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LOCALIZING YOUTH VOLUNTEER
DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICE
IN KENYA

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Any views expressed in this paper are those of the author. They should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of the Institute for Development Studies or of the University of Nairobi.

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ABSTRACT:

The report is based on interviews with Kenya National Youth Servicemen and Officers, Kenya Voluntary Development Association Volunteers and officials and representatives of International Student Movement for the United Nations (ISMUN) from Sweden, Ghana, Nigeria, Tunisia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Libya.

The central issue in this report is the question of the relevancy of the conventional youth programmes in Kenya and the question as to the degree of alien imported values, goals and aspirations being imparted to Kenya Youth by the International Voluntary Services (e.g. VSO, Peace Corps etc.) and the Kenyan foreign financed Voluntary Organisations.

The study shows that Kenyan youth programmes are not consistently evaluated against our developmental realities or aspirations and suggests that a massive re-orientation for most of our youth organisations is long over-due. This, it is suggested, could be done through dynamic leadership training and incentives system to attract local leaders, the development of a national level youth policy from which each youth organisation will derive its programmes and a re-orientation of youth activities to projects which make useful contribution to our developmental programmes, especially in the rural areas.

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INTRODUCTION

When one hears of a youth volunteer, one automatically thinks of a long haired, or miniskirted German, British or American involved in helping teach children in a primary school or teach farmers how to raise chickens in a remote rural area in Kenya. Or one may think of the overdisciplined national serviceman marching with a spade on his shoulder on a national parade day. Or further still, one may think of some ~~Christian~~ youth from the NCCK one met at a local market place helping the local people to make bricks for the local community hall. But one rarely asks the following questions:

- (1) Is voluntary service relevant to Kenya or is it of alien importation?
- (2) How do the youth in our universities and colleges, and those who are semi-literate and unemployed view voluntary service?
- (3) What are the various youth organizations in Kenya and what are their action programmes? How are they organized and what are the most effective leadership or management techniques which increase and sustain membership satisfaction, morale and volunteer - community rapport?

To answer some of these problems, we carried out a study of some of the Kenya Youth Programmes and also interviewed university students from all over Africa, who had come for a United Nations International Student Movement seminar at Limuru (ISMUN).

CATEGORIES OF RESPONDENTS INTERVIEWED

- (1) Kenya National Youth Servicemen and Officers - normally recruited among unemployed semiliterate rural youth on a Provincial quota basis.
- (2) Kenya Voluntary Development Association volunteers and officials - normally recruited from secondary schools and colleges for volunteer tasks in rural communities such as school classroom construction, etc.
- (3) ISMUN students from Sudan, Ghana, Nigeria, Tunisia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Liberia.

EVALUATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER

Among the university students and the KVDA respondents, there was a general feeling that volunteer service is fun. One meets other youth from other countries, one interacts with ones peers and learns to articulate ones ideas. Probed further to be more specific as to why volunteer service is useful to the individual and society at large, there was an obvious ambiguity about the level of contribution desirable to utilize available youth skills at an optimum. In an African context, there was a strong feeling that involvement in physical projects such as building construction, well digging etc. was useful. The reasons given ranged from personal training in physical endurance to helping local communities or demonstrating that university students can perform manual tasks. There was a general vague feeling that this kind of involvement helps in national development.

Pressed to be specific about the role of the international volunteer in this kind of volunteer activity, the youth expressed the following:-

- (a) Dissatisfaction with the one way traffic of youth from Europe and America to Africa without reciprocal Africa to Europe programmes.

The youth argued that the Euro-American youth volunteer does not qualify as an expert and normally gains more from the contact established here than the local people. Thus international youth volunteer service should be seen as a character development, educational programme and an exercise in friendly international relationships.

In this context then African youth should be invited to Europe and America just as Africa invites European and American youth to come to Africa. This assumes that in welcoming Euro-American youth volunteers, we are not importing technical aid or rare talents but a Euro-American presence.

- (b) They felt that since western countries train their youth to accept the belief and practice of delayed gratification of wants by keeping them unduly long in schools and colleges, volunteer service in the western context is a further manoeuvre to delay the youth in taking their role in society at large. This, it was felt, is only possible in an affluent economy where co-opting youth into society is at best a painful and gradual process, and where the economic circumstances of the youth and their families make it unnecessary to hurry the process. The African student on the other hand is a public investment by his immediate family, kinship or even his neighbourhood. He constitutes, for example in East Africa, that 1% of the total youth population which obtains university education, job security and a reasonable salary. He is educated at the sacrifice of his unfortunate brothers and is obligated to leave university as fast as possible and begin the responsible task of supporting his brothers etc.
- (c) The university students and KUTA volunteers felt that the uncritical copying of western youth values including long hair, torn clothes, revolt against the Establishment, free love, etc. results from a confusion among our youth of Euro-American ethnocentrism for cultural superiority, harmonious and progressive social values and effective social institutions. The way to introduce more critical introspection among our youth, the respondents felt, was to introduce a two way volunteer exchange programme where Euro-American youth and African youth would receive the desired cross-cultural exposure while participating in socially and economically useful volunteer projects.

IS VOLUNTARY SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY FOREIGN?

Service to the community per se is not alien to Kenya. But perhaps, service to a different people is new. To illustrate this point, we will discuss the forms of community services indigenous to East and Central Africa.

(a) Corporate Work Groups: "MWETHYA". This is a form of voluntary community based work whereby members of a community, organized into various groups such as kinship groups, age-sex groups, neighbourhood groups, etc. perform collective tasks. These tasks include general community tasks like bush clearing, weeding, house construction, etc. This form of voluntary community activity has been identified by researchers (Mbithi 1970, Mutiso 1971) as the base for Kenya's dynamic Harambee selfhelp activities which in 1967 generated \$ 5,700,000 worth of community projects.¹

The government report on Self Help states:

"The statistical facts presented in this narrative summary cannot convey the excitement and enthusiasm of the people themselves. The story of working together, of the detailed planning, of the hours and hours of manual work, given freely and joyfully, of collection of thousands of shillings from persons for whom every shilling represents a real sacrifice: statistics cannot give the true picture."¹

(b) Resource Pooling Groups:- "ielo". The term "ielo" is used for group help in kind where people pool together money, food, animals, ornaments or even furniture to help a general community cause. It takes two forms. The first kind is a form of a grant to the needy. This is the form through which communities have been able to send many promising students overseas for further studies. The writer has benefited from this form of community charity where his home community paid for some of his book and living allowance while in the United States.

The second form is a kind of non-interest loan to any needy member or community institution, payable to each contributing member in prescribed turns in periods arranged to coincide with good seasons.

1. See: Joint report by Department of Community Development and the Statistical Division, Ministry of Economic Planning. "The Output of Self Help Schemes", Nairobi 1967 (Mimeo).

Groups involved tend to be kinship age groups where voluntariness is meshed with kinship obligations and age-group solidarity. Thus, young married women of one clan will bring along firewood, thatch grass, water, etc. to the home of one of their members or to a community project and contribute a sum of K Shs. 1-4 each and give it to their "sister" or community chest for immediate use. The following weeks and months they would repeat the same procedure at the home of each of their members until each one had their turn. These are called in Ukambani 'Eitu ma Mbai' - (united girls of the clan). The contribution does not have to be in the form of money only. It can be eggs, a bunch of bananas or a measured quantity of grain.

Young school boys who may be organised as a neighbourhood group will pool money together on the same voluntary help principle for parties, especially Christmas parties and in some cases will pool money together for a village library or for sponsoring a local football team.

(c) Community Care: The principle of the extended family, the closely knit neighbourhood or the complicated kinship networks in Kenya have been criticised because they appear to serve the interests of the aged only ; 'old age security'. This system, it is argued, makes elaborate arrangement for inter-personal sibling and filial obligations which sap individual innovativeness and establish a system of blood-tie parasites, mainly the dependent aged,cripples, invalids and youth needing education, food and clothing.

The narrowness of this view is at once apparent. In developed countries where such elaborate systems of community norms exist, the plight of the aged has led to the concept of 'homes for the aged' and volunteer services aimed at alleviating the loneliness of the sick, aged or crippled. Elaborate national charity organizations, pension schemes and insurance and security organisations take care of these other problems. In a developing country, such measures would add to the strain on already

overstretched resources and the traditional mechanisms for solving these problems are unquestionably effective. In rural Kenya, suffering is present, but one does not meet abandoned old people, foot loose beggars and unaided sick. Communities organize work parties for the sick, e.g. weeding their fields, thatching their houses etc. The fear of the curse, closely tied to what western scholars call 'ancestor worship' makes it imperative that the comfort of the aged must vary in direct proportion to their creeping age and every blood relative is subject to a curse or difficult old age if he or she does not contribute to helping an aged relative.

WHAT IS FOREIGN ABOUT NON OR SEMI OBLIGATORY VOLUNTEER WORK

Scholars such as Talcott Parsons and Robert Redfield have identified a peculiar trait of predominantly rural people; that is they are more particularistic and less universalistic than urban people. Kenya, with a 90% rural population would according to their view demonstrate more particularistic traits. What this means is that, reality to the ordinary man is tangible and meaningful mainly within the confines of his immediate family, kinship network or neighbourhood. Therefore, one foreign aspect of modern volunteer service is its universalism. The idea that one should volunteer to help people one has never heard of or seen is an innovation. Secondly, the way one identifies needs and defines goals tends to be too abstract, and is not practical in a particularistic sense.

Nationalism is a major feature of modern developing countries and Kenya is no exception. Volunteer activities which are Kenya-centric are beginning to receive the same legitimacy and individual commitment as those which were traditionally community-centric. But modern volunteer services emphasise service to a World Community. Thus a VSO or a Peace Corpsman will have a choice of either working in Venezuela, Ivory Coast, or Taiwan whereas these choices will not normally occur to a Kenyan. Thus there is skepticism of the VSO or

Peace volunteer in Kenya. They lack in our view, a deep rooted commitment to 'people', to a community and are busy sowing the seeds of universalism and the universalistic power-value structure. This is often a disguised aspect of neocolonialism and an attempt to instil a value-allegiance - the bondage of people of the developing world to the super-powers who thrive on global political and economic ties. The problems of the mass society, where the span of appreciation of human values revolves around the hundred or so people one knows and the rest are a diffuse mass of humanity has not escaped the practical minded Kenyan. Therefore, the gospel that these VSO or Peace Corps Volunteers appreciate our human problems when the problems of the ghettos, urban slums, crime etc. abound in their home communities appears to a Kenyan as lacking in sincerity.

Thus one should not be surprised when the very useful services a foreign volunteer offers in Kenya are belittled and the volunteer taken for granted. Thus terms as 'these hippies in our rural communities', 'these young people with alien moral standards' should not be taken at face value. They hint at belly-deep skepticism and disbelief that one can volunteer two years of the most active and creative part of ones life to shovelling manure, suffering from attacks of the dread malaria, having frequent attacks of dysentery and earning \$ 70 a month, being abused by local intellectuals and still be sane or sincere.

A final alien aspect of voluntary service to the community is that it is a prerogative of the young. In fact community volunteer service in an indigenous context is a prerogative of everyone. As shown earlier the system of community division of labour tended to follow established institutional patterns - peer groups - which were age sets, age-sex sets, kinship sets, neighbourhood sets, etc. Involvement in community projects therefore could begin after circumcision or after initiation into a functional peer group to ones death bed.

KENYA'S YOUTH POLICY

Kenya has no overall coordinated youth policy. Rather her policy develops from what is created and practiced according to how we perceive our problems and needs.

Apart from the National Youth Service this youth policy is implemented through the development of Village Polytechnics and Youth Centres which in 1968 enrolled 14,280 youth on courses such as carpentry, masonry, tinsmithing, shoemaking, motor mechanics, signwriting, tanning and leathercraft, tailoring, rural woodcraft, etc.

The encouragement of voluntary bodies is again a part of implementing this policy where civic and character training to potential school drop outs or leavers is an important aspect of the programme.

The Government policy of 'return to the land', an appeal intended to arrest the rural to urban migration is implemented through youth training programmes such as the N.Y.S., 4K clubs, Young Farmers Clubs, and the K.V.D.A. where respect for manual work, the training for community leadership and the appreciation for rural life are deliberately highlighted in the nature and selection of project activity and involvement.

The major problem areas which seem to have guided the formulation of a national youth policy are:²

- (1) The gradual breakdown of tribal ways of living and traditional mechanisms of social control and socialization under the impact of western influence, leading to new forms of youth delinquency.

2. We are grateful for valuable information on youth policy supplied by Kenya Freedom From Hunger Committee, Kenya National Youth Council, Kenya Voluntary Development Association, National Youth Service Director and Kenya Association on Youth Centres.

- (2) Insufficient school facilities. A large number of children do not even start primary education due to shortage of schools. The drop out rate after primary education adds to the seriousness of this problem.³
- (3) Population increase leading to scarcity of land in many areas and breakdown in traditional homesteads, traditional security mechanisms which combined to (2) above lead to youth migration to urban centres.
- (4) The aftermath of the emergency some children grew up without parental control, guidance or discipline.
- (5) Rural and urban unemployment.

These and many other problem areas lead to a youth policy which emphasizes youth programmes within an institutional setting such as the National Youth Service Programme, the Kenya Youth Clubs programme, the Youth Hostels, homes etc. The main elements of youth policy in Kenya are highlighted by the following policy objectives.

- (1) To develop good citizenship among youths, teaching them services useful to the Community and handicrafts useful to them.
- (2) To provide and foster facilities for self education, general good fellowship among Kenyan youth of different ethnic background and develop a spirit of cooperation.
- (3) To develop appreciation of the dignity of manual work and respect for the manual worker and thus make the implementation of the return to the land policy possible.
- (4) To coordinate all youth activities in support of national development programmes while at the same time examining and protecting the welfare and interests of young people with respect to physical fitness, creative ability and freedom of choice.

3. In 1969 of the 150,647 pupils enrolled in standard seven (the highest stage in primary education in Kenya) only 46,528 joined secondary and secondary technical schools.

- (5) To recognize and harness the potentiality of the young people of Kenya in support of progressive and constructive development and to inspire the young people to participate in all relevant programmes.
- (6) To explore ways and means of expanding existing institutions which are presently engaged in protective and curative measures, such as the care of young people in need and the prevention of exploitation of young people in such fields as employment, education and training.
- (7) To explore ways and means of establishing new opportunities for young people which will offer protective and curative measures as described in (6) above.

Kenya youth policy being as broad as it is, obviously cannot be implemented through one type of organization such as the N.Y.S. Thus we have other youth institutions as shown in the next chapter such as Young Farmers Clubs, Youth Clubs, YMCA and YWCA, Youth Hostels, Boy Scouts etc.

STRUCTURE OF YOUTH PROGRAMMES IN KENYA

To understand fully the voluntary aspects of the Kenyan youth programme and the way Kenya implements her own youth policy we must first of all attempt an overall review of Kenyas Youth Programme. Kenya has about 30 youth organizations which are coordinated by the Youth Council of Kenya.

The Youth Council of Kenya

The Youth Council of Kenya was inaugurated in August 1969. Its two main objectives, as laid down in the constitution, are as follows:-

- (a) to provide a body which organizations, concerned directly with the interests of youth, can join for their mutual advantage.
- (b) to co-ordinate the work of these organizations.

The Youth Council's functions, therefore, are varied; it acts as a forum for youth movements and an information centre for all matters concerning youth.

Membership is invited from all Kenya youth organizations and other organizations, which whilst not being youth organizations are nevertheless concerned with the interests of youth. The Youth Council also has some individual members who wish to support the work of the Council and to take a part in its activities and meetings.

There are at present some thirty member organizations of the Council. They are:-

- Dr. Barnardo's Homes
- Child Welfare Society
- East Africa Women's League
- Federation of Kenya Employers
- 4 K Clubs
- Freedom From Hunger Committee
- Kenya Association of Youth Centres
- Kenya Boy Scouts Association
- Kenya Catholic Secretariat
- Kenya Girl Guides Association
- Kenya Red Cross Society
- Kenya United Nations Students Association
- Kenya Voluntary Development Association
- Kenya Y.M.C.A.
- Kenya Y.W.C.A.
- Kenya Youth Hostels Association
- Limuru Boys Centre
- National Christian Council of Kenya
- National School Feeding Council of Kenya
- National Youth Service
- Outward Bound Trust
- St. John's Ambulance Brigade

Jacaranda School

Salvation Army

Save the Children Fund

Sisters of Charity, Edelvale

Starehe Boys Centre

Young Farmers' Clubs

Young World Appeal Students Committee

Although it has no real powers, the Council can help to evolve and apply a youth policy for Kenya and has, in fact, in collaboration with the Youth World Appeal Committee of the Freedom From Hunger Committee, drawn up a draft youth policy which has been submitted to the appropriate government departments, but no reaction has been obtained from Government.

The Council is also the Standing Conference of Youth to the Kenya National Council of Social Services, which is sponsored by the Government. Thus it is a major vehicle for integrating youth activities and formulating youth policy. As yet, the Government does not have its own clear, all encompassing policy. However, Government involvement in youth is mainly through the National Youth Service, the Association of Youth Centres, 4K Clubs and Young Farmers' Clubs.

Kenya Association of Youth Centres

Practically the whole of the time of the National Youth Officer of the Community Development Department (Youth Activities) of the Ministry of Co-operatives and Social Services, is taken up by his duties as Chief Executive Officer and Secretary of the Kenya Association of Youth Centres. The range of activities has been extended to include the development of village polytechnics similar to those run by the N.C.C.K. There are at the present time some 180 Youth Centres catering for approximately 16,300 young people and about 16 village polytechnics with an enrolment of around 400. It is understood that the role of the village polytechnics is to be greatly extended in the present development

period and in certain cases Youth Centres will be converted into village polytechnics, which place far greater emphasis on vocational training than is given in the Youth Centre. Although some pupils of Youth Centres become qualified under the Trade Tests set by the Kenya Labour Department this is incidental to the main aims, which are:-

- (i) To produce individuals who have a sense of responsibility and of service to their fellows; who understand the working of the Government of their country, and can play their part as citizens and as voters; who have a command of manual skill sufficient to enable them to participate constructively in the development of the economy and the raising of the standard of living, particularly in rural areas.
- (ii) To bring a measure of interest, stability and discipline into the lives of the children of the poorest sections of the community.

4K Clubs

This is a national programme of agriculture extension work among young people, organised through decentralized groups on the lines of the American 4K Clubs. The clubs are independent but associated at the national level in a youth movement sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Launched in 1963 this programme developed very quickly, there are now more than 1,000 local clubs in 26 districts with a total of 26,000 members and 1,400 voluntary local leaders. A club usually has from 26 to 32 members. The age range is from 8 to 22 years organized in two age groups 9-16 years and 16-22 years.

While it is explicitly stated that 4K clubs are for all farm youth, the majority of clubs seem to be attached to a school or Youth Centre.

Youth Farmers' Clubs

This association has members in almost all the secondary schools. Its membership is therefore large. It organizes clubs in the schools

which provide instruction in the techniques of agricultural education - mostly at the weekend. The activities of these clubs are essentially the same as those of the 4K Clubs. However, the Young Farmers' Clubs Association is not subsidized by the Government, it is helped by the Kenya Agricultural Society. It operates only in secondary schools, whereas the 4K Clubs are open to all young people, whether attending school or not.

Kenya Red Cross Society

The Society has two main youth groups. The Links are groups attached to primary schools drawing their members from standard VI-VII; there are 232 groups each with a membership of around 30. The other group is the Red Cross Youth associated with secondary schools and teacher training colleges with approximately 35 groups each with about 25 members. These are mainly training units, although many of them also undertake some local community work, visiting the sick, child minding etc. One interesting feature is that each school group is given a garden and some seeds which is used as a fund raising scheme and helps quite considerably in financing the unit.

The National Youth Service

History and Original Philosophy: The Kenya National Youth Service was created in July 1964 under the Ministry of Labour and was established by an Act of Parliament with effect from 1st September, 1964. It was set up as a voluntary work and educational programme for Kenya citizens between the ages of 16 and 30 years. The Service was classified as a disciplined force under the Kenya constitution and the National Youth Service Act (No. 3 of 1965) makes provision for the exercise of disciplinary powers, similar to those existing in the Police Force and Prison Service. The voluntary nature of the National Youth Service was maintained, however, by there being no penalty for desertion other than the loss to the deserter of his accumulated savings. All volunteers

are paid Shs. 20/- monthly less Shs. 8/- compulsory savings.

The intake of volunteer servicemen and servicewomen was 1,215; 2,816; 4,008; 2,923; 2,000; 2,300 for the years July 1964-1971 respectively. The service formed a Women's Training Unit in 1967: the first intake of girls was trained as Junior Leaders and 400 girls are currently under training or with field units. All servicemen and women are expected to serve for 2 years.

The service does not engage on minor works that are considered to be the responsibility of community development and self help groups; but selects projects which are part of the National Plan. According to Mr. Griffin the Director: "The project undertaken by this service must be of a size to accommodate at least one company" (i.e. 100 Servicemen).¹

Why Have A National Youth Service?: The major reasons which led to the creation of a deliberately large organization such as Kenya's N.Y.S. (Note that currently the National Youth Service has a carrying capacity of 4,000 Servicemen and women as compared to the only effective non-government counterpart; K.V.D.A. which has a register of 200-260 only) are:-

- (1) The assimilation of militant youth who had been actively engaged in pre-independence nationalistic struggles and who, once independence was achieved, required re-orientation to fit them for normal working lives. As Mr. Griffin, observes: "Such a reason may have been politically pressing especially in the immediate pre-independence years, but its nature is transitory, and it has no place in long-range planning".
- (2) The relief of unemployment by removing from the city streets the large cadres of unemployed school leavers and drop outs. In 1968, it was estimated that Kenya had over 100,000 primary school leavers per year, 60,000 of whom could not obtain employment.

1. Personal communication.

- (3) With (2) above, the creation of a pool of trained and disciplined manpower for such low level skills as motor mechanics, plant workers, drivers, security guards etc.
- (4) With (3) and (2) above, the creation of a pool of trained (and possibly armed) manpower to support the Army and Police in defence or internal security. In Kenya, legal provision exists for the Youth Service to be employed with the military in the event of "War, insurrection, hostilities, or public emergency". It has been found in practice that a by product of Youth Service training is to fit a substantial number of young people to go on to careers in the Armed Forces, Police, Prisons etc.
- (5) Education and training. It has been realized in Kenya that the cost of keeping a young person in the National Service is much the same as putting him through some form of secondary education (between £100-£200 p.a.). This makes it desirable to have a long range programme of equipping these youth with some useful skills which would increase their productivity after leaving the National Youth Service.
- (6) Project work in aid of national development. The National Youth Service has become increasingly useful for work in remote areas where civilian contractors would hesitate to send their personnel either due to harsh environment (desert) or hostile localized activities such as clashes with cattle raiders and roaming nomadic bands; or even wild animals.
- (7) Creation of a national spirit where youth from diverse tribal backgrounds work side by side for 2 years.

The Kenya Voluntary Development Association

The Kenya Voluntary Development Association formerly the Kenya Work Camps Association, is a non government voluntary organization trying to

afford opportunities for youth of different backgrounds, races and nationalities, to work on practical projects at the community level. The number of volunteers on its registers is about 200 for 1971.

The KVDA was started in 1962 around the principle of work camps. In fact the first work camp was started as early as 1956 with the support of British and American Quakers. The basic belief is that youth could contribute effectively in small groups of 20-25 participants, living in a community and, as democratically as possible, running their own camp and working alongside local people.

The main aims were developed around the problems outlined below:-

- (1) The need to impart into youth pride in manual labour and voluntary service to the nation without pay or immediate personal gain.
- (2) Bring youth of all races, tribes and nationalities together to learn about themselves, through discussion, self discipline etc.
- (3) Provide leadership training for youth who later may be involved in community development programmes.

St. John's Ambulance Brigade (Cadet Division)

A very rigid type of organization based entirely on training in first aid, home nursing and child welfare. There are 34 Divisions (Units) with a membership of 800. Most of the Divisions are in secondary schools and mostly situated in Nairobi.

Kenya Girl Guides Association and Kenya Boy Scouts Association

These associations are non-denominational. Large numbers of young people between the ages of 6-7 and 20 years belong to them. They provide the usual guides' and scouts' activities. 75% of the membership of the Boy Scouts are attached to primary schools.

The Youth Department of the National Christian Council of Kenya

This Youth Department is probably one of the biggest organizations as it co-ordinates all the Protestant youth work. The department has

several full-time and a number of part-time workers and does a considerable amount of work in the field of training youth leaders. It is estimated that over 110,000 boys and girls between the ages of 10-26 years are being catered for by this department.

Besides the usual youth club programmes run with the aid of the churches in both rural and urban areas, concern has been shown in the problems of unemployment and rural development resulting in the experiments in the Farm Training Schools where young boys are being encouraged to take an interest in farming; village polytechnics where it is hoped further skills in agriculture and local craft work can be acquired also projects such as 4K Clubs and young farmers' associations are being introduced in specifically church groups.

Perhaps one of the best indications of the Department's real concern to integrate young people in the process of national development is the excellent report it produced on the further education, training and employment of primary school leavers. The sub-title alone of this report is highly significant "After School, What?". It is still the best and fullest source of information available on youth problems in Kenya.

Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A.

Both of these organizations have tackled one of the key problems - unemployment among school leavers.

The Y.M.C.A. has built youth centres - in Shauri Moyo for instance, where it has initiated a programme for vocational guidance with conferences for school leavers and has opened a very fine training centre for artisans. Another most interesting project is the agriculture education course at the Limuru Rural Training Centre. The aim of the centre is to show farmers how they can develop their farms and reach a much higher level of productivity. Parents sometimes pick up the techniques their children have learnt.

The Y.W.C.A. has some very successful secretarial courses running.

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENTAL AND VOLUNTARY ABOUT OUR YOUTH PROGRAMMES

As will be obvious from their names, most of these youth organizations are concerned with the welfare of youth more than organizing service by youth as a resource for national development.

The systematic discussion and a detailed inventory of the functions of these organizations quickly revealed that only two organizations in the list were organized to mobilize youth for direct service. The others emphasized training, civic and character development, providing homes for the destitute and unwed mothers, and provision of information and education through radio programmes, film shows, conferences, seminars, workshops and work camps. Admittedly most of these organizations were found to include in their programmes some active participation by youth in work projects, but these activities were ad hoc, sporadic and subservient to the training and educative aspects. The principle of voluntary activity explored in this report is that of work rather than training without appropriate salary though there may be fringe benefits and other non-monetary inducements.

By this definition therefore only the Kenyan National Youth Service and the Kenyan Voluntary Development Association qualify as voluntary developmental organizations.

Therefore, only these two organizations can be said to be fully organized to implement the main developmental aspects of Kenya's youth policy. They are also voluntary in that youth are not legally obliged to join.

ISSUES IN LOCALIZING YOUTH VOLUNTARY PROGRAMMES IN KENYA

Socio-Economic Factors

- (1) It was emphasized earlier, in the report on interviews with youth that the system of expectations and the economic realities in a developing country are such that we cannot afford the practice of delayed gratification of wants by releasing our youth for

any period of time after school or college for international volunteer work. They are an investment with immediate applicability and as a resource, they are in great demand.

- (2) The problem of unemployment is such that volunteering from altruistic motives is at best a luxury, especially for the youth. At the college level, the number of dependants per new graduate is confounded by the number of unemployed relatives who need immediate support. At the primary and secondary school-leaver level, the need for training in skills defeats all altruistic motives. We found that almost all youth in the National Youth Service join because they can learn a skill, e.g. driving, machine operating, typing whereas those from the other voluntary body the KVDA emphasised the opportunity to mix and travel.
- (3) Nevertheless, the youth articulate their motivations for joining the two Kenyan voluntary agencies very clearly as shown below.

TABLE 1: Motivation

Question: <u>What motivated you to join the organization:</u>		% N.Y.S.	% K.V.D.A.
1)	The need to help in Kenya's development only	30	30
2)	Nothing else to do. No employment, no training	20	0
3)	Heard the N.Y.S. gave training, education etc. free of charge; needed it to get a chance for employment after	29	0
4)	Thought the N.Y.S. a good place	2	0
5)	Mutual aid: If I help the Government, the Government will help me.	10	0
6)	My family and relatives influenced me	5	0
7)	Meet other people, amuse myself	0	25
8)	Visit different places	4	20
9)	Heard of national disaster, went to help, got interested in organizations; help others	0	25
		100	100
n =		40	24

The table shows that those youth who joined the N.Y.S. had different motivations from those who joined K.V.D.A. Their responses support the original generalizations about their level of education, and their employment situation. It should be noted that those who joined the N.Y.S. because they were unemployed or needed a place, some training to help increase their chances for education account for 69% of the total sample (responses 2, 3 and 5).

On the other hand, the K.V.D.A. volunteers appeared to emphasise the need to meet other people, visit different places, amuse oneself. This should be expected since K.V.D.A. recruits school going and college level youth mainly over vacations.

TABLE 2: Obligation

Question: Do you think service by youth should be made compulsory?

	<u>N.Y.S.</u>	<u>K.V.D.A.</u>
YES	50	4
NO	40	92
Don't Know	10	4

⁶1 Should be

Compulsory because:-

1) It is a way to help building Kenya	40	0
2) It inculcates discipline, good manners and behaviour	4	0
3) Helps us obtain employment	36	0
4) Hard work is good for youth	0	100
5) It helps integrate different tribes	16	0
6) Provides training, skills to youth	4	0
Those responding "Yes"	100	100
n =	20	1

	<u>N.Y.S.</u>	<u>K.V.D.A.</u>
⁶ ₂ Should not be compulsory because:	%	%
1) People contribute most when they offer work willingly	37	96
2) Many youth are unemployed. They fight to join N.Y.S. Why force them	25	0
3) One should not be forced to come to such a difficult place	31	0
4) N.Y.S. provides little money and no allowances	7	0
5) Other	0	4
Those responding "No"	100	100
n =	16	22

TABLE 3: Value of Voluntary Work

Question: "What do you think is the value of voluntary work?"

(1) To get training, education and courses	15	0
(2) Help in the development of remote areas, nation building ...	50	35
(3) Develop responsibility and leadership in youth ...	0	10
(4) Example to others when students and youth do manual work ...	0	15
(5) Helps people of many tribes to mix	5	25
(6) One broadens ones experience	10	5
(7) Teach the principles of self help	0	10
(8) Supply labour voluntary, without pay helps Government save money	20	0
	100	100
n =	40	24

The above table shows the differences in how the volunteers and servicemen are socialized into these organizations. The K.V.D.A. volunteer values self help, inter-tribal, inter-racial mixing, the demonstration effect of educated students working on manual projects. The N.Y.S. servicemen emphasise nation building, training and the voluntary supply of their labour. These are quite consistent with the goals of these two organizations. Obviously, the two organizations are successful in imparting their values to the youth, although both use very different approaches.

The question on what tasks undertaken by volunteers were of most value did not solicit many clear responses. But what came out clearly was that the N.Y.S. servicemen saw technical jobs undertaken by the service such as road construction as being most valuable. In fact, a few of the older servicemen pleaded that these services be extended to their home districts. The K.V.D.A. volunteers on the other hand saw the camp life as being most valuable not in the impact of the projects on the communities' programmes but in the demonstration effect and in bringing youth together.

Organizational Factors

Relations between Volunteers and Professionals: Although KVDA unlike the NYS emphasises democratic management, surprisingly 92% of the K.V.D.A. respondents responded that there is a great need for understanding between workers and professionals. The most common reasons given were:

- (a) There is so much turnover in volunteers, continuity can only be achieved through organizational administrators and camp organizers.
- (b) Volunteers rarely see the mature committee men at work camps and this reduces the educative aspects of camping.
- (c) Leaders tended to be vague, too permissive and unsure of themselves.

Volunteers stated that only a few officials ever attend camps consistently. Our interviews with the administrators and planners showed that recruiting leadership and expert help is often difficult as one is expected to volunteer ones services. The belief that youth volunteer organizations should be run by adult volunteers is questionable. The aims of these organizations are directed at youth and these youth do not appear to expect adults to demonstrate all the principles of volunteer life to them. Fully paid workers might devote more time to K.V.D.A. activities.

The N.Y.S. Servicemen were on the other hand more divided. "Yes, there is a need for understanding because uniformed officers and civilian staff guide us; they are like our parents" or "No, there is no need. Officers command us. They discipline us. They should be separate and we should be separate." Some responses indicated that a number of servicemen did not understand why there should be understanding or what it was all about.

Paid Employees and Training of Volunteers: These two questions were dismissed by the N.Y.S. servicemen as being irrelevant. First all volunteers received some on-the-job training and their original motivation to join the organization was to a great extent to avail themselves of the training opportunities (also responded that they should be trained). Secondly, it was felt that replacing volunteers by paid workers would negate the whole point of volunteer activity. Some servicemen, however, saw the need to complement their contribution with paid expert help, e.g. consultant engineers etc.

This latter view was shared by the K.V.D.A. volunteers who saw the need for carpenters, masons, and architects in most of their work projects but argued vehemently that the volunteer cannot and should not be replaced by a paid worker on basic tasks except on jobs which are skilled. On training, 41% of the K.V.D.A. volunteers responded that volunteers should not be trained. The main reason given is that the volunteer should be jack-of-all-trades and training would lead to specialization which would make him less responsive to all types of requests from different rural communities.

Those K.V.D.A. volunteers who supported training (59%) were cautious and most of them specified that training should be on-the-job and limited only to imparting skills which will increase his efficiency as a volunteer and should not aim to train him for a future career.

Relations Between Volunteer and Supervisor: In the first section, we showed data which indicated that 92% of the K.V.D.A. respondents indicated that there was a need for understanding between workers and professionals and that the N.Y.S. Servicemen were more divided.

K.V.D.A. official responses tended to be a text book approach. The phrases "we are one body", "relationship is genuine, welcoming, friendly, etc." "No authoritarian approaches are tolerated" occurred. This view tends to appear myopic in the light of volunteer sentiments. Volunteers tended to feel that democratic management was alright if one did not have urgent goals to achieve but K.V.D.A. officials tended to overdo it. At the same time this approach did not necessarily reduce the social distance created by the generation and exposure gap between youth and leaders.

The N.Y.S. officials dismissed this issue. They maintained that Staff-Servicemen relationships are laid out in the Youth Service Act and there was no vacuum in their relationships. Personal differences led to deviations from this rule and some officers had lukewarm personal relationships with servicemen although official relations were completely formal.

Role of Expatriates

Interviews with administrators of the Kenya Youth Council, the National Youth Service and officials of the Department of Community Development showed clearly that lack of local leadership is a major constraint.

Most Kenyan youth institutions are wholly dependent on charity funds from outside Kenya. Apart from the National Youth Service, the Association of Youth Centres, 4K Clubs and Young Farmers' Clubs, most of the others were initiated by officials who had direct contact with these funds or were employees of these organizations. These were normally non-Kenyans and still remain thus, making the leadership of the Kenyan youth organizations almost wholly expatriate. This has

some far reaching implications:

- (1) The youth movement is to a great degree removed from the influence of the common man and is an isolated elite activity with elite leadership. This creates problems among organizations such as the K.V.D.A. the success of whose community programmes depends to a great extent on local good will and rapport.
- (2) The youth movement tends to be too dependent on foreign charity and initiative and this places government involvement and guidance on the periphery. This factor explains why Kenya has gone along for so long without a clearly enunciated government policy and had to wait until these charitable organizations themselves drew up a youth policy. The degree of autonomy among the various youth organizations has created problems of coordination and creates duplication, and competitiveness especially among the missionary sponsored organizations.
- (3) It is fair to argue that expatriates normally have little empathy with our indigenous needs and though they are well meaning, often design programmes with priorities derived from other more developed countries and with alien value goals. For example, our findings that young people do not necessarily favour democratic management appeared to surprise our democratic minded Britons and Americans. Yet it is perfectly clear that these youth value efficiency and unambiguous leadership and are impatient of impractical permissiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS: FOR LOCALIZING YOUTH PROGRAMMES

- (1) Kenyan youth priorities are imported or at best, our youth policy consists of a hodge-podge of stereotyped local needs and imported fashionable youth problems. We wish to submit that Kenya has her own unique youth problems which need careful analysis. Therefore, Kenya needs to re-evaluate her youth policy with the aim of devising relevant youth programmes, such as the youth centres programmes.

- (2) Kenya needs to begin a programme of pulling together the wide array of unco-ordinated and disorganized youth programmes. We already have over 30 youth organizations most of which are clustered around Nairobi. Does this mean youth problems are real only in Nairobi?
- (3) Kenya's population has been described by demographers as being 'young' - that is it has a high ratio of youth to adults. This means that Kenya has a tremendous youth power. The school leaver, school drop-out or illiterate unemployed proportion of this youth power is staggering. Therefore, the deliberate involvement of youth in developmental programmes should be seen as a mobilization for national development of a significantly untapped resource.
- (4) Involvement of youth in developmental projects should not only consist of the offering of manual labour. The nation should exploit the existing skills of budding engineers, doctors, agriculturists, nurses, architects, journalists, writers, social scientists etc. on self help projects, on community programmes and on national projects.
- (5) Youth leadership and Kenyanization of youth leadership should be the concern of the government. A study on how we can create incentives for voluntary leadership and attract more Kenyans into the service is long overdue.
- (6) Kenyan youth programmes are too much involved with school-going youth - (YMCA, Young Farmers, 4K Clubs, Boy Scouts, Red Cross, St. Johns Ambulance, United Nations Students Association, Kenya Youth Hostels etc.) as compared to non-school-going youth. The only organizations which are fully concerned with these youth is the Kenya National Youth Service and the Association of Youth Centres. We have already shown that this is a skewed concentration catering for a very small proportion of our youth.

We need to take our youth programmes into the rural areas where 90% of Kenyan population lives.

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