AFRICAN UNION STATE OF VOLUNTEERISM IN AFRICA REPORT(*SUMMARY*)

Volunteerism in Africa

The African Union State of Volunteerism in Africa Report is a ground-breaking attempt that documents and analyzes the multifaceted contributions of volunteerism in Africa. This report examines the legal, strategic, as well as institutional frameworks set up by various actors, including the AU and member states, regional economic blocks, CSOs, NGOs, etc. to create an enabling environment for volunteerism and continental volunteer efforts.

Key Findings of the AU State of Volunteerism in Africa Report

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Infrastructure of Volunteerism

The report highlights the key achievements and the strides made in institutionalizing volunteerism and frameworks, which are essential to creating an enabling environment where volunteerism can flourish and catalyze the continent's development.
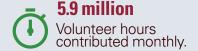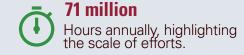
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS REPORTED

28
National Volunteer Programs Established in Member States.

17
Pieces of Legislation Supporting Volunteerism.

4
National Volunteerism Policies Implemented.

3
Formal Strategies Developed to Enhance Volunteerism

4
Specific Initiatives Launched to Advance the Cause.

Demonstrates significant progress in formalizing volunteerism as a tool for development and peace across the continent.

Development Contribution of Volunteerism in Africa – Agenda 2063

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The report underscores the critical role of volunteerism in advancing Africa's Agenda 2063 or the African Union's development plan for the next 40 years towards achieving continental socio-economic development. The report highlights the huge contribution of volunteer assignments reported by the AU Continental Volunteer Linkage Platform (AUCVLP).

VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

651,611
Assignments reported.

5.9 million
Volunteer hours contributed monthly.

71 million
Hours annually, highlighting the scale of efforts.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Valued at USD 4.98/hour, the annual contribution surpasses USD 353.5 million

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Recognizes traditional forms of volunteering as deeply rooted in African cultures. Highlights the underreporting and undervaluation of these informal contributions.

Key Challenges Facing Volunteerism in the AU Member States

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Along with the remarkable achievements, the report identifies critical challenges that undermine the achievements of volunteerism's true potential.

Key Challenges

Non-Prioritization in Policies

2.1 Non-prioritisation of volunteering in development policies and strategies

In official discourses, volunteering is mentioned more often; however, only a few countries consider volunteerism as an asset that needs to be considered when developing their policies and strategies on development and peace;

Insufficient Resources

2.2 Lack of resources (especially financial) for volunteering

Some governments with state-managed national volunteer programmes allocate a budget for volunteerism, even though it is often insufficient. In many countries, the funding of voluntary activities comes mainly from NGOs;

Underutilization of Traditional Volunteerism

2.3 Inadequate consideration of the power of traditional forms of volunteerism

Traditional forms of volunteerism have not been sufficiently harnessed/explored as an asset or effective instruments for development and social cohesion;

Lack of Robust Data

2.4 There is absence or scarcity of robust data and knowledge on volunteerism

Only a few countries have effective data management systems on volunteerism (i..e., systematic data collection and analysis), and data on volunteering is not often integrated into census/survey.

Recommendations

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This report takes a comprehensive view of the challenge and recommends the following measures.

On Espousing Volunteerism for the AUC and all Member States

Member States should be urged to dedicate sufficient resources (especially financial) to volunteerism to optimize its contribution to development and social cohesion;

The traditional forms of volunteerism need to be considered when developing national volunteer programmes and strategies;

The AU Commission needs to push for the integration of volunteering into official and regular census/survey/statistical measurements to strengthen data on the scale and scope of volunteer work;

The advocacy effort for the development of national volunteer programme should be more enhanced as the existence of these programmes will optimize the contribution of volunteerism to development and social cohesion as well as facilitate data collection and provide official information.

For the Development of Future State of Volunteerism in Africa Reports for AUC

The AU Commission should allocate a budget for and oversee the development of a thorough AU report on volunteering. This task should not be limited to a desk study but also involve extensive fieldwork and consultations with a range of stakeholders in AU member states, and facilitating study workshops, which will lead to producing a more robust report;

Explore a more systematic mechanism of data collection. For instance, in addition to the AU Volunteer Linkage Platform's survey, the application developed by Togo could be customized to make it relevant and applicable to all countries. Each year, Member States will collate annual data to be consolidated by the AUCVLP. A pilot phase could start with countries that have well-functioning national volunteer programmes;

Assess the impact of volunteerism through independent reviews by local research teams, i.e., academia, volunteer organizations, local consultants, and the like. Moreover, the AU, together with member states, should seriously consider carrying out impact assessments of volunteerism that may involve member countries and independent evaluators.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, this report, which is is presented in seven chapters, covers all AU Member States and examines the state of volunteerism in all its forms. It shows how volunteerism can add value to the achievement of many development goals. It underscores the need for mobilization of a critical mass of volunteers to optimize its impact. It asserts the need for more effort to make Africa a continent where volunteering in its all forms is cherished, and a place where all citizens believe that they can do something worthy for the general good. In line with this, inclusive volunteering for all citizens of Africa practiced without distinction of ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, age, gender, or physical fitness will go a long way in promoting volunteerism, contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and social cohesion on the continent, thereby fulfilling AU's Agenda 2063 and the UN Agenda 2030.

African Union

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