At the Service of Community Development. The Professionalization of Volunteer Work in Kenya and Tanzania

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Abstract: This article explores the changing nature of the "volunteer" as an official role within health and development interventions in East Africa. Contemporary development interventions require the engagement of volunteers to act as links between project and community. This role is increasingly professionalized within development architectures with implications for the kinds of people who can engage in volunteering opportunities. Volunteers in development interventions are likely to be drawn from public sector staff and from educated youth seeking access to positions of paid employment. Volunteering as a formal status within the organization of development programs is recognized as a kind of professional work by those seeking to engage with development organizations. Volunteers perform important work in linking development programs with beneficiaries. At the same time, volunteering provides opportunities for personal transformation.

Keywords: Volunteering; development; work; community; Kenya; Tanzania

Introduction

Volunteering and community participation have come to be synonymous in development discourse and practice in many parts of the world (Lacey & Ilcan 2006; Smith & Laurie 2011). Development interventions prioritize community engagement as a vehicle for sustainability, and the voluntary participation of local people in projects is lauded as an indication of community "ownership." Agencies including the World Health Organization (see, e.g., W.H.O 2008) are making efforts to formalize and support the role and contribution of local volunteers as a visible cadre in development. In East Africa this formalization process is accelerating an ongoing transformation in the status and practice of volunteering. Volunteers in East African development interventions are no longer engaged primarily on the basis of their membership in the community that is the object of development interventions, but on the basis of their ability to act as intermediary between development programs and

the community in question. The “volunteer” is now a formal category within development projects, with responsibility for community engagement.

As volunteering becomes, in effect, a professional situation, the kinds of work that volunteers undertake demand more specialized competencies in the bureaucratic and technical practices that make up development interventions. Volunteering is becoming professionalized, associated with particular forms of knowledge that effectively restrict volunteering to certain people and create barriers to entry for others. For the young educated people aiming to assume volunteer roles in Kenya and the public servants working in Tanzanian rural districts who are also involved in small scale non governmental organizations, volunteering is not just a special kind of work for which remuneration is expected to be minimal or nonexistent. It is a formal position at the margins of the development establishment from which a move into some form of longer term employment is a hoped-for possibility. It also positions volunteers as intermediaries between development organizations and the community they serve (Green 2012; Mercer & Green 2013; Swidler & Watkins 2009). Public sector staff in rural Tanzania who were interviewed about their voluntary activities with local NGOs described their activities in terms of helping the community. Similarly, the Kenyan high school and college graduates working as volunteers with a range of development projects viewed volunteering as a morally responsible use of their education and learning.

This article explores recent shifts in the constitution of volunteering in Kenya and Tanzania through an examination of the changing composition of the volunteer cadre in the Kenyan community health sector and the role of the volunteer as foundational to newly formed civil society organizations in rural Tanzania. In both settings the uncertain nature of employment markets means that most volunteers are destined to remain in rural areas. Very few will obtain formal employment in development organizations. Volunteering in rural development projects is configured as a kind of professional work in terms of the status of voluntary positions and the kinds of tasks performed by volunteers. Becoming a volunteer as a recognized status within a funded development intervention is now sought after as a means to perform a professional role, as a potential step on the road to a formal job, and as a means through which educated men and women from rural areas can demonstrate their aspirations to work for the development of their communities (see Prince, this issue). Professionalization, however, does not imply regular payment. Instead, various other mechanisms exist whereby volunteers can expect to obtain some level of financial compensation depending on the particular project.

Because the position of the volunteer is interstitial and intermediary, and because voluntary labor is central to visions of inclusive development premised on ideals of community engagement, volunteering has become central to the work of linking development beneficiaries and projects (Mercer & Green 2013). Volunteers undertake their work within international funding streams and policy visions, translating development project aspirations between organizational tiers and facilitating community engagement in program activities. In the emerging East African economy, made up of professional services, development funding, NGO contracts, and foreign direct investment (cf. Thrift 2000) volunteering is also central to new forms of identity formation as people position themselves as educated professionals and service providers ready to respond to new opportunities. Volunteering is thus also “work” on the self. Professionalized volunteering becomes a means through which educated East African youth and members of the rural

professional middle classes (see Mindry 2001) fashion themselves as good citizens and as self-directed agents of community transformation.

Volunteers and Community Participation in East Africa

Since the colonial era, aid and development interventions directed at social transformation have also been directed at transforming the self. Missionary endeavors incorporated into the British colonial enterprise through grants in aid were from the outset concerned with forms of conversion that aimed to transform not only individual spirituality, but also economic, bodily, and material worlds (see, e.g., Comaroff & Comaroff 1991; Thomas 2003; Vaughan 1991). Broader forms of social and economic development from the late 1940s onward aimed to create "modern" subjects through improved farming and domestic practices (Lewis 2000; Smyth 2004), while education, religious, and labor programs emphasized new forms of disciplining and ordering the self (Hansen 1992; Jennings 2009). Playing out alongside the attempts of colonial states to change the way that people live their everyday lives was a governmental imaginary that separated the needs of traditional rural subjects from those of modern urban citizens (Mamdani 1996), with rural areas constituted as sites where social solidarity is naturalized on the basis of customary practice and shared residence. Community development was designed by the British colonial state as a means of making rural populations responsible for their own development to be organized through local institutions under the authority of district administrations (Green 2014). Contributions of labor from rural people for development projects implemented on behalf of the state were a basic instrument of colonial community development across East Africa where expectations about the community as agent and object of development continue to inform contemporary development interventions. .

Although forms of communal and shared labor in Kenya and Tanzania have a history that predates the colonial encounter (see, e.g., Moore & Vaughan 1994; Pottier 1985; Richards 1995 [1939]; Shipton 2007), institutionalized "voluntary" labor is more a recent phenomenon. During the colonial periods in both Kenya and Tanzania, community members were expected to participate in communal labor activities in lieu of tax and as a contribution to development projects (see, e.g., Hunter this volume; Iliffe 1979). Such contributions were compulsory. Those who refused were imprisoned or fined. After independence, this labor contribution was reframed as voluntary, albeit legally enforced, and as "participation": in Tanzania as the responsibility of communities for their own development (Jennings 2003; Green 2010) and in Kenya through the ideology of *harambee* (Hill 1991; Maxon 1995; Widner 1992). During the colonial period formal volunteering in Kenya was primarily the domain of female white settlers through organizations such as the Kenyan Women's League and initiatives such as the Jeannes school (see Aubrey 1997; Lewis 2000), projects that built upon notions of class hierarchy, feminine benevolence, and a sense of duty to help the poor (Davin 1978). Meanwhile, notions of communal charity were also promoted by missionary orders that sought to encourage the involvement of converts in evangelism and in community care (Iliffe 1987; Vaughan 1991).

Compulsory participation in development activities, enforced through local by-laws, continues to characterize village life in rural Tanzania, perpetuating an association between unpaid labour as a requirement of development and development and volunteering (see Green 2010; Becker this volume). This association has been strengthened over the past decade in both Tanzania and Kenya by the emphasis on

increased community involvement in the "good governance" agenda promoted by international donors. This massive spending effort, which intends to increase the accountability of public services, on the one hand, and the role and scope of nonstate actors, on the other, has led to a significant expansion of the civil society sector and a proliferation of nongovernmental and community-based organizations (Hearn 1998; Ndegwa 1994; Semboja & Therkildsen 1996). During the 2000s the Kenyan government registered on average four hundred new nongovernmental organizations every year, bringing the number of registered NGOs to 6,705 in 2009 (Republic of Kenya 2009).[2] In Tanzania there were two hundred and twenty-four registered NGOs in 1993 (Lange, et al. 2000); by 2010 there were around fifteen hundred registered nationally, plus numerous district-based civil society organizations (Green 2012).

This scale of development investment has enabled a mode of development spending that is channeled through government agencies that work with, and are accountable to, what are categorized as "community stakeholders." Whereas structural adjustment entailed cuts in public spending and a shrinking of the state, the poverty reduction programs of the early twenty-first century are premised on a neoliberal model of reformed public service delivery that assumes state responsibility for the provision of services—particularly in areas such as health care and education— but with the assistance and cooperation of other providers who ensure efficiency and effectiveness. NGOs are not assumed to have a comparative advantage in the provision of services, as they were in the structural adjustment era, but to be ideally positioned to monitor the quality of public service delivery and to voice citizen concerns in relation to the implementation of small-scale community programs. Nongovernmental actors are thus contracted by donor organizations to undertake the task of community engagement and to encourage communities to hold state actors to account (Mercer & Green 2013). This transition has ongoing implications for the ways in which nongovernmental organizations, including Christian churches, interact with state and local governments and in the range of activities they perform.

In Kenya, the ideology of *harambee* as a developmental form of self-help remains strong, although today contributions of labor are likely to be replaced by cash donations. In Tanzania where contributions to development continue to feature communal labor activities, this work is sharply differentiated from formal "volunteering" in a development project or organization. The former is conceptualized as one off and short term and it is also nonselective, in that all able bodied adults are expected to take part. Being a "volunteer," by contrast, is a long-term commitment and is associated with a specific position within an organization. In this changed context, the function of NGOs in enabling community responsibilization (Amin 2005; Rose 1999: 156) necessitates a new kind of work from NGO staff and community members. The old model of voluntary work as support for service delivery has given way to the work of mediating between NGOs and communities, between development enterprises and their beneficiaries, and between state and civil society.

Professionalizing Volunteering

The alignment of the nongovernmental sector with a specific role in monitoring development progress and in community work has taken place alongside a concentration of resources around nonstate organizations. Since the late 1980s the imagined and material potential of nongovernmental organizations as development conduits has resulted in the multiplication of voluntary roles in this sector. As we

have seen, community volunteers, have long been a central component of the organization of grassroots development in Africa. They are understood as representatives of the community, but also as channels through which to direct educational messages and resources within frameworks of self help and sustainability. Development projects, particularly in the health sector, have sought to harness the labor of those considered to be most suited to represent, influence, and extend services to what is constituted via such projects as the community, viewed as the intended target of the development intervention. Older women in particular are valued and have been thus somewhat overrepresented in these projects, partly as a consequence of their assumed influence in the domestic sphere and their expertise in small-scale farming (Brown 2013; Thomas-Slayer & Rocheleau 1995).

Nevertheless, the formal and institutionalized practices of volunteering in contemporary Kenya and Tanzania that are the focus of this article are different from the cooperative labor movements that characterized the early postcolonial period and the more recent community development approaches. Rather than emerging from community solidarity, contemporary volunteering has become a semiprofessional status occupied by people seeking to obtain a more formalized relation with development programs. Volunteers nowadays are not simply members of communities, but rather specialists who understand how to "do" development and how to "work with" communities. In this sense, while the legacies for contemporary volunteer work are related to the long history of community participation in East Africa, they also draw prominently on the organizational arrangements made familiar through forms of local government, development programming and Christian churches. These organizations often relied on intermediaries such as catechists, headmen, and in Tanzania, ten-house cell leaders and village executive officers to effect vertical relations between communities or congregations and higher administrative tiers such as districts, diocese or region.[3]

There have been two important catalysts for the emergence of the new role of the volunteer. Both are the outcomes of longer term processes set in motion by the transformations in the architecture of aid after the ending of the Cold War. First, the development sector in East Africa, including non-governmental organizations, has become progressively nationalized. Staffed by capable professionals whose practice conforms to a globalizing template of development expertise through adherence to standardized project design, the management and community facilitation of development is a professionalized domain. NGO staff are highly qualified. Many national NGO staff in Kenya possess (or are studying for) masters degrees in public health or community development, or have worked in senior government positions before joining the NGO sector. They are likely to be qualified in specific development practices through attendance at "capacity building" seminars and "trainings," for which certification is generally obtained (Phillips & Ilcan 2004). They also possess specialized knowledge and technical capabilities that the beneficiaries lack (such as familiarity with development planning techniques including logical frameworks and theories of change), know the language of project management, and display the appropriate dress (business attire), comportment, and artefacts (blackberry, smartphone, memory stick) that have become global signifiers of the capable, worldly professional (Green 2003).[4]

The growth of national NGOs which are staffed locally has to a large extent involved the replication of the organizational forms of international NGOs (Igoe & Kelsall 2005) in which volunteers and interns are an established presence. Kenyan and Tanzanian volunteers work regularly with volunteers and interns from northern

countries, mostly North America and Europe (Heath 2007; Jones 2008; Simpson 2004).[5] Among these overseas volunteers even the lowest paid, such as gap year students, Peace Corps workers, and VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) volunteers, receive allowances that equal or exceed most local salaries. It is clear to Kenyan and Tanzanian observers that these predominately white, relatively wealthy volunteers gain material benefits, professional contacts, and relevant work experience from volunteering. Such motivations are similar to those of the local volunteers, who hope that voluntary labor could leverage employment possibilities, contacts, and other opportunities. However, what differentiates the motivations of local volunteers in both countries is their strong desire to make an explicit contribution to the work of national development.

The second important change is that the development sector, including the nongovernmental sector, has become progressively institutionalized as part of the state apparatus through attempts to scale up and harmonize development interventions. The rise of the governance agenda in international development, along with narratives of country ownership through poverty reduction strategies, has altered development relations (Craig & Porter 2006; Harrison 2004). Contemporary developmental visions are ones of "partnership" with the state that assume the potential for the state to emerge as "strengthened" by such interventions (Abrahamsen 2004; Gould 2005; Mercer 2003). Development agencies are likely to have their offices alongside or even within government buildings, in marked contrast to an earlier period when nongovernmental agencies were seen as a more efficient conduit for resource distribution compared to corrupt and inefficient states (Harvey 2005; Hearn 1998). This trend stands in direct contrast to the situation in northern countries, where neoliberal reform is shifting the provision of social services in the opposite direction: away from government agencies and to NGOs and voluntary organizations (Lacey & Ilcan 2006; Milligan & Conradson 2006). In East Africa, models of contracting and partnership have on the contrary *extended* the reach and influence of the state as governments gain more influence and control over the delivery of basic services (Brown 2015).

For these reasons, it can be difficult to distinguish between governmental and nongovernmental sectors (and not simply because the engagements of nongovernmental actors can themselves be understood, broadly speaking, as "governmental" or "statelike," as some have argued; see Li 2007; Trouillot 2001; see also Hulme & Edwards 1996; Lewis 2010). An effect of this, as evident in the example from Kenya, is that the state is empowered to demand the rationalization of development initiatives as an effect of incorporating discrete nongovernmental projects into sector specific nationally owned programs. This may imply the formal incorporation of community projects within national and regional development architectures structured on models of verticality in which communities are the lowest tier of development impact (Ferguson and Gupta 2002). Volunteers play a key role here in representing community as beneficiary and hence delineating community engagement (Mercer & Green 2013). Consequently, volunteer roles are becoming increasingly formalized as official positions within the organization of development. Volunteer labor is recognized as professional work but remains differentiated from paid employment.

Formalizing Community Health Work in Western Kenya

This section draws upon ethnographic fieldwork carried out by Hannah Brown between 2005–7 and in 2011 and draws attention to similarities and differences in the organization of community health interventions through voluntary labor across these two periods. The earlier fieldwork involved work with 'Kagot Development Group', a pseudonym for a community-based organization (CBO) in western Kenya whose members had been trained as community health workers to provide home-based care to people with HIV/AIDS (See Brown 2010). This group of mainly older women performed this voluntary labor as an extension of their domestic duties, with their suitability as volunteers in development projects naturalized by their gendered roles in their own families and communities. The project was typical of community focused health interventions of this period (see e.g. Brown 2013; Kaler & Watkins 2001; Kalofonos 2014; Lehmann & Sanders 2007).[6] The group was funded intermittently by nongovernmental and international governmental organizations and the women received a range of small "incentives" for their work, such as travel reimbursement, bicycles, and food donations.[7] By the time of the second period of fieldwork in 2011, when Brown worked with a group of District level health managers, the Kenyan Ministry of Health was in the process of implementing its 2006 Community Strategy for Primary Health Care. The new strategy standardized the work of community health workers, and incorporated them within health systems as a link between communities and formal health services (see Kenya Ministry of Health 2006).

The Community Strategy amounted to a rationalization of the NGO activities in the region. For the previous twenty years various NGOs had coordinated and funded numerous community health and development projects that were geographically patchy and characterized by both an overlap of activities and gaps in provision. The new strategy was not a move to a system of state organized welfare, and it did not have a great deal of state funding allocated to it. Rather, district health managers were encouraged to approach nongovernmental organizations to support different aspects of the program, such as training the community health workers, paying their stipend, and providing chalkboards for the community information systems and other equipment that were part of the program. Health managers viewed the new community strategy as the opportunity to have a managerial overview of community-based health activities and to streamline the activities of a range of different nongovernmental organizations and development partners through standardized provision to all citizens,

The reorganization of NGO activities by the Ministries of Health created new kinds of opportunities for volunteers who were integral to this vertical model as links between communities and health facilities. Although this formalization mostly excluded the older, less educated women who previously had featured prominently among volunteer workers, many of the ideas about the kind of person who should do volunteering resembled those of older projects. Examining the assumptions around what kind of a person was viewed as suitable to work as a volunteer across the two periods helps reveal the increasing professionalization of voluntary labor in development. For, example, the stipend that was part of the new initiative was framed as a "token" rather than a "salary," and reproduced ideals of selflessness and dedication that had been prominent in earlier projects. Selflessness and dedication were even presented as character requirements for prospective Community Health Workers in the national strategy document; "the selection criteria for those to be trained as CORPs [Community Health Workers] should include literacy in the local language, along with respectability in the community and a 'good heart'" (Ministry of Health 2006: 29). However, the size of the stipend and the regularity of its payment

meant that community health workers in the new model essentially became "paid volunteers".

The new Strategy also worked much more overtly on some additional aspects of self, in particular the educated or literate self and social standing. In a government implementation meeting attended by the first author in office of the District Public Health Officer (July, 2011), representatives from the provincial and national offices of the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation emphasized that community health workers needed to be literate enough to fill in the necessary records and reporting forms. In line with constitutional requirements, District Managers were also told to ensure gender equity (a ratio of at least 30:70) and geographical equity—not all participants should be from the same village. Finally, the senior official emphasized that volunteers should not have "low social standing" or lack a reasonable income, because this could stop them from becoming involved in community issues.

These concerns with social standing had not been so prominent in earlier projects. Leaders of women's and community groups were indeed often economically successful and prosperous people, but this was not necessarily true of those people who joined groups under their leadership, who were largely responsible for community-based activities such as home visits. In fact, the line between community health workers and those whom they served was often very blurred, a characteristic that was sometimes seen as valuable by development organizations keen to work with people whom they could imagine as being "close" to the community. Literacy and educational achievement had certainly created divisions among the group of women whom Brown worked with in 2006. Those who were better educated were more likely to be selected to receive formal training as community health workers (and were therefore also first in line for further training opportunities and other resources when they became available), while others were considered "just members of the support group". However, for these women respectability in the community was seen as something that one *gained* through doing community health work, rather than as a prerequisite for such activities. Opportunities for voluntary labor were not tied so starkly to preexisting social standing and economic prosperity. The new community strategy placed far greater emphasis on the economic and educational status of prospective volunteers. As one health manager put it, "community health workers should be role models in health and development" (Fieldnotes, May 2011).

In terms of the ways in which these two iterations of community health intervention worked on the self , their 'governmentality' (Foucault 2002 [1978]; Rose 1999 [1989]) was therefore in some respects very similar. They promoted similar kinds of internal characteristics (the 'good heart') and valued particular forms of individual status, like educational achievement. Nonetheless, differences emerged under the new regime through the requirement for aptitude in certain kinds of professional activity – notably the compilation of reports – which excluded some who had previously volunteered on these kinds of projects. Also, because much the new initiative entailed clearer links to resources of state and the politics of local government, 'old' Community Health workers now had to compete for these roles with a new set of younger, better educated people, including a greater number of men. Furthermore, because Community Health Workers were competitively selected at public meetings (*baraza*) their appointment often required the support of community members with political influence in the area.

In terms of the opportunities available for volunteer work, then, the new Community Strategy excluded some people who might have found positions in the

past. For those who did succeed in finding volunteer work, opportunities for later paid employment in the NGO sector—and for an improved financial status—did exist, though with limitations. Volunteering allowed people to accumulate a range of forms of capital, including forms of social, material, and relational capital (Bourdieu 1984). This could sometimes lead to new opportunities, but very few people were able to convert their experience into secure paid employment. One woman who was a key research participant in Brown's fieldwork in 2006 was a volunteer in a newly open HIV/AIDS Patient Support Centre where she received an allowance of KSh50 a day (approximately U.S.$0.7 at the time of fieldwork. Since then she has since built on this experience and carved out a fairly successful career in the HIV sector. Most volunteers did not make the transformation to paid labor but instead professionalized their volunteer work to position themselves better to access future volunteering positions.[8]

Making oneself available for paid voluntary opportunities also required ongoing work on the formation of a professional identity. In one striking attempt to demonstrate such professionalism, the volunteer leader of a group of Community Health Workers called a meeting at the District Hospital where Brown carried out fieldwork in 2011, and handed out a letter directing community health workers to "make close home visits and advise those households who do not have latrines in their homes to make an immediate action". His letter carefully replicated the style and tone of Kenyan government documents—including through a self-created filing code. The informant had typed and printed the instructions at his own expense at an Internet cafe in the nearby town. He also made other personal investments to promote his professional identity, including purchasing his own megaphone, which he used to deliver health messages at community meetings. Positioning himself as a professional working as a community-based extension of state-managed development structures and projects his self-promotion helped him to develop a professional volunteering identity. This literally paid off, as he was selected for a number of different paid and voluntary opportunities within the health sector and able to access a regular income. Unlike the older women who worked in the AIDS support sector, his voluntary labor was based around a set of professional skills which included a range of bureaucratic competencies. His membership of the local community was not irrelevant to his success, but it was not the most pertinent factor. What was more important was the expertise he demonstrated in managing the networks and relationships with what constituted "community" as imagined in development architectures through liaison with government and NGO officials.

Although volunteering opened up opportunities for regular income for some people, these were fragile and unreliable. One informant commented of her stipend of KSh2000 (at the time approximately U.S.$28), "Two thousand shillings a month! What can I do with that? That one is still a voluntary work!" Meanwhile, in the district where the 2011 fieldwork was carried out, the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation had not managed to secure funding to support the payment of the stipend at all, and was rolling out the new Community Strategy with the stipulation that the stipend was still "in the pipeline," pending the outcome of ongoing discussions with a range of development partners. In this sense, things were not dissimilar from older regimes, where many people had undertaken voluntary work in the hope that this would open avenues for future employment, or for access to fringe benefits such as training courses and material incentives like bicycles. The benefits of formal employment remain far out of reach for most community health workers, and regardless of whether one regards KSh2000 a month as a stipend or a salary, it is less

than half of Kenya's minimum wage. Volunteering in rural Kenya has become a professional situation constituted by its peripheral relationship to the sectors of formal employment and development.

Volunteers and Civil Society in Tanzania

In Tanzania, as in Kenya, volunteers play a role in the health sector as liaison members of communities in public health programs. Outside the health sector, as also is the case in Kenya, they also make up the core cadre of the expanding civil society sector of NGOs and CBOs that have come to play a contracted role in donor-funded development (see also Prince, this volume). This role is not the delivery of specialized expertise or skilled work in a particular development zone of operation, nor is it tied to a particular sector of government activity such as health or agriculture. It is essentially one of professional situation. Small-scale district-based NGOs and CBOs are now contracted to enact a situated relation between a development program and the communities which are the objects of intervention. In these scenarios of community responsibilization in which communities are simultaneously objects and subjects of development the role of the volunteer is to enable communities to become development actors within the parameters set by a program through sensitization, awareness raising, and participation in planned activities. In these arrangements the volunteer is no longer a member of the targeted community but the holder of a formal position linking the object of development with the implementers of an intervention.

In Tanzania, as in Kenya, the conception of nongovernmental organizations as "voluntary" associations and the work within them as "volunteering" arises partly from the historical connections between the voluntary sector and civil society, and the association of community development in East Africa with voluntary engagement (see, e.g., Hunter this volume). This association also conveys the idea of work that is not formally remunerated. This does not imply that work is not compensated with cash or other benefits, material or otherwise, but rather that a salary is not paid. The idea of salary implies an ongoing relationship between employee and employer, associated with long term and substantial benefits such as paid leave, end of service payments, and pensions, in addition to a wage (Anders 2009; Miller 2006; Rizzo & Wuyts 2013). Therefore, even where volunteers derive some payment for their work, occasionally amounting to the equivalent of a monthly salary, they are likely to maintain that they a do not receive a salary and are therefore volunteering (Green 2012; Olivier de Sardan 2009).

The association between working in the community through nongovernmental organizations and volunteering is accentuated by the proliferation of the number of small-scale, donor-funded NGO and community organizations in rural districts of the country. These were designed initially to promote local civil society activities and eventually to support the role of civil society in ensuring the accountability of public spending. These NGOs focus onchanging the culture and capabilities of communities in support of various sector initiatives. A myriad of small-scale organizations that registered as CBOs and NGOs in response to specific funding opportunities in particular sectors now compete against each other for contract funding to engage in a range of accountability and sensitization activities. This context of competition for contracts is key to understanding the status of the volunteer, who in practice is an individual associated with a small-scale NGO but is not remunerated, either because the organization does not have a current contract or because the existing funded

projects do not have a budget line for payments to staff other than allowances.[9] Volunteers expect to receive allowances (*posho*) for participation in trainings and capacity-building activities, and for activities in villages they undertake in their capacity as volunteers, but this payment differs from the salary associated with long-term formal-sector employment and also from *kibarua*, the daily rates paid for unskilled casual labor. Such allowances and *per diem* are in fact a common feature of the development and civil service sectors in East Africa, paid not only to those who are officially considered as volunteers but also across government department and development programs to staff, government personnel, and consultants as recognition of their taking time to participate in development activities (Søreide, et al. 2012). Therefore, *posho* payment is prestigious rather than demeaning, associated with official status and professionalism. Rates of allowance vary according to a person's status and seniority. A villager involved in a participatory training may receive a meal and the equivalent of a couple of dollars in compensation. A senior official, in contrast, could expect to receive at least thirty times as much for each day they are engaged in the activity, in addition to their monthly salary. As a daily payment *posho* is often much higher than the rate for casual labor. Even for low status officials and the unwaged, work that is remunerated in this way is much more prestigious than daily casual labor.

Development volunteers in small civil society organizations thus make themselves available to be recipients of *posho* should financing permit, but their ultimate objective is for their organization to be awarded contracts to undertake civil society activities and hence to move from the periphery to formal inclusion in the work of development. For some this leads to a move away from volunteer status to formal employment. However, because opportunities are limited and contract values (except for the largest organizations) are generally low, most continue to occupy an ambiguous position as professional volunteers, paid through allowances for their roles as intermediaries between government agency and community beneficiaries in the hierarchical architecture of internationally financed development.

This situation is clearly visible in Tanzanian rural districts, especially those adjacent to regional centers that have a number of large-scale NGOs and development programs that are likely to require small-scale implementers for community activities. In Magu district, near Tanzania's second biggest city, Mwanza, numerous small-scale NGOs have been created by social entrepreneurs, many of whom have some experience of local government or of working as project staff in previous NGO community development projects. These organizations have generally been formed through close engagement with larger, often international, NGOs seeking to build local civil society organizations. This international connection, along with requirements of NGO legislation in Tanzania and the general standardization of capacity building initiatives, has led to some consistent features of these operations, including a name that is easily rendered as an acronym and displayed on a bright signboard, an explicit mission, residency in a small office, and the employment of a few committed volunteers who assume the key roles of treasurer, secretary, and chairperson (Green 2012; Mercer & Green 2013; Green, Mercer & Mesaki 2012).

In this competitive context, where nongovernmental organizations compete for contracts, the fate of the volunteers is closely tied to that of their organization. They therefore tend to not to seek alternative situations as volunteers within similarly placed organizations. The trajectory of volunteer success is to be involved in a successful organization, that is one which is contracted to be involved in activities on behalf of higher tier organizations. Depending on the level of inclusion, and hence

the value of the contract, a volunteer can hope to move towards better remunerated volunteering through higher or longer term allowances. In some instances where an organization acquires several contracts and becomes in effect a private development contracting business there is the possibility of actual, if short term, employment. Few organizations attain this status. In 2009 Magu was home to around sixty registered civil society organizations, of which the majority had been formed as offshoots of larger operations. Although originally developed as projects within specific sectors—dealing, for example, with health or the environment—these small newly autonomous organizations had to orient themselves towards the short term funding which could support their quest for sustainability through demonstrating sufficient flexibility to work to the differing agendas of various funders (Watkins & Swidler 2013). These organizations, and the volunteers who ran them, existed in a state of limbo , waiting for the opportunities to receive funding to engage in community activities across all sectors, whether a program was addressing AIDS, vulnerable children or the environment. The volunteers interviewed as part of the research in Magu perceived their role in civil society organizations to be working with, not being members of, communities. Volunteering was a formal role constitutive of civil society work. Like district civil society organizations, operating at the margins of large scale development programs, volunteers occupy an interstitial and insecure space between beneficiaries and funders.

Conclusion: The Changing Structure of Volunteering in the New East Africa Economy

These two examples shed light upon changing forms of voluntary labor in relation to development architectures in Kenya and Tanzania. A key difference between the two cases is that the Kenya Ministry of Health interventions are top-down and regard the community as one "level" within vertical models of public health intervention, while in Tanzanian civil society NGOs the volunteers themselves develop these understandings of community as a means to situate themselves in positions from which they can engage with development. Furthermore, the volunteers whom we described in Kenya are more strategically mobile, moving between different volunteering opportunities, whereas in Tanzania volunteers' success is tied to the success of the organizations to which they are affiliated and is mediated through personal and clientelistic relationships to larger organizations. However, what links the two examples is an aspiration to professionalization, and more specifically, a move from volunteering as a situated member of a community to a professional situation in relation to communities. These new spaces of professionalized volunteering do not require the volunteer to be embedded in the community in the same way as in the past. Communities are still expected to contribute cash or labour to development through *harambee* or "participation," but volunteering has assumed a special status in development as a kind of work for the few who can position themselves in the interstitial space between community and development organizations.

In the early postcolonial period in East Africa there was a clear trajectory linking educational success and employment opportunity. In contemporary Kenya and Tanzania, people continue to seek education as a way to position themselves favorably in a changing labor market, and volunteer positions are one source of education and training for future employment in the NGO sector. They also allow people to situate themselves on the peripheries of development projects from where

they can learn the specialized administrative and technical processes that constitute contemporary development interventions. From these peripheral positions, volunteers aim to develop professional identities which offer possibilities of joining new communties of practice (cf. Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998), but because opportunities for paid employment in the formal labor market are limited, they are also contributing to an expanding and increasingly professionalized volunteering sector. In Kenya young educated people position themselves within grass roots organizations while officials working in Tanzanian rural districts may seek to establish their own civil society organizations in anticipation of opportunities of professional engagement through future development interventions (Green 2012).

As in other settings (see, e.g., Ong 1999; Sennett 1998) the emergence of new economies in East Africa is characterized by short-term contracts, insecurity, and "flexibility." In rural (and urban) East Africa, it is very common to move in and out of periods of paid employment and training, and people frequently search for diverse sources of income simultaneously—for example, by investing in small-scale businesses alongside formal employment. Development interventions and the contracting of international aid agencies constitute significant and tangible economic opportunities for some members of the rural middle class and for educated young people, including those who find it difficult to access the formal labor market because they lack contacts or experience, but they are not a secure alternative to formal employment. This is partly because of the transitory nature of development projects, but also because of the position occupied by volunteers as the liaison between these projects and the recipient communities. Thus they occupy a position that is inherently scripted as subaltern in relation to broader labor opportunities and employment stability within development architectures.

Nigel Thrift (2000) has argued that emerging economic forms in the West involve forms of doing business which are changing subjectivities, encouraging people to take on new subject positions in relation to the changing spaces of action and embodied possibilities that become visible and available to them within new economic orders. Following Thrift, we suggest that similar changes are taking place within an East African 'ecology of labor', shaped by the intersection of social practice, spaces of opportunity, and a growing understanding of the self as an embodied resource that can be molded to improve labor opportunities and outcomes by the adoption of particular kinds of comportment. As Sennet (1998) argued of flexible working habits among white-collar US business people in the 1990s, and as in du Gay's (2007) work on organization and identity which argues that different forms of selfhood are 'made up' in relation to changing organizational and economic contexts, what we see in volunteering practices in East Africa are new processes of self formation which respond to the changing material architectures of labor opportunities, in this instance shaped by the widespread influence of development interventions. Positioning oneself as an appropriate candidate for employment within these changing contexts requires ongoing work on the self.[10] In rural East Africa, this work is made visible in dress and bodily comportment, ongoing professional development, and changing employment aspirations.

What is at stake in these transformations is not simply the emergence of new labor markets which generate particular kinds of exclusion and opportunity, but changes in the constitution of work itself that relate to the form of people's engagements within new global economies (e.g. see Jones 2008; 2011; Rabinow 2005). Volunteers in the public health support and civil society sector in Kenya and Tanzania make themselves open to the acquisition of tacit and practical knowledge

which is useful in negotiating opportunity within the shifting global economies within which their labor is embedded. An increased focus upon skills and professional development within volunteering opportunities for development organizations in East Africa is part of broad processes of professionalization and personal development which extend beyond the economies of development itself (Smith and Laurie 2011). These processes cannot be understood from the perspective of local cultural forms alone; they are part of new institutional cultures being created in relation to development investments and institutions in East Africa. In this sense, volunteer labor in development can be considered to be what Jones (2008) termed 'global work'; work which is partly shaped by transnational and global-scale relationships. Current forms of voluntary work therefore tune our attention more generally towards the changing economy of work within East Africa and to its multiple spatial registers.

For Kenyan and Tanzania nationals, as for their northern counterparts, volunteering is a site where notions of citizenship informed by understandings of benevolence and the potential of action for the greater good intersect with the desire for professional development. Volunteering is not simply a step towards paid employment but a way of demonstrating moral purpose and commitment to improvement. An effect of this is that the national volunteers in Kenya and Tanzania whom we describe in this article develop new forms of personhood in ways which reinforce visions of difference and inequality inherent in developmental architectures (cf. Junghans 2001; Smith and Laurie 2011). The notion of 'community' lies at the heart of this, within a 'politics of virtue' (Mindry 2001) that constitutes community members as worthy recipients of development funding and allows those who volunteer to achieve forms of relative status that are constituted by the interstitial nature of their position and the connotations of self-sacrifice that accompany their labor. At the intersection of development imaginaries and the performance of new professional identities through practices of volunteering, community itself has become a category with which one can have a professional relationship.

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Notes

1. deleted
2. As a comparison, in 1978 the number of nonchurch foreign NGOs and local NGOs in Kenya numbered less than 100 (see Fowler 1991).
3. The ten house or ten cell system in Tanzania was a way of organsing sub villages for the development initiatives of the socialist state under Julius Nyerere, Groups of ten houses within villages were organized under a leader, who had a seat in the village council. The village council (also known as village government) was integrated into the organization of the Tanzanian state through the organizational tiers of ward, represented by a councilor, the district and the region.
4. Logical frameworks are planning tools used in development which enable project planners to delineate potential relations between inputs to a project and what a project produces (outputs) which are believed to lead to the project purpose. The logical framework approach is described in some detail in Green (2003).
5. We thank the anonymous reviewers who suggested that we consider the relationship between national and international volunteers.
6. Their work was distinct from the more formal voluntary work done by people within health facilities (who were also often referred to as “community health workers”) whose duties included a range of unskilled and semi-skilled tasks, such as cleaning, counting out pills, and counseling and who were compensated with a small daily allowance collected from patient user-fees.
7. Typically these incentives were quite small: enough food to cook two or three meals for their family or enough money to purchase 2 kgs of sugar.
8. This resembles the situation that Birgitte Bruun (2011) has described in relation to clinical trials in Zambia.
9. Part of the explanation for the delayed or withheld funding was the doctrine of “sustainability” in development work, which assumes that empowered communities will lead their own development and which values training above resource provision. See Swidler and Watkins (2009).
10. This is similar to the argument that Margaret Frye (2012) makes about aspirations for educational achievement in Malawi.