture of peace in West Africa, assist in institutionalizing gender equality, establish and support partnerships between communities, link up communities with technical and financial support services, network and collaborate with other development partners; while the volunteers themselves gain the capacity to adapt to various social, cultural and political circumstances.

22. Would it not be great if we had indicators and methodologies which could provide data on these contributions! While GDP contributions can be impressive, it seems that we also need to work on developing other indicators to demonstrate impact in more social, relational, and participatory terms. Hopefully we can discuss this more later.
23. Moving to the second reason to value volunteering, addressing civil society and volunteering capacity development, CIVICUS, a global civil society network, has recently completed a second stage of implementing Civil Society Index (CSI) studies globally. The purpose of CSI is as a civil society self-assessment and action research project. It is conducted by CSOs at the national level in partnership with CIVICUS, and engages with stakeholder from all sectors. Between 2008 and 2011, studies were completed in eight countries in sub-Saharan Africa: Guinea, Liberia, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo and Zambia. The CSI in Ghana is being finalized. It is currently underway in Mozambique, and planned in Uganda.
24. Because the CSI explores civic participation, the methodology covers both volunteering in formal CSOs and non-formal participation or direct volunteering. Capturing or valuing these various forms of volunteering in some national contexts is challenging because of differing perceptions and definitions of volunteering. The Senegal CSI partner noted “It is very difficult to realistically calculate levels of volunteering since for most Senegalese people, the definition of volunteerism is unclear, and indeed, counting the time...is also unusual.” (CIVICUS b., 2011, p. 2)
25. The CSI African partners tend to emphasize the socially, culturally and community rooted “wellsprings” of volunteerism. For example, in Liberia, volunteering is “a way of life, as people work together for their communities for free.” In Guinea, volunteerism is “typified by assistance to a neighbour or a member of the community without expectation of being paid in return” And in Rwanda, “on the last Saturday of every month between 7 am and 12 noon, everything in Rwanda stops. Or at least all the restaurants are closed, markets do not operate and public and private transportation is limited. The reason for this is that the entire country is supposed to take part in *umuganda* – community service. This includes digging ditches, sweeping the grounds, making compost, building houses, clearing land, or any other activity that is helping the country become better. Given this, it is interesting to note that in Rwanda, only 21.4% of respondents reported that they volunteer in formal organizations.
26. CIVICUS’ overall CSI analysis suggests considerable gaps exist between formalized forms of participation that take place within CSO structures, and less formalized forms of participation that take place outside organizations, including through direct volunteering and other forms of individual and community action. In Guinea, it is reported that, “formal volunteering for a CSO is far rarer [than community volunteering] at 13.8%.” The Senegal report neatly captures this division: “The community survey shows that 81.2% of the sample is involved in volunteering. However only 15.7% of them are involved in volunteering within CSOs, which means that most of these activities take place outside the frame of any given organization.”
27. The sub-Saharan Africa countries recorded higher levels of formal participation in CSOs when compared to the rest of the world. Typically, the CSI also reports greater rates of volunteering (76% in Africa) in socially-based CSOs, such as cultural, religious or sports associations, than with politically-oriented CSOs, such as advocacy groups, NGOs and trade unions (31% in Africa).

28. As a self-assessment tool, national CSI studies include multi-sectoral recommendations to strengthen the capacities and effectiveness of civil society as well as participation, and volunteering. For example, to broaden the participatory base for advocacy and community voice, more focus is needed on how to better link with religious, cultural, sporting and recreational institutions as well as community and direct volunteering.
29. The CSI challenge, as with any self-assessment tool, is having the recommendations implemented. Unfortunately, CIVICUS has not felt this was as successful as it should be. There is a strain between applying an international methodology to ensure comparability among CSI studies globally and allowing the flexibility to develop a nationally owned report. Moving forward, CIVICUS is interested in supporting more customized national civil society assessments. At the same time, there are discussions of a need for a global health of civil society indicator, similar to the Transparency International corruption index. The civil society indicator would have to be simple and feasible to implement regularly worldwide. Discussions have suggested a focus on civil society space for participation, civic engagement, and volunteerism. Again, we can discuss this more later.
30. Thirdly, when it comes to valuing the impact of volunteerism on achieving national peace and development priorities, as well as the MDGs and sustainable development for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting purposes can be a challenge for volunteer involving organizations (VIOs), funders, and their constituents. A variety of existing and emerging tools are attempting to do this.
31. We are pleased to finally share with you printed versions of the *Methodology for Assessing the Contribution of Volunteering to Development Handbook* which was jointly developed by UNV and FORUM.
36. In 2007, using this methodology, UNV conducted a series of results workshops focused on specific thematic areas. One workshop, held in Entebbe, focused on Volunteerism for Development in Post-conflict Environments. It brought together volunteers to share their experiences in Uganda, Liberia and Sierra Leone along with four external resource people. A second results workshop was held in Nairobi and focused on Volunteerism for Development and Democratic Governance, with volunteers and resource people from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. The workshop methodology is primarily focus groups and the results are qualitative focusing on contributions and impact.
32. As an example of what this methodology can produce, here is a summary of the findings of the Post-Conflict Environments workshop, UN Volunteers' activities can be categorized in 6 key areas:
- Helping to restore confidence and building trust in the peace process
 - Restoring social networks and helping to build social capital
 - Supporting the peaceful demobilization, social healing and reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life
 - Advocating and raising awareness of human rights and protection at the community and national level
 - Facilitating civic education and political rehabilitation processes
 - Supporting the capacity of key state national institutions, local authorities and civil society organizations to be more effective and accountable

37. A set of distinctive attributes were identified that UN Volunteers contribute to their work in post-conflict environments:

- Highly skilled, with technical knowledge and multi-national
- Demonstrate values of solidarity, good will and commitment
- Volunteers are able to mobilize the communities and are trusted agents of change
- As impartial and neutral actors are bridge builders
- Knowledge of the local context and commitment to local ownership enables them to link grass roots communities with public and development agencies

38. The fruits of these contributions resulted in:

- The restoration of basic services for many people living in affected communities in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Northern Uganda.
- Communities demonstrating greater awareness of their rights and the potential of voluntary action and beginning to mobilize to address a range of human rights and development efforts, including mobilizing to improve access to schools, water, health and collective action in addressing human rights abuses and holding key development actors to account.
- The demobilization and reintegration of thousands of ex-combatants in all three countries.
- Assisting in changing attitudes and behaviours towards possession and use of small arms among the public and an increased number of small arms and munitions being handed to public authorities for destruction without fear of prosecution.
- Reports of fewer human rights abuses in camps and prisons and a return to the rule of law in Uganda.
- Peaceful elections in Sierra Leone & Liberia.
- An increase in the number of refugees and IDPs willing to return to former communities and being accepted on their return [Uganda, Sierra Leone]
- And in all three post conflict environments strengthened governance and accountability of state institutions and civil society organizations.

39. What has been shared so far are valuing studies using international methodologies.

Throughout sub-Saharan Africa, there have been national level studies which map, assess, and review volunteering for multiple purposes, including influencing policies and legislation, integrating volunteering into development programming, evaluating projects, or to celebrate and recognize volunteerism. What do they add to the valuing of volunteering in Africa?

40. At this stage we highlight some examples from this research demonstrating the results emphasis from Kenya and a Malawi education sector study that shows opportunities for improving capacity and effectiveness and the policy influence perspective in myriad national reports.

41. In 2008 a National Survey on Volunteerism in Kenya: Perspectives, Structures and Systems was completed by the Institute for Social research and Community Development, Kenya on behalf of VSO and UNV. The survey targeted volunteers and volunteer involving organizations and was conducted in the entire country, covering eight clusters or provinces

namely: Nairobi, Central, North Eastern, Eastern, Coast, Nyanza, Western, and Rift Valley. 106 volunteer organizations were involved of which 94 were national and 12 international. 265 volunteers were interviewed from the organizations with 241 being Kenyan and 24 non Kenyan.

42. The study highlighted the example of one very successful local community based organization (CBO) located in Kakamega in the Western Province which had recruited at the time of the study 40 international volunteers for an average duration of 2 months, in addition to making use of local volunteers. The CBO had careful recruitment processes and charged the international volunteers for the services it provided including briefings-it also had connections with universities and other institutions to recruit volunteers on top of the internet.
43. In respect to perceived benefits derived by NGOs and communities the survey reported 25% of the volunteer involving organizations reported volunteers as a cost effective way to run projects, 15 % suggesting they complemented the paid staff. 13% appreciated the new ideas and experiences volunteers brought and others noted the important capacity building element, program development, support, community linking and cultural experience. Focus groups and interviews also highlighted "the impact of voluntary services in the socio economic and political development of Kenya" though volunteering was not explicitly singled out. Contributions including strengthening the economy, building strong safe communities, a confident, democratic Kenya, and delivering public services and sustainable development were highlighted in qualitative terms but the report noted that the contribution of the voluntary sector was not always well recognized in the implementation of development plans in Kenya.
44. VSO Malawi commissioned the 2010 National Volunteering Mapping which presents findings of the study on national/community volunteers in the education sector in Karonga, Mchinji, Blantyre and Thyolo districts in Malawi. The study investigated the types of volunteer groups that existed in the districts, motivations to take part in voluntary work, the support received, and how they were perceived. The objective of the study was to generate information that would help to develop a national volunteering strategy for the education sector.
45. The study provides a valuable sectoral view of volunteers in education and highlights key elements including the essential role of volunteer teachers which in some cases ensured the viability of whole schools to exist. It highlighted the important roles of volunteers in formal education structures like the Parents Teachers Association or the School Management Committee and the importance of capacity development in these roles. It also noted the crucial complementary role provided by other less direct volunteer input e.g. through the Mothers Groups present in some schools and noted for their contribution to encouraging girls attendance and advocating for gender sensitive approaches to issues like having toilets available at schools and eliminating violence. The study recommended for example that the Ministry of Education should expedite the introduction of mothers groups in all schools and that CSOs should develop programmes to target spouses and members of the community to recognize and support the voluntary work of mothers groups. The study reminds us of the importance when looking at valuing volunteering to look at the wide range of stakeholders connected with volunteer work. We must look not just at what can be achieved by individual volunteers in formal and non-formal settings but also volunteers working collectively and through organized groups, bridging with other stakeholders for effective development – a

truly reciprocal and relational approach¹ which we must aim to capture no matter how difficult when valuing volunteering. This will also ensure we recognize the contribution of the strong volunteering traditions present throughout Africa.

46. The Liberian National Youth Volunteer Service (NYVS) Project Mid Term Review was conducted on the NYVS project in Liberia. It noted the recognition of the work of 67 national volunteers: developing national capacity of host institutions, local professionals, community members and at the same time noted it enriched the volunteer's own skills and experience. However it also noted "the chances of long term impact are very restricted if the program remains an isolated initiative". "Rather" it said "it needs to become a national policy, part of the governments development plan and poverty reduction strategy".
47. There have been myriad other national studies that also merit some mention and it is worth suggesting that a systematic consideration of all of them together would be a valuable endeavor to ascertain the common useful insights and information gathered as well as gaps in both methodology and content. Many have been focused specifically on policy change most commonly building a case to inform and advocate for the consideration of appropriate national volunteer schemes. Countries covered include: Namibia, The Gambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana, Zambia, South Africa, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Nigeria.
48. There is clearly a need to encourage such national studies into academic forms for better official recognition as well as into accessible forms in order to encourage community engagement and recognition in the community. The 2007 VOSESA 5 country study highlighted that in those countries "a substantial collection of documentation, knowledge and practical experience exists, which is not published in scholarly publications". It is important to draw these insights into systematic research endeavor's that can evaluate their findings and methodologies to guide future research that is both country specific at the same time as drawing on broader contextual African and international volunteer research methodologies, findings, trends and recommendations.
49. To conclude, we certainly have not presented the value of volunteering in Africa. What we have done is share a few, mainly country specific, snapshots of the value of volunteering in terms of scope, economic value, civil society space for participation, complementarity, development and social impact.
50. While there still is not very much formal research on volunteering in sub-Saharan Africa, there are actually many diverse studies. What is missing is a common methodology with common indicators.
51. Given the diversity of expressions of volunteering in sub-Saharan Africa, many of which might not even be called volunteering by the actors, this is a challenging goal. We are pleased that the International Labour Organization in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University and UNV recently launched *The Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work*. The methodology is a household survey of volunteering activities within the last month. The survey never uses the word "volunteer" so should be effective in capturing a range of expressions of volunteering, including both formal organizational volunteering and community or direct volunteering. Since labour force household surveys are commonly conducted globally by National Statistical Offices, once convinced to do it, governments

¹ Eyben, R. (2008) '[Power, Mutual Accountability and Responsibility in the Practice of International Aid: A Relational Approach](#)', IDS Working Paper 305, Brighton: IDS

should have the capacity to implement the survey. Now that the Manual has been officially launched, the next step is engage with national volunteering community partners, especially civil society, academia and relevant government ministries to advocate for their implementation. We look forward to cooperating with you on this.

52. The ILO Manual focuses on describing the scope and economic value of national expressions of volunteering. For international volunteering, FORUM and its members are exploring avenues to further study the value and impact of international volunteers. We hope that members in the discussions which follow will share tools and initiatives they are engaged in.
53. At the IYV+10 Global Volunteer Conference held in Budapest last month, the Conference Declaration included a call to: *Measure both the economic and social value of volunteering at the local, national and global levels to provide concrete and comparable evidence of the power of volunteerism for the public, media, and decision-makers. Measurements of national GDP should include the added value created by volunteering and recognize civic participation as an indicator of growth.*
54. The Open Forum on CSO development Effectiveness recognized the importance of measuring change, developing capacity and the role of volunteerism in the June 2011 Siem reap Global Assembly. Its International Framework said CSO's needed to "utilize participatory tools for planning, monitoring and evaluating development activities" and "build the analytical capacities of staff, volunteers and partners with an orientation to determining and assessing conditions for long-term sustainable development outcomes affecting lasting change for people living in poverty or marginalized populations" (p 13). The International Framework also explicitly noted that amongst other fundamental elements "CSOs act in development to"... "encourage domestic and international volunteering engagement, whether in the creation and support of CSOs and/or contributing in the ongoing organizational life and mission of CSOs" (p 25). This growing policy recognition amongst CSOs is the fruit of the work on valuing volunteering by Forum and its members.
55. As we prepare to take the case in terms of the contribution of civil society and volunteering to aid effectiveness in Busan and to sustainable development at Rio+20, we need to consider developing indicators which can properly reflect the contributions of both international and national volunteering to achieving not only economic, but also social and environmental well-being goals.

Discussion Questions:

1. How should we adapt our attempts to value volunteering in order to take into account the regional/national and international contexts (eg valuing volunteering in Africa, Busan HLF, Beyond 2015, Rio + 20)?
2. The Arab Spring highlighted the value of direct volunteering including traditional forms of volunteering. How can bridges between formal, organization based and direct volunteering be strengthened? Do you know of examples?
3. Do you have examples or ideas for indicators that report on social, relational, well-being, or participation impacts?
4. What tools does your organization use to value volunteering and how do you adapt these for different stakeholders (eg donors, beneficiaries, national governments...)
5. When discussing valuing volunteering does using different terminology complicate the discussion? How can we find shared agreement on the meaning of terminology (eg impact/results etc)?

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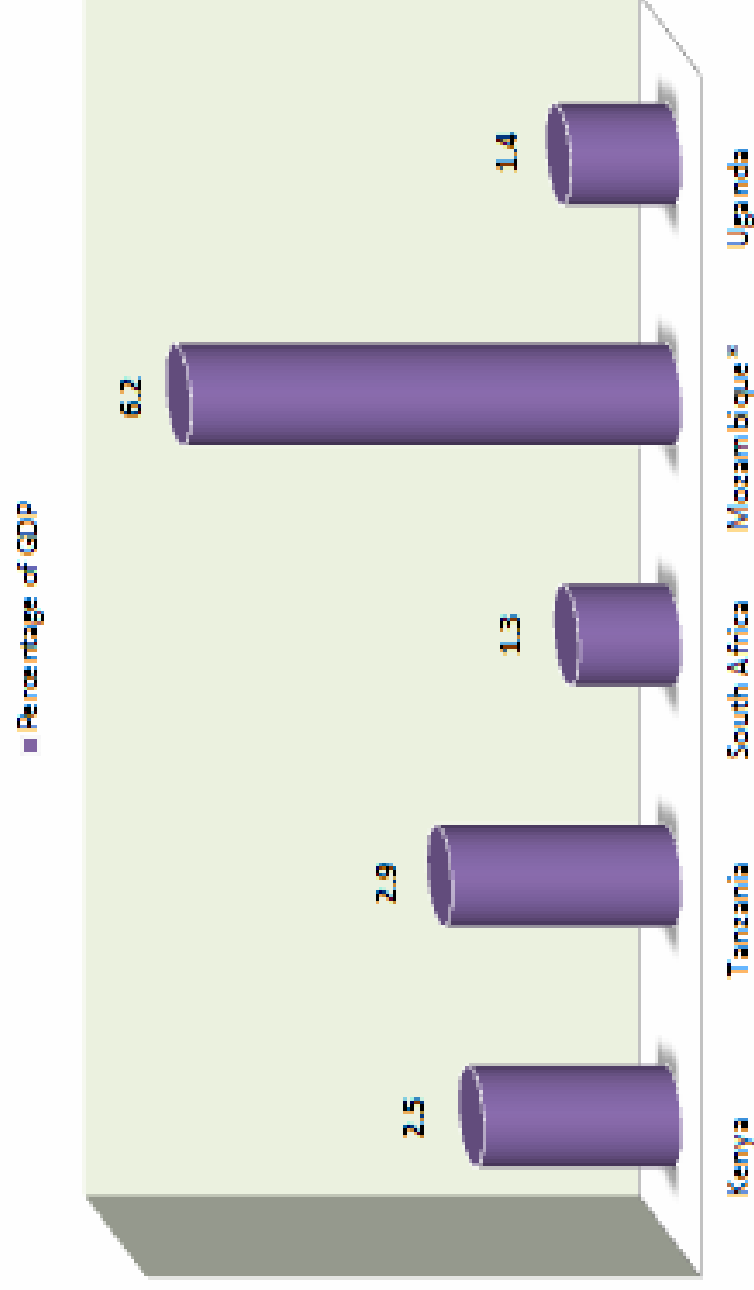
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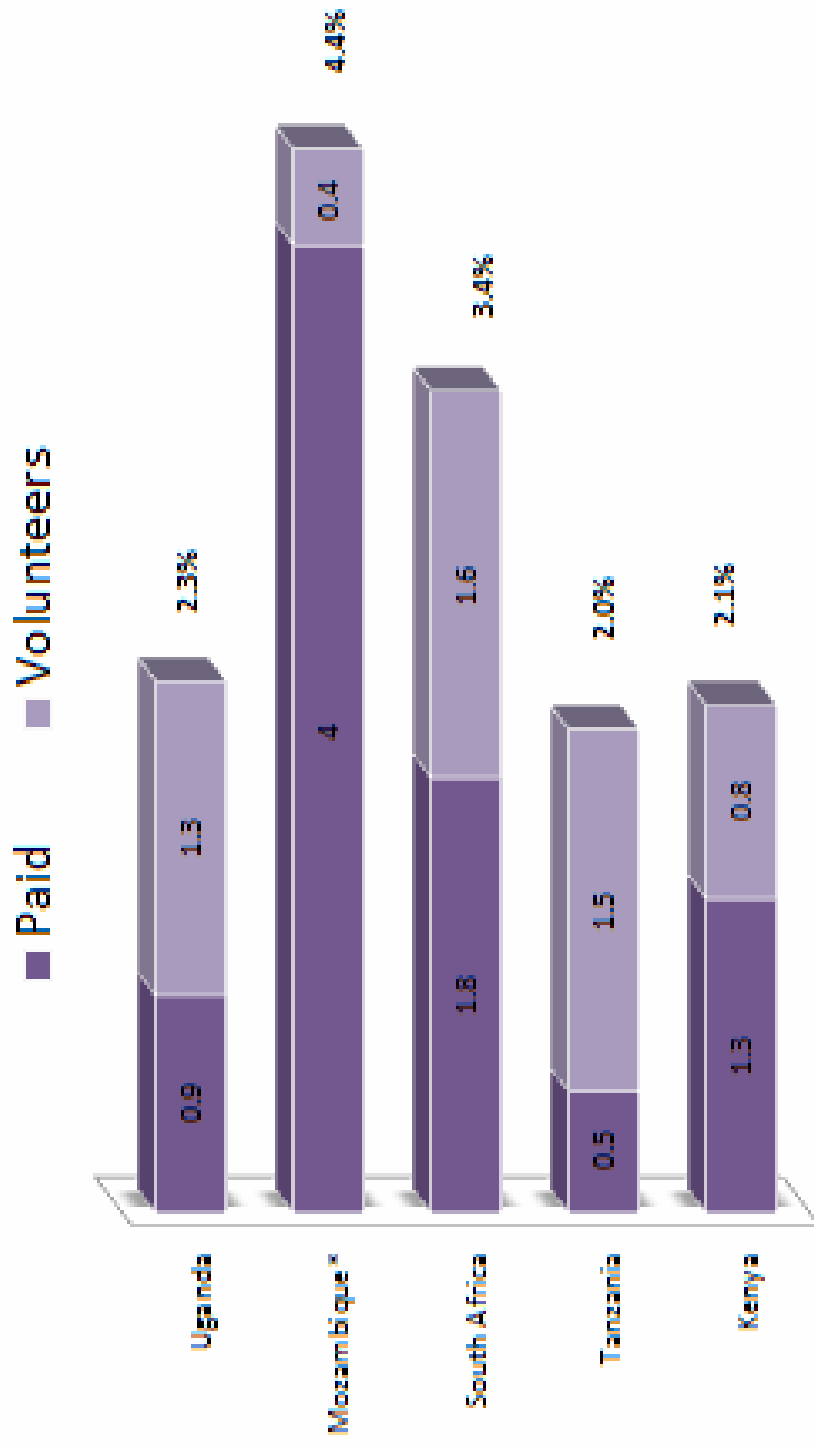
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Civil Society Sector's Contribution to National GDP

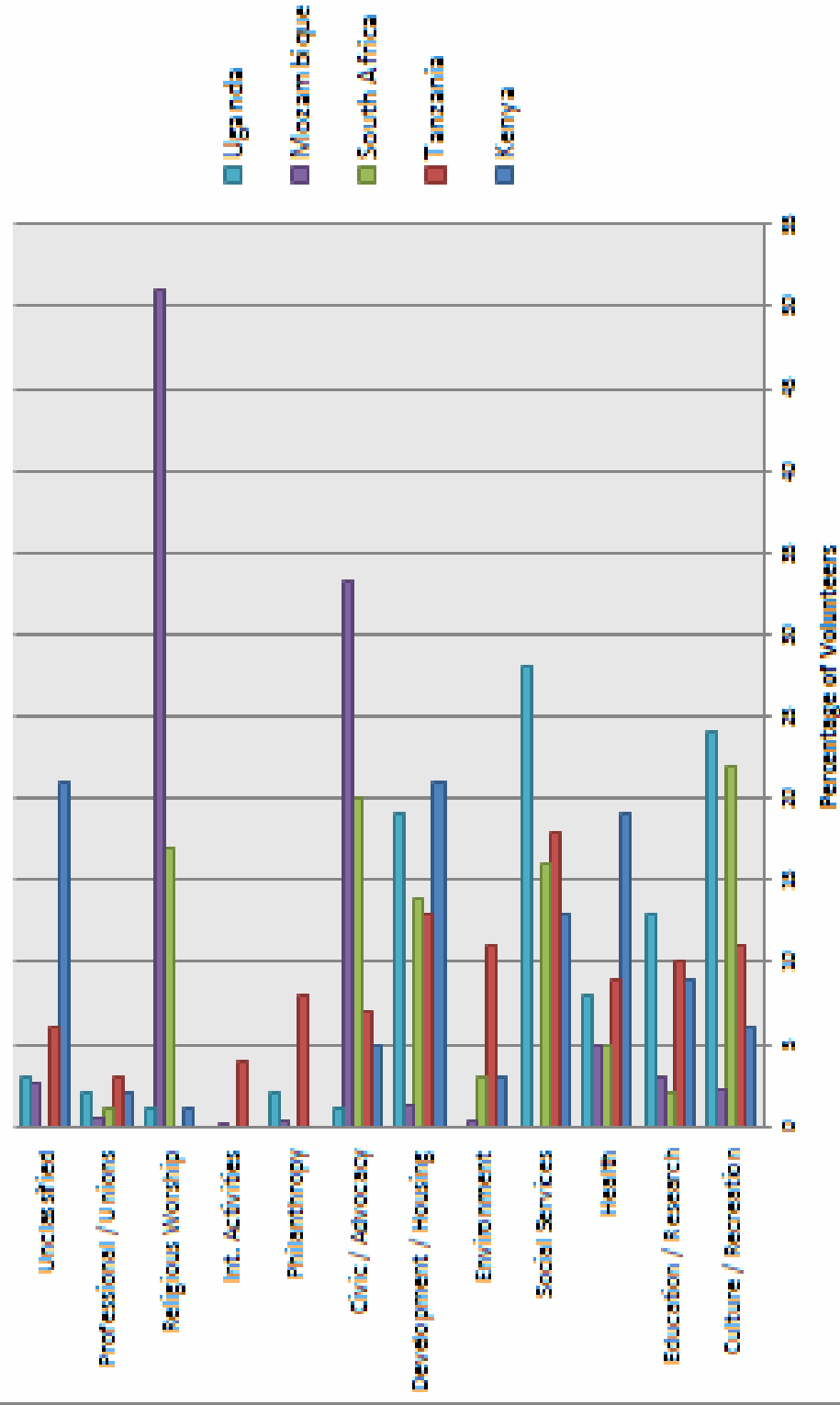


* Mozambique: 0.1% increase due to volunteering

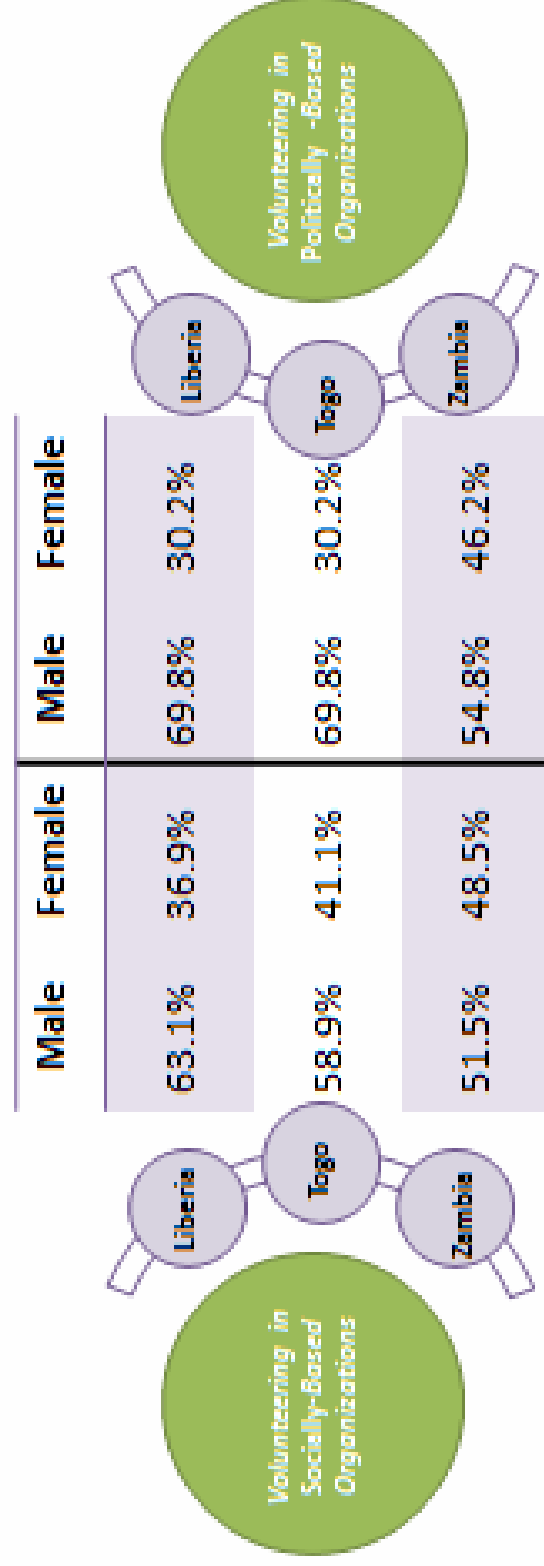
Civil Society's Workforce in Africa



Composition of Volunteers by Field in Five African Countries



CIVICUS Civil Society Index 2008-2011



Socially-based: religious, sports, art, music, educational, consumer organizations
 Politically-based: labour unions, political parties, environmental, professional, humanitarian, charitable organizations