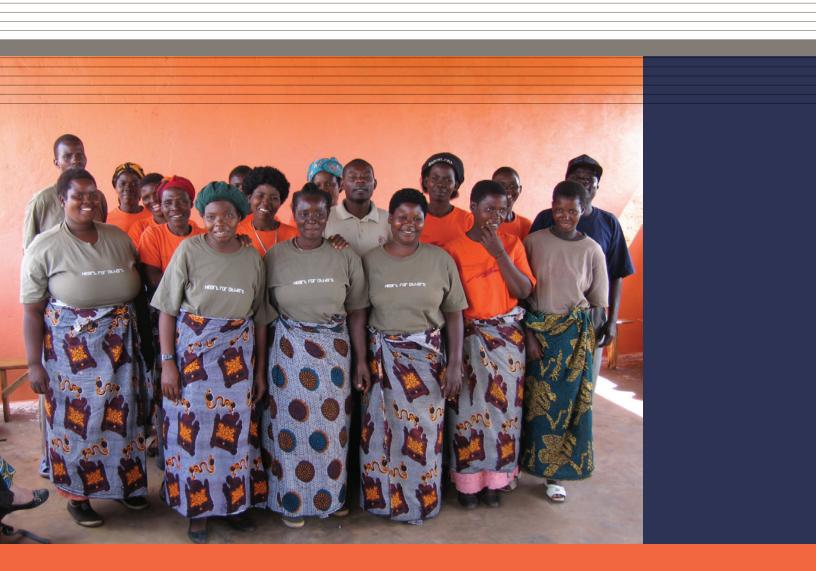**B** | Global Economy
and Development
at BROOKINGS

VOLUNTEERING AND CIVIC SERVICE IN THREE AFRICAN REGIONS

Contributions to Regional Integration, Youth Development and Peace

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INTRODUCTION

In December 2011, the United Nations State of the World's Volunteering Report was released at the U.N. headquarters in New York along with a General Assembly resolution championing the role of volunteer action in peacebuilding and development. The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Program report states that:

> *The contribution of volunteerism to development is particularly striking in the context of sustainable livelihoods and value-based notions of wellbeing. Contrary to common perceptions, the income poor are as likely to volunteer as those who are not poor. In doing so, they realize their assets, which include knowledge, skills and social networks, for the benefit of themselves, their families and their communities…Moreover, volunteering can reduce the social exclusion that is often the result of poverty, marginalization and other forms of inequality… There is mounting evidence that volunteer engagement promotes the civic values and social cohesion which mitigate violent conflict at all stages and that it even fosters reconciliation in post-conflict situations. …*[1]

The "South Africa Conference on Volunteer Action for Development" convened in Johannesburg in October 2011, and the July 2012 "Africa Conference on Volunteer Action for Peace and Development" co-hosted with the Kenya's Ministry of East African Community,

the United Nations and partners in Nairobi give further evidence to the rise of and potential for volunteer service to impact development and conflict. Indeed, in the aftermath of the 2011 Arab Spring, youth volunteer service and empowerment have emerged as a pivotal idea in deliberations aimed at fostering greater regional cohesion and development.

In "Foresight Africa: Top Priorities for the Continent in 2012," Mwangi S. Kimenyi and Stephen N. Karingi note that: "One of the most important pillars in determining whether the positive prospects for Africa will be realized is success in regional integration… This year is a crucial one for Africa's regional integration project and actions by governments, regional organizations and the international community will be critical in determining the course of the continent's development for many years to come."[2]

The authors note the expected completion of a tripartite regional free trade agreement by 2014 and the expected boost to intra-African trade, resulting in an expanded market of 26 African countries (representing more than half of the region's economic output and population). At the same time, the declaration from the "South Africa Conference on Volunteer Action for Development" calls on "Governments of Southern African member states and other stakeholders to

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incorporate volunteering in their deliberations from Rio +20 and to recognize the transformational power as well as economic and social value of volunteering in achieving national development goals and regional priorities, which can be achieved by facilitating the creation of an enabling environment for volunteering to support, protect and empower volunteers."This speaks directly to the urgent need to factor the social dimension into the regional integration agenda in the different African subregions.

This paper includes examples of the growth of volunteer service as a form of social capital that enhances cohesion and integration across three regions: southern, western, and eastern Africa. It further highlights civil society best practices and policy recommendations for increased volunteering in efforts to ensure positive peace, health, youth skills, assets and employment outcomes.

The importance of volunteering to development has been noted in recent United Nations consultations on the Rio+20 convening on sustainable development and the post-2015 development framework.[3] As the U.N. reviews its Millennium Development Goals (MDG) process, Africa's regional service initiatives offer vital lessons and strategies to further achieve the MDGs by December 2015, and to chart the way forward on the post-2015 development framework.

But how does volunteerism and civic service play out in sub-Saharan Africa? What are its institutional and non-institutional expressions? What are the benefits or impacts of volunteerism and civic service in society? Our specific purpose here is to provide evidence of the different manifestations and models of service, impact areas and range of issues in three African regions. In responding to these questions, this analysis incorporates data and observations from southern, western and eastern Africa.

In conclusion, we provide further collective insights and recommendations for the roles of the Africa Union and regional economic communities (RECs), youth, the international community, the private sector and civil society aimed at ensuring that volunteerism delivers on its promise and potential for impact on regional integration, youth development and peace.

VOLUNTEERING AND CIVIC SERVICE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Southern African communities, like many other developing societies, face numerous development challenges that include but are not limited to general poverty, underdevelopment, poor or fragile economic, political and resource governance, environmental degradation, health, peace and security, and fragile social systems. These challenges are compounded by a dearth of economic resources and poor service delivery by the states in the region. In light of this, the very survival of most communities in the region depends heavily on the ability of citizens to supplement state efforts in confronting these challenges.

The literature on volunteerism in the region[4] identifies numerous ways through which citizens' agency has manifested in supplementing state capacity in Southern Africa. The starting point is an acknowledgement that prior to the advent of modern nation-states and the organization of service delivery and development, citizens in Southern African communities have always voluntarily organized themselves either formally or informally to help one another in times of need, but also in celebrations that are widespread in the region. As such, volunteerism arguably forms the basis of social organization. While aware of the dangers of instrumentalizing volunteer programs as the panacea for addressing the pervasive socio-economic and political malaise in the region, we contend that the contributions of volunteerism to development have been either underestimated or largely undocumented in the region. Below we offer evidence to demonstrate some of the benefits that volunteerism and civic service offer.

Manifestations of volunteering and civic service in Southern Africa

In Southern Africa, volunteering has both formal and informal manifestations. In defining formal and informal volunteering, there is a tendency to concentrate on western contexts that may not necessarily capture the Southern African realities. We argue that any definition of formal and informal volunteerism should capture extended families and kinships, which are a major form of associational life. Loosely defined, formal volunteering in the Southern African context demonstrates stronger features of being programmatically structured and may include the provision of stipends. Informal volunteering may display features of regularity, but rarely involves stipends and springs from cultural and community-based imperatives.

Community-based informal volunteering

Comparatively, informal volunteerism is more widespread in Southern African communities than formal volunteerism. The key reason is the African philosophy of "Ubuntu"[5], which is central to traditional African culture in the south. Translated as 'I am because we are', "Ubuntu" is an expression of the interdependence of individuals and communities. Its meaning produces the conditions for the manifestation of informal volunteering in Southern African communities as they respond to challenges and opportunities in livelihoods, health provision, disasters, education and governance.

In Southern Africa, most forms of informal volunteering are characterized by the volunteers and recipients having similar socio-economic backgrounds (e.g. ethnic identity, socio-economic class etc.). As such, the poor serve the poor.[6] In this case, informal volunteerism manifests mainly as mutual aid and support, without the volunteer receiving a stipend, which debunks the myth that only economi-

cally well-off people volunteer. One of the most significant manifestations of informal volunteering in the contemporary context was South Africa's internal struggle against Apartheid. While the United Democratic Front and underground structures of the African National Congress constituted significant organizational centers in South Africa, mass involvement was required to bring the Apartheid regime to its knees, and this rested on the mobilization of millions of volunteers throughout communities across South Africa.

Local formal volunteering and service

The manifestation of formal volunteer and service programs in the region is most evident through nongovernmental organizations and national service schemes. Here, volunteer energy is channeled through voluntary community organizations.[7] Volunteerism is the backbone of civil society organizations throughout the world and Southern Africa is no exception.

In formal contexts, volunteers join local organizations or are placed in organizations that address community concerns. Recent research conducted by Volunteering and Service Enquiry South Africa[8] found evidence in Mozambique and Tanzania of local volunteers functioning as founders, stakeholders and short-term volunteers who are critical to institution-building and service provision in poor communities. Moreover, others volunteer in boards or steering committees of nongovernmental or community-based organizations, or even as activists. There are many benefits to this model of volunteering, which are detailed in the section below.

The largest civic service programs in Southern African countries tend to focus on youth and are run by governments sometimes with the involvement of private sector and civil society organizations. In a context of high youth unemployment and inadequate secondary school completion, however, youth service

programs face a tension between retaining a focus on service with skills development (thereby strengthening active citizenship and the employability of participants) and keeping young people 'busy', ostensibly in the name of service. Regrettably, in some countries (such as Zimbabwe), the national youth service program has been co-opted for narrow political ends and young people have been used to intimidate citizens ahead of and during elections.[9] However, the South African National Youth Service uses a hybrid model, which delivers the program through a range of different agencies including government departments and civil society organizations. Run by the National Youth Development Agency, the program has the potential to offer young people from many different backgrounds the opportunity to serve and to meet their need for civic participation in different ways. The hybrid program model may also make it less susceptible to co-optation for partisan ends.

North-south volunteering model

North-south voluntary service occurs when volunteers from northern developed countries are placed in communities in the south and are usually supported by stipends. The international volunteers are supposedly tasked with a 'capacity building' role as opposed to engaging in a reciprocal learning journey. A recent VOSESA study in Tanzania and Mozambique[10] notes some positive contributions made by north-south volunteers such as skills transfer, innovations and service provision for the receiving organizations and communities in Southern Africa. It also reveals the complexity of these relationships due to the geopolitical power imbalances involved in this model. Specifically, the 'supply-driven' nature of international voluntary service skews the relationship between sending and host organizations, and typically results in host organizations not receiving the skills they need for their own advancement. This is particularly evident in the case of programs that

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send young Europeans straight from school into a voluntary service experience, with the risk that they derive greater benefit from the experience than the host communities and organizations they are meant to serve.[11]

South-south volunteering model

Here, volunteers from one developed country volunteer in another developing country. A recent study by VOSESA noted this is an increasing phenomenon in the field of international volunteerism.[12] Organizations like Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO), Canada World Youth, Southern Africa Trust, Score and FK Norway among others, have launched or support various forms of south-to-south volunteering. This model prioritizes the goals of building effective working partnerships by pairing young volunteers and linking various civil society organizations in different countries. The program is based in a strong commitment to reciprocity in promoting the value of volunteerism as well as developing skills among youth, communities and organizations. This model offers real possibilities for building solidarity across southern and eastern African communities.

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERISM AND CIVIC SERVICE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Contributions to sustainable livelihoods and wellbeing

The term 'livelihoods' covers a range of activities that contribute towards 'making a living', improving quality of life and enhancing self-reliance. These include education (skills training and capacity building), health and social networks.[13]

Volunteerism in Southern Africa contributes to sustainable livelihoods in multiple ways including in education, health and building capability assets (knowledge, skills and social networks). Such benefits accrue to volunteers as well as their families and communities, and are critical in increased access to formal employment. For example, an assessment of the loveLife groundBREAKER program in South Africa, conducted in 2007 by VOSESA, showed that following a year's service as peer educators, the young people who served as groundBREAKERS were significantly more likely to access additional education, training or employment than the national average among their peers.[14]

In health, Southern Africa is one of the regions hardest hit by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The management of HIV/AIDS has relied heavily on community volunteers who have been the backbone of responses and coping mechanisms.[15] The responses vary from provision of care (for example ensuring the infected take their medicine) and psychosocial support, to advocacy on behalf of orphans and vulnerable children. This includes establishing day care centers, crèches and child-minding facilities for children, as well as acting as peer educators that reach out to communities in rural and urban areas, as has been demonstrated in Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania.[16]

Very often, home and community-based care initiatives take the form of self-help or mutual aid, while

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most programs initiated by governments and NGOs intervene in communities by working with local community-based volunteer self-help groups. Many NGOs and community-based initiatives at the grassroots level, or more widely at local and national levels, aim to tap volunteer energy in responding to the pandemic. Consequently, the role of volunteers in managing diseases is not confined to HIV/AIDS, but has spread to general primary health care in the most countries in the region. In Malawi for instance, volunteers are key players in providing primary health care. These examples demonstrate the practical contributions and the power of volunteerism in these communities. There is also evidence from South Africa that young people serving in the Community Aids Response organization registered with the National Youth Service were encouraged to develop their knowledge and skills in healthcare during and following their year of service. In this way, youth service was instrumental in placing these young people on a career path that strongly influenced their prospects for mobility and sustainable livelihoods.[17]

A recent VOSESA study[18] documents how volunteering and hosting volunteers from neighboring countries in a youth exchange program has contributed to learning and skills development in agriculture, cooking and language development as well as increasing participants' knowledge of development challenges and introducing them to new ways of addressing these. Such skills acquisition and knowledge development influenced the career and continuing education choices not

only of the volunteers, but also of the children in the communities in which the volunteers served.

Volunteer engagement, social inclusion and cohesion
Southern African communities face a number of challenges relating to violent conflict and civil unrest, which reflect tensions between the traditional and the modern forms of life. Despite a great deal of progress towards values such as tolerance and trust, an increasingly atomized modern life has led to the disintegration of cohesive communities, which in turn sometimes leads to conflict. Conflict over control of political resources (such as in Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo) has ignited and fueled social and civil strife of varying magnitudes. Factors ranging from allegations of a stolen vote and dictatorship in Zimbabwe, to a civil war in the DRC have produced a breakdown in these countries, prompting millions to flee their homes and seek refuge in neighboring countries. This in turn has produced serious manifestations of xenophobia in South Africa.[19] The mosaic of civil unrests and violent conflicts reflects a sense of inadequacy in existing socio-political institutions, which lack the mechanisms to deal effectively with competing interests and genuine grievances centered on growing inequality, exclusion and isolation, and thus fail to promote social cohesion.

There is growing evidence supporting the claim that volunteerism has the potential to contribute to easing inter-communal and intra-communal tensions and violent conflict. VOSESA's study of the volunteer response to the xenophobic attacks in poor South African communities in 2008[20] demonstrated that there were different types of volunteer responses and that through volunteering, people both inside and outside the affected communities were able to articulate their opposition to the attacks and express solidarity with individuals and affected groups. The nature of the various volunteer responses also demonstrated the real need for cooperation to mobilize sustained support for foreign nationals who were

under attack and to call for the South African state to take a stronger stance against xenophobia. In this way the volunteer response of the 2008 violence sent an important message about the need to build a society that is cohesive and connected by combating social exclusion, teaching civic values and encouraging democratic engagement.

Volunteerism has played a role in promoting social cohesion as well as been a source of community strength, resilience and solidarity. Important factors that contribute to building harmonious societies collectively committed to finding solutions to shared problems include social capital, trust (faith in others and the social systems in which individuals operate), reciprocity, self-help/mutual aid, tolerance, public spiritedness, a sense of belonging, willingness to cooperate and work together at all levels of society to achieve collective goals, and civic participation.[21] Social capital creates bonding ties, which provide a form of security where other forms are non-existent or lacking. As the 2005 Commission for Africa Report observes:

> *Social networks … form much of the social capital without which many African communities could not function. For many people, their primary loyalty remains with the family, clan, tribe or other social networks, including, increasingly, religious groups. Africa's strength lies in these networks. Africans survive—and some prosper—in the face of low incomes and few formal economy jobs. … To an outsider, the complexity and opacity of many networks may be perceived as a form of anarchy. In reality, there is structure. Often it is self-organization, for example in the local organizations of farmers, women and students. In all cases, the networks demonstrate that people will respond to and get involved in activities where they can see purpose and direction. Just as these networks can fill gaps where the central state fails, they have the potential to act as building blocks in the struggle to build effective states.[22]*

Volunteerism also helps fight exclusion by leveraging inclusive participation of the entire population, despite gender or other factors. For instance, in largely patriarchal African societies, African women have been key in creating a sense of hope in conflict situations. Examples from Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo[23] also suggest that women have played an important role in post-war situations, in mobilizing resources and recreating a sense of community. These actions demonstrate volunteerism helps bring to light ignored but pressing issues in society. It also offers avenues to mediate competing interests in society.

However, even within volunteerism certain groups can be marginalized. For example, while community-based volunteering enhances the capacity of families and communities to secure affordable care, a key weakness in the health sector throughout Southern African are volunteer health workers. Nearly 80 percent of volunteers giving home and community-based care are women and girls[24] who are working in dire conditions. Their activities are unregulated, there are virtually no legal frameworks that protect their rights, and VSO's Regional AIDS Initiative of Southern Africa (VSO-RAISA) has found that many organizations neglect their responsibilities and obligations towards their volunteers. "The volunteers are unrecognized, overwhelmed by work, psychologically burdened by others' problems and inadequately supported."[25] This highlights the importance of efforts by leaders such as the Honorable Ephraim Kayembe, member of parliament in Malawi, who seek to involve larger numbers of young men in community-based health care, but also points to the need for constructive policy frameworks that can support and protect these volunteers.

Because volunteerism teaches people the values of participation, it also enhances democratic engagement. Specifically, volunteering teaches people how to be good responsible citizens and schools them in

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the art of democratic involvement. Over the last decade, some Southern African societies in Zimbabwe and Democratic Republic of Congo have continuously witnessed polarization in electoral politics. This is caused by politicians who exploit different identities to serve specific group interests to the exclusion of others. Politicians in many African countries use youth as political gangs to intimidate rival groups during political campaigns. As noted above, the so-called 'green bombers' in the Zimbabwe national youth service are an example and points to the importance of trust in institutions to mediate political conflicts in society.

Significantly for the Southern African region, research shows that volunteerism can be used to create a sense of belonging. The World Bank notes that "social cohesion manifests in individuals who are willing and able to work together to address common needs, overcome constraints and consider diverse interests. They are able to resolve differences in a civil, non-confrontational way."[26] Inclusion promotes equal access to opportunities, and removes both formal and informal barriers to participation. A sense of belonging in Southern African countries is a benefit produced by volunteerism, especially through its informal manifestations and increased intergenerational connectedness. When young people and older people engage in local activities, volunteering bridges the generations so they can learn from one another and enhance mutual understanding. VOSESA's study on youth volunteering exchange models in the region (cited above) helps amplify this point. Specifically, multi-generational friend-

ships across borders were built between youths and the older people who hosted them. This has created a sense identity either as Southern Africans or eastern Africans, which in turn is likely to facilitate the political project of regional integration.

Volunteerism helps create these bridging forms of social capital when people of diverse backgrounds reach out to others outside their own ethnic, religious or party affiliations. This occurs especially when societal structures offer opportunities outside of people's ethnic or communal vicinities. Enhanced social cohesion and the reduction of societal pressure and tensions that would otherwise have destructive social consequences are some of the benefits that can accrue through such engagement. As noted above, in some cases rising xenophobic tensions in South Africa have been managed mainly through the volunteer spirit.[27]

POLICY IMPLICATIONS FROM THE SOUTHERN AFRICA EXPERIENCE

From the evidence cited above, it is clear that volunteering and civic service is deeply entrenched in Southern African societies, has universal value in the region and can function as a pillar of development. However, the value of informal and more formalized forms of voluntary service needs to be recognized in the civic-mindedness and social cohesion of women and men at all levels of society, including youth.

Furthermore, as reflected in the declaration adopted by the "Southern African Conference on Volunteer

Action for Development" there is an urgent need to foreground voluntary service as one manifestation of the social domain of regional integration in Southern Africa. This calls for investment in 'new' models of community-centered development, including widening the participation of youth in regional south-south volunteer service programs.

Both these imperatives depend on building and supporting the development of local infrastructure to scale-up local volunteering within countries and increase south-south programs. These have clear advantages for reciprocity and mutual learning, and can foster goals for social cohesion, building regional integration, identity and development. Governments and other stakeholders (regional integration bodies, NGOs, western donor countries, private corporations) should contribute to increasing the prevalence and effectiveness of in-country and cross-border programs that can support long-term partnerships and produce far greater returns in terms of peace, social cohesion and sustained development. This calls for cross-sectoral collaboration around policy frameworks to ensure such opportunities for scaling-up voluntary service, particularly intergenerational programs, can improve the prospects of youth as active citizens in the southern African region.

Furthermore, scaling-up HIV and AIDS services in community and home-based care programs requires a fundamentally new approach to health and volunteer policy that will recognize the rights of care providers (who are primarily women) and create a supportive environment in which their contribution is mainstreamed and they are acknowledged and respected for the quality care they provide.

WEST AFRICA: A BRIEF SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

In recent years, service advocacy has intensified across West Africa. Specifically in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Cote d'Ivoire—countries still recovering from protracted civil wars—the idea of national service has been a strongly moot vehicle of national reconciliation and a way of alleviating impossibly high rates of youth unemployment.[28] On the other hand, in countries where national youth service has been a longstanding part of the social architecture, there has been a marked uptick in efforts to reimagine it and make it more relevant to their emergent needs. Nigeria and Ghana fall within the latter category.

Discussions on the situations in both categories of countries are inevitably framed against a global and regional backcloth of mounting pressure on the state, increased agitation for political liberalization by a resurgent civil society, runaway youth unemployment, overall exclusion from vital political and policy processes and transnational migration, both within and away from the subregion.

In October 2011, Leymah Gbowee and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberian social justice advocate and incumbent president respectively, were announced as the year's joint winners (together with Yemen's pro-democracy campaigner, Tawakkol Karman) of the coveted Nobel Peace Prize. For developments watchers in West Africa, the announcement was a reminder of the proud contribution made by women to the attainment of peace in Liberia. More instructively, it was a timely recognition of the fact that, across the subregion generally, women have been at the forefront of efforts to rein in political authoritarianism and expand space for popular involvement in politics. We offer this particular illustration in order to make the point that, contrary to its reputation for political turmoil—one

that, admittedly, the wars in Liberia (1989–1996), Sierra Leone (1991–2002), and Cote d'Ivoire (2002–2007; continuing skirmishes) may have helped to solidify—it may be more rewarding to see the west African subregion as a rapidly transforming arena of radical political ebullience and competitiveness in which different social forces are in contention for visibility and supremacy.

Seen through this lens, one is able to divide the subregion's recent history into two distinct epochs. The first epoch started in late 1989 with the onset of a war between the Charles Taylor-led National Patriotic Front of Liberia and the Liberian state under Samuel Kenyon Doe. In retrospect, the Liberian conflict was the spark for a regional 'time of troubles,' which continued in Sierra Leone and has been bookended by the lingering crisis in Cote d'Ivoire. The second epoch started deep in the womb of the first, characterized by an eruption of civic energy seen first in mobilization for conflict resolution, and second in continued popular involvement in efforts aimed at peace building and national integration.

NATIONAL SERVICE FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND CIVIC RESTORATION: LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE

Liberia and Sierra Leone feature prominently in ongoing policy discussions on national civic service in West Africa. The situation in both countries is remarkably similar. Both absorbed extraordinary damage as a result of prolonged conflict, with much of the formal economy and physical infrastructure virtually decimated. Among other things, this has resulted in rampant criminality and staggering levels of youth unemployment. In Sierra Leone for example, nearly half a million young people (out of a total

population of 5.6 million) are without any kind of gainful unemployment.[29] In Liberia, more than 75 percent of an estimated 3.4 million people are thought to eke out a living on less than a dollar a day. Accordingly, both countries have been involved in various initiatives aimed primarily at creating employment opportunities, and, in the long run, inculcating a sense of civic pride and citizenship.

It is arguably in recognition of the dire situation of young people in the country that the government of Sierra Leone established a National Youth Commission in December 2009. Speaking at the official launch of the commission in November 2011, Sierra Leone's President, Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma underscored the theme of youth unemployment by acknowledging that the commission will be "pivotal in promoting employability amongst young people."[30] Since 2011, the National Youth Commission has been mulling over a proposal for a National Youth Service scheme. No doubt partly inspired by examples from other parts of the subregion, especially Nigeria, the proposed scheme is imagined as a complement to other initiatives broadly geared towards manpower training and skills acquisition, improving social intercourse among young people from different parts of the country, training personnel for rural development, and forging a sense of national consciousness.

Liberia has gone one step further in putting in place a National Youth Volunteer Service (NYVS). Established in June 2007 with the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the government of Liberia and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), NYVS aims to "engage the services of youth to voluntarily contribute their time and services to the reconstruction and development of Liberia".[31] The scheme also enjoys the support of the United Nations Volunteers. Participants in the NYVS are university graduates. They undergo a one-month period of training before their deployment to the rural parts of the country where they are expected to provide much needed support in healthcare and education, among other vital needs. The first batch of volunteers was deployed in 2008.

Although it is still too early to assess the Liberian scheme and while its counterpart in Sierra Leone remains in gestation, the omens for the idea of national service in West Africa are encouraging indeed. From these two examples, we can see the beginnings of a potentially groundbreaking conversation on the role of young people across the subregion in national development. Furthermore, developments in both countries offer some hope that politicians, policymakers and development activists in West Africa may be ready to embrace a view of young people as 'makers' rather than 'breakers'. Finally, Liberia and Sierra Leone provide additional material for the longstanding debate in the civic service literature on service for purely utilitarian reasons versus service for the advancement of social citizenship.

NATIONAL SERVICE UNDER PRESSURE: GHANA AND NIGERIA

Established in 1973, the national service schemes in Nigeria and Ghana have become models of widespread emulation for successive projects throughout West Africa and the rest of the continent. For example, The Gambia National Youth Service Scheme was established in January 1996 with technical assistance from the Nigerian National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). Currently approaching their 40th anniversary, both the NYSC and the Ghana National Service Scheme have drawn positive attention from outside Africa because of their longevity, focus on national integration, and relative success in mobilizing large numbers of young people. For example, an estimated 250,000 participants are 'handled' annually by the Nigerian National Youth Service Corps directorate.

The Ghanaian scheme has been hailed for its success in four key areas: encouraging the spirit of national service among Ghanaians; providing opportunities for partici-

pants to take part in urgently needed development initiatives, particularly in the areas of rural health and mass literacy; furnishing participants themselves with skills that might advance their personal and professional development; and finally "strengthening the bonds of common citizenship among Ghanaians."[32] Over the past few years, the scheme has paid greater attention to health delivery, especially in rural Ghana. Last year alone, a total 1,035 nurses and midwives were deployed to 229 health facilities across the country.[33] The Nigerian Youth Service Corps program has been similarly successful. For one, there appears to be a broad consensus that it has fulfilled a basic institutional objective of facilitating social integration in Nigeria.[34] More concretely, since its inception, the scheme has deployed thousands of corps members across the country to serve in a wide variety of sectors, including health, education, and the corporate and public sectors. One symbol of the program's success is the way in which the national year of service has become a permanent part of the post-graduation calendar in the country.

At the same time, challenges continue to mount for both the Ghana National Service Scheme and the National Youth Service Corps. According to a 2011 Nigerian Federal Ministry of Youth Development report[35] the NYSC faces several challenges, key among which are: overcrowding in training camps; security for corps members, particularly in the northern section of the country where the danger of violence due to religious fundamentalism is ever present; the increased rate of post-service unemployment, which means that corps members have no opportunity to hone the skills acquired whether in the university or during the service year; the apparent decline in the social prestige of the program; and persistent interference by 'big men' and 'big women' in the society to influence the posting of their children or relatives. In Ghana, the problem of apparent decline in social prestige would seem particularly poignant, given persistent reports of user agencies' abuse of servers.

ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

The picture of national service that emerges from the above is mixed. On the one hand, there is understandable headiness in Liberia and Sierra Leone about the prospects of national service. Contrarily, the experiences of Ghana and Nigeria, though largely successful, are nonetheless sobering. In Nigeria for instance, such is the level of frustration with the program that clamor for its abrogation has become increasingly audible, especially over the past decade or so. Such clamor, while often misguided, is not without its uses, and ought to be viewed as a challenge to rethink the fundamental idea of service in the subregion and the protocols undergirding individual programs. We offer two substantive proposals, and here we are not necessarily responding to the problems associated with individual service schemes. Instead, our objective is to reflect more broadly about the idea of service and the modalities for its institutionalization.

First, it is important that service and service-learning be incorporated into the school curriculum in West African countries at all levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. This will go a long way in addressing the obvious disadvantage in the current situation whereby institutionalized service tends to be regarded as an isolated post-graduation performance, which is promptly cast aside as soon as the service year is over.

Second, the transnational nature of the socio-economic challenges facing West African countries demands a transnational solution. Transnational solutions are impossible in the absence of citizens with a transnational imagination. Establishment of a West African National Youth Service Corps with the symbolic goal of producing regionally-oriented West African citizens is proposed. This will be a marked departure from the country-based focus of existing national service programs. The hope is that, in time, nationals of various West African countries will start seeing themselves as West African citizens.

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY CONTEXT

East African culture has long been home to traditions of community volunteerism and mutual help. In Kiswahili, the tradition of "harambee" ("let us all pull together") became the founding credo of the new Kenyan nation after independence in 1963. Community traditions of mutual help are strongly represented in local education, health care, waste management, agriculture and other initiatives. Swahili also embodies the African tradition of interconnectedness in "mtu ni watu" ("a person is because of other people"). [36]

Rwanda's civic tradition of "umuganda" ("pillar" or "essential support") has been utilized as a mantra for its national service schemes advanced by President Paul Kagame. In Tanzania, founding President Julius Nyerere's brand of national socialism, "ujamaa", while failing in its forcible use of centralized economic controls, nonetheless succeeded in fostering a strong trans-tribal national identity with heavy reliance on African traditions of family and community mutual help.

The East African Community (EAC) was revived in 2000 by regional political leaders with added impetus from the East African Business Council led by its founding chair Dr. Manu Chandaria. Participating countries include Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, with EAC headquarters located in Arusha, Tanzania.

In 2008, the EAC joined together with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) to further the proposition of an African Free Trade Zone from "Cape Town to Cairo" comprising 26 nations from the tripartite block.

In Ocotober 2011, East Africa News noted that many observers have noticed the need for greater buy-in from regional citizen stakeholders including the bulging youth population to achieve the aims of regional cohesion. Concerns over certain member states' "foot dragging" and perceived fears and discrimination across borders in issues such as immigration and property ownership have been frequently cited.

Trust among people from diverse cultures in cross-border trade and regional integration can be enhanced through increased regional social capital from youth engagement in innovative civic service across borders. In November 2010, this proposition received a significant boost in the Nairobi Declaration of the "Global Peace Convention" convened in Nairobi. Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga were the patrons of the convention and associated youth volunteerism programs supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and various agencies together with the Global Peace Festival Foundation and participants from 40 nations. In his welcome address, President Kibaki strongly endorsed the formation of an East Africa Peace Service Corps across borders.

Along with its deeply rooted cultural traditions of mutual aid, East Africa has served as a global convening hub for service in part due to the presence of two United Nations world headquarters, UN-HABITAT and U.N. Environment Programme in Nairobi. This rich environment for regional service in East Africa has led to a number of innovative south-south and south-north initiatives. These have notably included Canada World Youth supported volunteering exchanges between Kenyan and Tanzanian communities; FK Norway and VSO programming across the region; and Kenya Global Peace Youth Corps Rift Val-

ley Peace Initiatives partnering with East African and Korean volunteers.

The potential exists to utilize regional economic community youth and civil society service initiatives to strengthen a pan-African youth service movement. The Africa Union Commission Youth Volunteer Corps was launched by the AU in Abuja, Nigeria in December 2010 with a pre-service training. The idea of a pan-African corps was inspired by the African Youth Charter Article 11(h)31(k). Volunteers receive a $500 monthly stipend for service of one-two years. Initially the Corps trained 205 youth participants from 36 African nations and diaspora (55 were deployed as of 2011 in projects in areas such as education, peacebuilding, health and agriculture, with demand exceeding available volunteers, including 1,000 requested by South Sudan alone).[37]

A VOSESA study on cross-border volunteering among youths engaged in Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO) in Kenya and UVIKUITA in Tanzania, supported by Canada World Youth, found significant effects of service in building youth social capital for regional cohesion. Volunteers between the ages of 18 and 24 were hosted by families in the counterpart host country for six months. A Kenyan volunteer stated on return from Tanzania:

> If you remember, in 2007 we fought in Kenya along tribal lines…We do not want this to happen again. The program helps us interact with other people from different areas and different cultures. This way, you get to understand that other people too have a right to live their own way of life the way he/she sees it necessary. And when you come back to Kenya you start seeing things beyond tribal demarcations…

The report further states:

> Both programs also have impacts on host communities with regard to knowledge/learning, attitudes and values, friendships across borders, skills, career studies, and local and regional action. For volunteers, the programs registered impacts on attitudes towards host country, knowledge of development issues, knowledge of host country, and the development of communication, organizational and technical skills… The most cited impact is friends across borders. This is a positive outcome for the development of regional identity. In addition, the exchange programs seem to be stimulating new conceptions of civic service in the two regions.[38]

NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHEMES

The creation of the Kenya National Youth Service by parliament in 1964 was the second major national service scheme in Africa (preceded by Zambia in 1963 and followed by Nigeria's massive National Youth Service Corps creation in 1973). The Kenya National Youth Service is operated as a division of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports as a 24-month program (age limit of 22).

Kenya's adoption of its first post-colonial new constitution in 2010 has become a pivotal rallying point for en-

THE POTENTIAL EXISTS to utilize regional economic community youth and civil society service initiatives to strengthen a pan-African youth service movement.

hanced youth civic engagement including volunteerism supported by Brand Kenya, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, and the National Integration and Social Cohesion Commission. Kenya's Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport has developed a three-year National Volunteering Scheme with pivotal financial and strategic support from VSO Jitolee. A Kenya National Volunteer Policy is under development by the Ministry of Youth and Sports along with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development and other actors.

The National Volunteer Network Trust (NAVNET) is a local volunteer center equipping Kenyans in national development activities through volunteerism, including joint efforts with VSO Jitolee, Red Cross-Crescent, Ufadhili Trust and St. John among others. In 2011 NAVNET and the International Association of Volunteer Effort (IAVE) collaborated in hosting a conference to take stock of volunteer practices in the region. NAVNET is also working to establish new volunteer centers in other East African nations as well as in Zimbabwe and South Sudan.

Along with NAVNET, the Volunteer Involving Organizations Network since 2004 has worked to engage the government in advancing volunteerism, building member capacity and promoting networking and exchange of best practices. The Kenya Red Cross is among the largest volunteering movements with 70,000 volunteers in 64 branches engaged in a range of areas including disaster relief, water and health services. [39]

Kenya has a robust corporate social responsibility climate with regional companies like Comcraft Group, Kenya Commercial Bank, Safaricom, Standard Charter Bank, Equity Bank, IBM and Nation Media Group playing pivotal roles. CISCO has played a marked role in advancing the use of social technologies by the nonprofit volunteering sector including use of its Tele-presence for volunteer sector convening. Other international firms such as General Electric have actively partnered with the Red Cross in projects such as homebuilding in the Burnt Forest since 2009 following the post-election violence.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame has given particular attention to developing a national culture of service to address the U.N. Millennium Development Goals. Today, it is manifested by community work in a national day of service taking place the last Saturday of each month (roads and businesses are closed during this half-day mandatory, national service period). Hutu-Tutsi cooperation is facilitated in cross-ethnic service initiatives ranging from street cleaning to agricultural work and housing. While the president's "Umuganda" campaign has had its critics as a state directed scheme, it has in fact helped to make Rwanda one of the cleanest countries in the region.

In 2009, President Kagame welcomed American Peace Corps volunteers back into the country, following a fifteen-year hiatus since the 1994 genocide. Kagame ensured that the American volunteers were exposed to Rwandan civic traditions such as "Umuganda" and the vital role of the family in Africa, as a "broad and all-encompassing concept, that an entire generation treats the next as its own children." He further emphasized that a proper focus of development is "not only in terms of capital, budgets and head counts," but places equal focus on "relationships between peoples who have a passion to learn from one another…. (and) to see the exchange of values and ideas as the way to build the competencies of our people, and to create a prosperous nation." [40]

Village Health Teams
The U.N. State of the World's Volunteering Report documents the use of cell phones in Rwanda by health care workers in rural villages who link pregnant women with sources of available healthcare and professional support, with significant impact reported in reducing maternal deaths.

In Uganda, a potential new health service corps that works together with professionals to equip community health teams with expanded lifesaving preventive methods has received attention through a unique quasi-experimental initiative. Omnimed and Makerere University have teamed up with the Ministry of Health and Peace Corps to demonstrate the outcomes of community health volunteers doing preventive work in basic hygiene practice and malaria eradication. Over the past two years 40 U.S. medical volunteers, including Peace Corps and Omnimed health practitioners, have trained over 700 Village Health Team personnel.

As guided by Dr. Ed O'Neil, Omnimed founder, each health team works in basic hygiene and malaria education with 25–30 households in a catchment of over 100,000 people through regular home visits. Preliminary data from Omnimed indicate a 140 percent increase in both hand-washing stations and dish-drying racks, and a 15 percent increase in ITN (malaria bed net) usage in the first year with projected increased performance in the second year.[41]

Youth Livelihoods and Skills Development

In a forthcoming paper, Ben Lough and Margaret Sherraden of Washington University's Center for Social Development have assembled research noting the role of volunteering as a "launch pad for future employment through building of human capital including work competencies, contacts and professional experience." They note that in the Gambia, Cape Verde, Lesotho, Zambia and Malawi, youth volunteer programs have given the participants access to microcredit, mentorship for environmental projects, knowledge for savings and personal finance plans in partnership with banks, and other entrepreneurial skills boosting self-sufficiency. This builds on the work of Michael Sherraden over the past two decades since the publication of the landmark "Assets and the Poor" work (1991), which has become the basis for wide implementation of individual development ac-

count (matched-savings) schemes for education, entrepreneurship and homeownership. The new Lough-Sherraden research builds on this global experimentation to suggest provision of longer-term financial incentives for youth savings accounts for entrepreneurship and education, which could be done together with banks currently sponsoring microcredit programs.[42]

An asset-based demonstration in Kenya supported by Postal Bank, Kenya Institute for Public Policy and Research Analysis (KIPPRA) and the Center for Social Development, along with innovative micro-credit programs of Kenya Commercial Bank, Standard Bank, Equity Bank, Safaricom and the National Youth Trust, could provide starting points for policymakers to assess potential for scale-up linking youth service, entrepreneurship and asset accumulation. The re-launch this year of Kazi Kwa Vijana by the prime minister and World Bank presents an opportunity to support this scale-up in national policy.

In "Civic Service Worldwide: Impacts and Inquiry," Ebenezer Obadare notes, "The idea of national service (in postcolonial Africa) emerged… as a way to stem the unhealthy rural-urban drift, impart useful skills in the bourgeoning youth populations, and provide temporary employment for the increasing number of high school graduates."

Obadare further suggests that the more than three-decade-old Nigerian National Youth Service Corps has important lessons for a structured youth corps, which also helped shape the newly formed Africa Union Youth Service Corps. These lessons include the importance of character standards and a "service-citizenship nexus" in the "project of enlightened patriotism." Noting the pitfalls Nigeria experienced (including rapid growth coupled with inadequate funding, as well as ethnic and inter-religious challenges) Obadare cautions against a "misplaced hope

that national service might provide a panacea for the multiple ills of the different societies." [43]

Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding

Since mapping the post-election violence and spurring volunteer peace actions in Kenya's hot spots in 2008, the Kenya-based Ushahidi movement has empowered volunteers with mobile communications technology in other areas, including mapping and monitoring outbreaks of diseases.

The town of Molo in the Rift Valley was an epicenter of the post-election violence in Kenya in 2008. Two schools that were burnt down in the outlying area have since been rebuilt on a cross-tribal basis by philanthropist Dr. Manu Chandaria. Today the Mutate schools have become a hub of regional and international volunteering activities by East African and Korean youth together with the Global Peace Youth Corps and the Peace Cops (community policing) initiative of the Administration Police. In a unique partnership between the Kurosoi-Molo (KURMOL) cross-tribal youth organization, Peace Cops, Global Peace Festival Foundation Kenya, and the District Commissioner of Molo, cross-tribal youth character education, service, sports and peacebuilding programs were launched in 2010. Agencies including the National Integration and Social Cohesion Commission, Brand Kenya and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports are working to scale up such youth-based service and education initiatives across the country to prevent a repeat of previous election related violence.

Dr. Mwangi Kimenyi, director of Brookings Africa Growth Initiative and the founding director of Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis and researcher Irene Kimenyi conducted a baseline assessment of the intervention with KURMOL youth in Molo, Kurosoi and Burnt Forrest by GPF Foundation and Peace Cops. Youth interviews and interactions with youth interveners from formerly warring Kikuyu and Kaelingin

tribal groups in the area, the Administration Police and other stakeholders provided evidence that the youths engaged in the cross-cultural service-oriented intervention "were much less suspicious of others and had come to trust members from other ethnic groups." [44]

SCALING UP YOUTH SERVICE THROUGHOUT THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

The July 2012 "Africa Conference on Volunteer Action for Peace and Development" (ACVAPD) builds on predecessor convenings to make the East Africa Peace Service Corps (EAPSC) a reality. A robust conference action plan was launched by stakeholders including the EAC Ministry of Kenya, UN-HABITAT and U.N. Volunteers, the East African Community Youth Organization and Global Peace Youth Corps, KENVO, Canada World Youth, FK Norway, Peace Corps, VSO, NAVNET, Washington University Center for Social Development, Comcraft Corporation, Kenya Commercial Bank, Safaricom, Bankers without Borders and other partners.

ACVAPD actions include forging public-private partnerships around volunteer action "development drivers" to achieve express outcomes in areas such as health, positive peace, youth skills, enterprise development and environmental service. Malawian parliament member Ephraim Kayembe is providing regional leadership along with Kenya's Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Peace Corps, JAICA, Global Heath Corps and Omnimed to support launch of regional health service corps.

An initial vision statement for the East Africa Peace Service Corps proposes: "An East Africa where volunteers work together to build peace by responding to social conflicts, inadequate health care, poverty and climate change. The East African nations of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, as well as Ethiopia and Sudan are taking a stand together for change through cross-border youth service."

An East Africa cross border service corps, following its recommendation in the Nairobi Declaration and recent convening with the East African Community Ministry, is proposed on three levels:

- Youth engagement partnerships that include the East African Community Youth Organization and regional youth volunteering organizations.

- A regional volunteering and NGO network across the East African Community and greater COMESA region, including build-up of national volunteer centers in each nation. This is being facilitated with the support of information technology partners including CISCO, NAVNET, Global Peace Connect and UN-HABITAT.

- Governmental ministries including Ministries of the East African Community, Youth Affairs and Sports, Gender, Children and Social Development, the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa and others as well as United Nations Volunteers, UNDP, UN-HABITAT and other organizations.

EAPSC TARGET AREAS

Environmental service and conservation. This includes initiatives of the Greenbelt Movement (founded by the late professor and Nobel laureate, Wangari Maathai) tree nurseries and youth entrepreneurship initiatives such as KENVO, and tree planting and waste management projects such as the Nairobi River Peace Initiative and Kariobangi Community-Driven Development, to foster achievements in national ground cover targets in "Green Kenya" and other EAC nations to address climate change.

Sustainable peace, conflict resolution and youth character competency programs. In collaboration with Ministries of Education, Youth and Sports, and National Integration and Social Cohesion, school and community-based grassroots interventions, as well as pilot education programs can wed innovative service learning, citizenship and

character competency initiatives empowering young leaders in peacebuilding.

Youth entrepreneurship, assets and workforce skills. Volunteering programs, youth policy schemes and entrepreneurial initiatives, such as Bankers without Borders, and the Chandaria Business Schools at U.S. International University and Kenyatta University can inculcate workforce skills and habits of entrepreneurship. Livelihood programs can be coupled with individual development accounts for youth asset development to finance micro-enterprises, homeownership and education. Lessons drawn from innovative success models will inform national replication and scale-up to boost youth livelihoods.

Health service initiatives addressing basic hygiene and malaria. Pilot initiatives by Omnimed, Makerere University and Peace Corps in Uganda, Global Health Corps, innovative community programs of the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical College and Kenya's Ministry of Health and Sanitation, coupled with Malawi's experience with basic hygiene models, can be adapted in a regional health service corps by equipping community health volunteers with support and training by health professionals.

The "Africa Conference on Volunteering Action for Peace and Development" represents the building of an informal regional networking process of service actors, governments, the private sector and international community. Convenings and symposia that optimize networks, best practices exchange, research and launching of public-private service action like those in Nairobi and Johannesburg could occur annually. This informal networking will in turn create a shared sense of national and regional identity and purpose within the volunteering movement for added sustainability.

From such beginnings, south-south, north-south and south-north informal alliances and partnerships can be developed. Youth oriented social media should play a

key role as the voice of young leaders and social entrepreneurs is positioned at the forefront.

EAPSC FORMALIZED ORGANIZATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

The 2012 ACVAPD conference in Nairobi has organized a representative stakeholder board and steering committee from East African sectoral players, with appropriate emphasis on local/regional leadership and youth engagement. From this starting point the representative group will form an ongoing oversight mechanism for more formal partnerships, joint projects, research and service activities across borders to further shape the East Africa Peace Service Corps

Regional economic communities such as EAC and COMESA can serve as formal partners by providing regional coordination across governments to enable civil society initiatives, and by promoting policy supports and joint research on cross-border impacts. RECs can also prove to be effective means of communicating policy recommendations and advocating for the localized youth corps at the Africa Union and United Nations levels.

International service corps such as FK Norway, Canada World Youth, U.S. Peace Corps, JAICA, KOICA and others can foster effective multilateral collaborations within the context of the REC and regionally established service networking mechanism(s). Donors are being asked to contribute to a start-up project seed fund to more fully operationalize and scale-up the East Africa Peace Service Corps as a regional model.

OVERALL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

We propose the actions below to the Africa Union, regional economic communities and national governments, youth service and civil society actors, international volunteering and donor organizations, corporate social responsibility and philanthropic foundations, and academic research sectors to advance the full potential of volunteering and service to further Africa's youth development, peace building, and regional integration agendas.

AFRICA UNION, NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES

- The U.N. State of the World's Volunteering Report and accompanying volunteer action resolutions adopted in December 2011 should be advanced and implemented by the unique contributions of the African region. As the MDG framework is reassessed for the post-2015 period, community-centered sustainable development presents a promising approach to tapping the full power and potential of volunteering. National development plans should increase attention and resources for community-centered engagement including volunteer action in updating their MDG strategies.

- The Africa position on a post-2015 sustainable development framework should be shaped and advanced in 2013 at the U.N. Millennium Development Goal Summit and include the unique contributions of volunteering and community-centered development. At the same time, as recommended in the Johannesburg Declaration of October 2011, the vision of a better society should be predicated not only on gross national product but on the wellbeing that stems from civic engagement embodied in Africa's traditions of service and mutual aid included in the values of Ubuntu, Harambee and Umuganda.

- Regional integration and service initiatives should incorporate youth volunteerism and citizen engagement as integral components of efforts to forge greater regional cohesion, peace and sustainable development objectives. The COMESA, SADC, and EAC tripartite efforts to substantiate the promise of an Africa Free Trade Zone should be buttressed by empowering young leaders in service and by forging stronger regional identities fostered by wider public participation in development. Furthermore, foregrounding voluntary service as one manifestation of the social domain of regional integration in Southern Africa calls for investment in 'new' models of community-centered development.

- Policymakers should examine what it would take to scale the East Africa Peace Service Corps model of cross-border exchange on a larger level of impact. Multilateral partners including UNV, Canada World Youth, FK Norway, JAICA, KOICA and U.S. Peace Corps could give vital support to the East African Community for the proposed East Africa Peace Service Corps alliance along with the steering committee of the "Africa Conference on Volunteer Action for Peace and Development." These initiatives need to be documented and effectively communicated to policy counterparts in the SADC and ECOWAS regions so as to foster a proliferation of regional youth volunteer exchange programs with shared learning and documentation of impacts.

- The transnational nature of the socio-economic challenges facing West African countries demands transnational solutions. A West African National Youth Service Corps should be organized within ECOWAS in partnership with civil society organizations with the goal of fostering regionally-oriented West African citizens. A regional postgraduate service exchange program should be encouraged along with incentives for entrepreneurship and asset accumulation among participants and host communities.

- The Africa Union's Youth Volunteer Corps should be strengthened and expanded with the partnerships, best practices and youth leadership derived from the "bottom up" in parallel initiatives in the regional economic communities cited above. A unique "pan-African peace service corps" can be shaped by African youth and partners that builds on the emerging East Africa Peace Service Corps and rich West African experience, the Johannesburg SADC regional convening and Nairobi "Volunteer Action for Peace and Development Conference," along with global momentum generated by the United Nations State of the World's Volunteer Report.

- Health service volunteer corps that empower community village health workers to supplement and expand basic health infrastructure by addressing hygiene, malaria eradication, maternal health and infant mortality risk factors should be scaled up together with pro bono medical and national research support. Furthermore, scaling up HIV and AIDS services in community and home-based care programs requires a fundamentally new approach to health and volunteer policy in order to recognize the rights of care providers (who are primarily women) and create a supportive environment in which their contribution is mainstreamed and they are acknowledged and respected for the quality care they provide.

- Service and service learning should be incorporated into the school curriculum at all levels—primary, secondary and tertiary.

- In addition, youth character competency initiatives being promoted by Kenya's Ministry of Youth and Sports, Brand Kenya, National Integration and Social Cohesion Commission and the Character Competency Council should be scaled-up and similarly incorporated in national service schemes.

CIVIC COALITION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- An African volunteer coalition of youth, civil society, volunteering and scholar consortiums, together with regional economic communities, parliamentarians and governments, should advance implementation of U.N. General Assembly volunteering resolutions and advocate for national and regional policies incorporating volunteering in development and peace.

- New forms of quality volunteering and empowerment should be escalated by connecting and engaging young people through information and communication technologies together with partners such as Safaricom, CISCO, Microsoft, IBM, U.N. Volunteers, UN-HABITAT and others.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Global service programs provided by international agencies and NGOs should shift from the "volunteer sending" model to a more reciprocal model. They should focus on building and supporting the development of local infrastructure to scale-up local volunteering within countries, and increase south-south programs that have clear advantages for reciprocity and mutual learning, and foster the goals for social cohesion, building of regional integration, identity and development.

- Governments and other stakeholders (regional integration bodies, NGOs, donor countries, private corporations) should contribute to increasing the prevalence and effective functioning of in-country as well as cross-border programs that can support long-term partnerships and produce far greater returns in terms of peace, social cohesion and sustained development. This calls for cross-sectoral collaboration around policy frameworks to ensure such opportunities for scaling-up volunteer service, particularly programs of an intergenerational nature, which can improve the prospects of youth as active citizens in the African region.

PRIVATE SECTOR

- Private sector support should be stepped up for volunteer action through collaborative corporate community partnerships (including employee volunteer-

ing) that recognize the interdependence between business and societies and leverage the unique value that companies can add to sustainable development.

- Private sector donors should pool initiatives with international donors to support seed funding for emerging Regional Economic Community service corps, research and pilot programs in east, west and Southern Africa, as well as across Arab Spring countries to the north.

- Volunteer financial incentives should be developed with the banking industry by linking service to asset accumulation through a program of individual development (matched) savings accounts for purposes of education, entrepreneurship and homeownership.

- Media partnerships should be engaged to give recognition to youths advancing effective volunteering practices and solutions to community problems and regional cohesion.

RESEARCH COMMUNITIES AND ACADEMIA

- National and regional universities and public policy think tanks should further assess the potential contributions of volunteering and service in the development of national policies relating to youth workforce skills, employment, community health, climate change, positive peace, and youth character, citizenship and leadership development.

- Higher education community service, civic engagement and research should be accelerated and integrated for increased scope, depth, visibility and impact so as to form a core component of knowledge production.

- Baseline studies of volunteering practices, forms and impacts should be commissioned by regional economic and academic institutions.

- The International Labor Organization Manual on Measurement of Volunteer Work should be utilized in national labor surveys to measure the economic value of volunteering.

- Donors and national agencies should invest in impact assessments and further research documenting the capacity building effects and end outcomes of volunteering in achieving development and social cohesion.

ENDNOTES

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16. See for example International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2003) Building Blocks: Africa-wide briefing notes. Resources for communities working with orphans and vulnerable children: Education. International HIV/AIDS Alliance. UK; International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2006) Building Blocks. Africa-wide briefing notes. International HIV/AIDS Alliance. UK. Available online at: http://www.crin.org/docs/young_children_and_HIV_FINAL_300107.pdf . The International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2003) for instance cites cases where there have been volunteer teachers who help pupils in many communities to study. In many instances, these are from the same profile as the recipient of the assistance. In Malawi, for instance, 'with support from Save the Children UK, villagers established a pre-school for young children, which provides play facilities, makes sure children get at least one good meal a day and integrates orphans and non-orphans. Children who attend do better when they go on to primary school. The village orphan care committee provides an allowance to pre-school teachers, the community contributes maize and groundnuts.'

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