



SOUTHERN AFRICA CONFERENCE ON
**VOLUNTEER ACTION
for DEVELOPMENT**
17-19 October 2011 Johannesburg

Southern Africa Conference on Volunteer Action for Development
CONFERENCE SESSIONS July 2012



UN
Volunteers

inspiration in action





Brief description of conference sessions

CONFERENCE SESSIONS

Pre-conference youth session

The pre-conference session aimed to support youth participants to engage meaningfully and effectively in the Conference. As such the session provided a space for youth to share their experience and perspectives on volunteering in the region and to build relationships and effective networks as well as to learn from each other. Five of the selected participants were from South Africa while the remaining six were from Zambia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Namibia. Six of the participants were female, while the remaining four were males. All of the participants were below the age of 27 years. The participants drafted a youth declaration, which was presented during the opening session of the conference.

Day 1: Monday, 17 October 2011

Welcome by Helene Perold, Executive Director, VOSESA

Helene Perold provided an overview of conference participants and explained the importance of the convening for the development of the region. She explained the background to the conference and outlined the conference objectives and the envisaged outcomes. Finally, she thanked the conference sponsors and all the individuals and organisations that helped make the conference possible.

Welcome by Sizwe Nxasana, CEO, FirstRand Ltd

Sizwe Nxasana welcomed participants to the conference and emphasised that FirstRand believes that part of their job is to support communities to develop. He highlighted the critical role of volunteerism as a force for change in society and reflected on the value of volunteerism, and particularly of *ubuntu*, in South Africa. He called on government to provide a policy environment more conducive to fostering volunteer action and stressed the need for the private sector to work together with governments and civil society on policy and programming in order to enhance the effectiveness of volunteer action. He suggested that volunteer action can help to hold capitalism accountable in the wake of the 2008 financial meltdown, promote social cohesion and provide opportunities for youth. He also presented the key features and accomplishments of the FirstRand Foundation and its Volunteer Programme.

Keynote address by Naheed Haque, Deputy Executive Coordinator, UNV

In her keynote address, Naheed Haque noted the impressive range of stakeholders in the room and highlighted that the conference was one of many regional events that UNV had supported throughout 2011 to mark the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10). She shared that UNV would be launching its State of the Worlds Volunteerism Report in 2011 and mentioned that the UN General Assembly would be meeting on December 5th 2011 to discuss volunteerism. Following this, she paid tribute to the tradition and transformational power of volunteer action in the southern Africa region and emphasised the important role that volunteer action can and does play in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). She went on to emphasise that young people are important agents of change in the region and called on African governments to support volunteering opportunities for young people. In the run up to the Rio+20 summit and the post MDG agenda, she stressed the need for champions of volunteer action to put forward an alternative vision of development – community-centred sustainable development – which places people at the centre. In conclusion she called upon participants to join the world in celebrating volunteering as an expression of our common humanity, and in engaging the will, positive energy and innovation of millions of people towards realizing the MDGs and sustainable development.

Youth participant presentation

Youth participants presented the Declaration developed during the pre-conference session. The



declaration highlighted the value of youth volunteering for fostering youth social and economic participation and called on conference participants and other actors in the region to promote and support regional opportunities for youth volunteering, including youth regional volunteer exchange. Other recommendations suggested by the participants included greater recognition of youth volunteer efforts, access to funding for youth volunteering programming, greater flexibility to move throughout the region, the creation of a platform (or platforms) to better coordinate youth volunteering activities, better M&E of volunteering organisations and more research on the contribution of volunteering to the economy.

Issues and Terminology by VOSESA

This session, conducted by Karena Cronin from VOSESA, focused on the different conceptions volunteer action, volunteering, volunteerism and civic service and highlighted some of the debates concerning definitions of volunteering in the southern African context. The session also outlined the different forms of volunteer action that would be considered at the conference – youth volunteering, higher education civic engagement, corporate or employee volunteering, community-based volunteering and international volunteering – and noted the different manifestations of volunteer action from charity to social activism.

IYV+10 and beyond: Role of governments, policy makers, UN Agencies and CSOs in strengthening volunteer action in the SADC region for community-centred development

Moderated by Tapiwa Kamuruko (Senior Portfolio Manager Africa Region, UNV), the session shed light on significant developments within the region with respect to creating an enabling environment for volunteer action for community-centred sustainable development. Simona Constansa Sow, Project Manager IYV+10, UNV provided background on the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers and shared recommendations for strengthening volunteer action for development from five regional consultations organised by UNV. Ruth Cangela (Director, Department of Youth Africa, HoD Ministry of Youth and Sport, Mozambique) shared the multi-stakeholder process of developing the National Law on Volunteering in Mozambique and highlighted government's facilitating role in the process. Bev Russell (Managing Director, Social Surveys) emphasised that government has a critical role to play in enabling volunteering through research and information gathering and shared preliminary findings from a research conducted by Statistics South Africa on volunteering activities in South Africa. Bhekinkosi Moyo (Programme Director, Trust Africa) stressed the importance of knowledge generation on volunteer action, which he noted is a form of philanthropy, in order to create awareness among governments. He also recommended that government should embed the values of solidarity, mutuality and reciprocity in policies that promote volunteer action, but cautioned that the law itself does not promote engagement and sometimes can even undermine civic participation.

Address by Mr. Pravin Gordhan, Minister of Finance, South Africa

Recalling his younger years and the anti-apartheid struggle, the Minister noted the rich history of volunteers, volunteerism and grassroots organising in South Africa and stressed its importance in building healthy democracies in the region. He emphasised the need to reactivate volunteering in the region and for civil society to become better organised so that it can mobilise for effectively for social change and influence other domains such as government and the private sector. He highlighted the important role that volunteering plays in youth development and in inculcating values of solidarity and sharing. Lastly, he again reflected on the importance of a vibrant civil society for development and mentioned the particular value of volunteering in a context of high youth unemployment.

National Youth Service in the southern African context

In his role as facilitator, Professor Ebenezer Obadare (University of Kansas) noted the issues raised by the youth during the opening session. Talking about the new Volunteer Programme in Lesotho, Rethabile Mosisili (Deputy Principal Secretary, Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation) explained the programme's aim to help prepare young people to access employment and find



African solutions to African problems. Nthuseng Mphahlele, Executive Manager of the National Youth Service (NYS) and Skills Development, South Africa, talked about the reasons for the establishment of the NYS, the achievements of the programme, as well as some of the challenges it currently faces. Speaking about the Namibian NYS, Onesmus Upindi (Commissioner) discussed the similarities between the South African and Namibian context with respect to the aims of NYS. Participants also discussed the particular motivations for youth volunteering in the southern Africa context, the challenges associated with providing a stipend for a service programme, the importance of remembering that NYS is not an alternative to the formal but failing education systems in the region and that NYS can and has been instrumentalised for negative political ends in the region.

Regional integration, peace, social cohesion and sustainable development: The role of volunteer action

This session explored the potential for youth volunteer exchange to be a driver of regional integration in SADC and considered different youth volunteer exchange programme models. Francis Chuks Njoaguani (Director, ECOWAS Youth and Sports Development Centre) shared how the new ECOWAS Volunteer Programme seeks to address issues of conflict in the region and foster regional integration. Highlighting the importance of reciprocal volunteer exchange grounded in equality, Grete Thingelstad (Deputy Director General) talked about FK Norway's e in fostering volunteer exchange in the region among young people (e.g. SCORE and Field Band Foundation). Lastly, David Kuria of Kijabe Environment Volunteers – KENVO talked about how the organisation initiated exchanges between Kenyans and then partnered with Canada World Youth to initiate south-south youth volunteer exchanges between Kenya and Tanzania. He stressed the importance of local buy-in for the success of the programme. In her role as facilitator, Helene Perold (Executive Director, VOSESA) referred to the experience of the European Voluntary Service, which was established to foster regional integration and reconciliation among European countries post World War II, and noted that a key barrier in southern Africa is that countries sometimes see regional integration as a threat to national sovereignty. As noted in other sessions (documented in this conference report) it will be important to advance the social dimension of regional integration (which can be promoted by volunteering) as a support for economic and trade integration.

HIV and AIDS, voluntary care work and gender equality in the SADC region

Facilitated by Thomas Joseph (Regional Director, VSO-RAISA) this session focused on the key issues pertaining to volunteer action in addressing the HIV and AIDS epidemic. It also explored the key role that volunteers play in providing community and home-based care to those with HIV and AIDS and shed light on the gender issues in this field since the burden of care falls disproportionately on women in communities. Bongai Mundeta (Director, VSO-RAISA) presented on the need for policy formulation to recognise and support community-based volunteers and identified six key areas where action is needed particularly at the country level. Dr. Andile Dube (Director, Youth Programmes, loveLife), shared how the goGogetters programme works within the cultural practice of older women caring for children and young people in the community and ensures that it supports this practice by providing financial, emotional and skill support to these grandmothers. Jennifer Mufune (Executive Director, Gender and Media Southern Africa – GEMSA) highlighted that although women do most of the care work in the field of HIV, this goes largely unrecognised in the media and emphasised that the media has a large role to play in shifting mindsets about the role of women in care work. Lastly, the Honourable Ephraim Kayembe (Member of Parliament, Malawi) stressed the importance of involving local leaders in sensitising communities about the burden of care falling on women and advocating for more involvement of men and boys in care work.

The role of civil society in promoting voluntary action for peace and sustainable development with government and regional organisations

Jacob Mati (Research Manager, VOSESA), Professor Ebenezer Obadare (Dept. of Sociology, Kansas University) and Henri Valot (Director of Outreach, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation) discussed a number of issues that have bearing on the role of civil society in promoting development



with government and regional organisations. The definition of civil society was explored and the inherent tensions between civil society and government were candidly acknowledged. The relevance of civil society organisations to civic participation, including volunteering and activism was also debated. With youth at the forefront of social mobilisation in countries like Egypt, the discussion also considered the role of volunteer-involving organisations in promoting youth civic participation and their broader engagement in development and democratisation.

Day 2: Tuesday, 18 October 2011

Keynote address by Emiliana Tembo, Director, Gender and Social Affairs, COMESA

Mrs. Emiliana Tembo reflected on the linkages between volunteer action, sustainable regional social and economic development, and the potential to leverage the spirit of *ubuntu* to deepen regional integration. First, she explored the diverse meanings and definitions of volunteer action in the region. She went on to identify *ubuntu* as a unifying feature in southern Africa and commended African volunteers, particularly community-based volunteers, for their contributions to responding to HIV and AIDS, poverty and gender inequality, poor water and sanitation and numerous health issues among other challenges. She also noted the potential for volunteer action to promote youth development and address high levels of youth unemployment in the region. Finally, she stressed the importance of regional coherence on volunteerism issues and proposed that volunteer action can support efforts to promote peace in the region and overcome deep-rooted fragmentation in our societies and political institutions.

Higher education civic engagement: A framework for regional development and the development of a regional identity

The session provided insight into community engagement at higher education institutions in southern Africa. Helene Perold (Executive Director, VOSESA) facilitated a discussion which drew on the perspectives of students, staff in engagement activities and advocates of higher education in the region. Piyushi Kotecha (CEO, Southern African Regional Universities Association - SARUA) stressed that community engagement is not properly resourced or supported at higher education institutions in the region. She recommended greater investment in this sphere as a tool for driving development and regional integration, to ground it in indigenous knowledge and local solutions. Nangamso Koza (Founding Chairperson, Association of Community Development Leaders in Tertiary Institutions - ACODLTI) showcased the work of ACODLTI to enable young people to engage in meaningful ways as volunteers in their communities, to develop themselves, and to foster greater connectedness between like-minded young people in the region. Finally, Nelly Corbel (Senior Program Coordinator, The John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement, The American University of Cairo (AUC), Egypt) proposed that community engagement should be a core and cross-cutting value of higher education. If approached in this way, community engagement can prepare young people to work in civil society and help to foster regional integration.

Re-envisioning corporate support for volunteer action in the SADC region

Claus-Bernhard Pakleppa (Vice-Chair of Executive Committee, South Africa German Network – SAGE Net) facilitated this session, which looked at trends in corporate support for volunteer action in the SADC region and considered recommendations for how to strengthen corporate support for volunteer action, particularly in South Africa. Sabine Strassburg (Independent Consultant) presented findings from a desk review on corporate support for volunteer action in the region and highlighted the lack of consolidated information and research on this topic, compared to other regions in the world. Tamera Campbell (Managing Director, Harambee) presented on the South African Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator programme, which draws on professional volunteers to train young people who are then placed in entry-level jobs in companies. Tracey Henry (CEO, Tshikululu Social Investments, gave a thoughtful presentation about the need for companies to support volunteer action in a way that supports the longer-term needs and sustainability of communities/civil society organisations and that is grounded in genuine and meaningful partnership.

Designing youth volunteer programmes to meet local needs



The session, facilitated by Lauren Graham (Research Associate, VOSESA) provided an opportunity to learn about youth volunteering initiatives in the region and how they facilitate youth leadership. From his experience with SCORE – a sports and development organisation - Stefan Howells (Executive Director) noted that volunteering helps young people to develop life skills, positive social networks and to become recognised as leaders in their communities. Scott Burnett (Group Director Programmes, loveLife) provided insight into the loveLife groundBREAKER (youth service) model which requires that each server recruits 5 *mpintshis* (or volunteers) to assist them with programme implementation. Many *mpintshis* are inspired to apply to become groundBREAKERS and alumni of the programme have an easier time accessing future employment and education opportunities than their national counterparts. Lastly, Petronella Chisanga (Volunteer, Youth Association of Zambia) shared an inspiring story about the potential for youth from Northern and Southern countries to find sustainable solutions to promote development in the region.

Recognising community-based volunteering for poverty alleviation in the region

Facilitated by Deline Van Boom (Director, Volunteer Centre Cape Town), this session featured presentations from organisations in three different countries in southern Africa and showed how organisations engage local volunteers in diverse community development projects. In Tanzania, Alfred Magehema (Director General, Young Tanzanian For Community Prosperity - YTCP) shared how YTCP, a youth-led volunteer involving organisation, aims to address the issue of high youth unemployment in Tanzania and engage youth in environment management programmes. Maureen Mwanema (National Advocacy Officer, NAPHAM), explained how NAPHAM's work on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support is done by volunteers, many of whom are living with the disease. In South Africa, the Soul City Kwanda project highlights that communities organised on their own behalf and drawing on their own energy and resources have the ability to partner effectively for development, noted Lebo Ramafoko (CEO, Soul City).

Higher education community engagement and student leadership development

Nangamso Koza (Founding Chairperson, Association of Community Development Leaders in Tertiary Institutions - ACODLTI) moderated this session which focused on the potential of student volunteer work as a co-curricular activity, to develop desired graduate attributes. Presentations were made by Dr Jerome Slamet of South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum (SAHECEF) and Dr Leslie van Rooi (Head FVZS Institute for Leadership and Student Development, Stellenbosch University) on research conducted into this topic. The research demonstrated that graduate attributes can be developed through student volunteer involvement and highlighted the educative nature as well as the value of student volunteerism. Throughout the session, participants also discussed the need to share the student volunteer programme model with other universities in the SADC and COMESA regions, the study's methodology, the community perception of student volunteers and the lack of programmes in existence that build relationships between youth out of schools and in school. A major recommendation from the session was that a manual on higher education community development and volunteerism should be developed.

Models of corporate support for volunteer action in the SADC region

Colleen du Toit (CEO, CAF Southern Africa) moderated this session and noted the importance at looking at the different behaviours of companies in terms corporate social responsibility approaches and the lack of research available on this topic in the region. Drawing on her experience in Kenya, and other African countries Carol Kiangura (Programme Manager, VSO Jitolee) shared insight into the range of development issues that employee volunteering can address, the different incentives behind employee volunteering, and best practice in designing and implementing meaningful and sustainable programmes. In her capacity as Manager of the FirstRand Volunteers Programme, Desiree Storey presented its mission, how it operates, its contribution to development and opportunities for strengthening the programme. Victor Menash (Programme Manager, Africa Region, Commonwealth Secretariat) spoke about efforts to encourage corporate support of volunteering and particularly youth volunteering given the context of youth unemployment in the



region. Nelly Corbel (Senior Programme Coordinator, the John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement, American University of Cairo (AUC), Egypt) also served as resource person for the discussion.

The role of international voluntary service (IVS) in promoting civil society development

The session, facilitated by Karena Cronin (Projects and Outreach Manager, VOSESA) covered research conducted on international volunteering in southern Africa. Claus-Bernhard Pakleppa (Vice-Chair of Executive Committee, South Africa German Network – SAGE Net) presented key findings from qualitative impact research conducted on a German international youth volunteering programme. He shared information on the attitudes, mindsets, motives, expectations and experiences of the young volunteers, and identified some key ingredients for a ‘successful’ voluntary service posting for both volunteers and partner organisations. Moses Mnzava (University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania) and Eddy Mazembo Mavungu (Research Associate, VOSESA) presented key findings from a study conducted by VOSESA, and funded by Trust Africa, on the experience of international volunteering by host organisations, host communities and volunteers in Mozambique and Tanzania. Moses provided critical contextual background on volunteering in Tanzania and the host organisations, while Eddy emphasised four key reasons why international volunteering cannot be understood in isolation from the history of colonialism and current day trade relations.

Strengthening volunteer infrastructure for peace and community centred sustainable development in the region

Naheed Haque (Deputy Executive Coordinator, UNV) demystified the concept of community-centred sustainable development and shared nine recommendations for how to strengthen community-centred sustainable development through volunteerism. For example, she mentioned the importance of bringing volunteerism to the centre of the policy and development agenda in the region; sharing and documenting experiences and good practices on the role of volunteer action in community-centred sustainable development; fostering youth leadership; developing an integrated and holistic model (or models) for community-centred sustainable development; and measuring the impact of volunteer action on development. Following this Tapiwa Kamuruko (Senior Portfolio Manager Africa Region, UNV) and Kate Cotton (Manager, National Volunteering Team, VSO) reflected on the features of an enabling environment for volunteer action and discussed the role of an enabling environment in strengthening volunteer action in the SADC region.

Establishing an International Association of National Youth Service (IANYS) body in southern Africa

Supported by the South African National Youth Development Agency, and facilitated by VOSESA, this meeting focused on how to strengthen the network of champions of youth service and youth volunteer action in southern Africa. Patrick Mphale (Senior Manager, South African National Youth Service) and Helene Perold (Executive Director, VOSESA) shared information about the International Association of National Youth Service (IANYS), a network of practitioners, policymakers, researchers, young people and professionals involved in youth civic service. Participants reflected on the value of growing such a network in the southern African context. Notably, meeting participants indicated strong interest in promoting volunteer exchange programmes among young people in the region, and made other recommendations related to strengthening research and knowledge-building on youth volunteer action policy and programming in the region.

Day 3: Wednesday, 19 October 2012

The potential to replicate loveLife groundBREAKERS programme in the SADC region

This breakfast meeting, hosted by loveLife, was well attended by conference participants. Grace Matlhabe (CEO, loveLife) presented on the loveLife groundBREAKERS programme and discussed the organisation’s interest in expanding the programme into the SADC region. Participants discussed with great enthusiasm this possibility and shared their thoughts on the needs and opportunities in this regard.

Conference site visits

- **Canada World Youth and VOSESA** hosted a discussion at the loveLife offices on a study on



models and effects of youth volunteer exchange programmes in southern and eastern Africa. Jacob Mati (Research Manager, VOSESA) shared emerging findings from the study and Nadia Karina Ponce Morales (Senior Program Associate, Canada World Youth) helped to facilitate the discussion. The study was supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and provides evidence of the role of youth volunteer exchange in promoting friendships across borders and fostering inter-cultural understanding.

- **CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation** hosted a site visit to their offices in Newtown. Henri Valot (Director of Outreach, CIVICUS) gave opening remarks while Mariano De Donatis (Convening Manager, CIVICUS) presented on CIVICUS's membership base, network and projects. Megan MacGarry (Convening Officer for Africa, CIVICUS) presented on CIVICUS's networking activities on the continent while Lerato Pagiwa (Communications, CIVICUS) briefly highlighted ways participants could engage with CIVICUS. Finally, Mariatu Fonnah (Research Unit, CIVICUS) gave an overview of CIVICUS's Civil Society Index (CSI) programme, and shared key research findings on volunteering patterns in Africa.
- **FirstRand Volunteers Programme** sponsored a site visit to the **Tembisa Housebuild** project, which operates with the support of the Niall Mellon Housebuild Trust and FirstRand Volunteers Programme. Approximately 30 FirstRand employees were on the site and helped to build a new house. Participants discussed with volunteers what it means to be involved in the volunteering project and also learned about the Trust's skills development programme, which trains people in a wide range of construction disciplines. The site visit was organised by Desiree Storey (Manager, FirstRand Volunteers Programme).
- **First National Bank (FNB)** sponsored a site visit to the **Mooiplaas Community Gardens** project supported by **SMILE Impact**. The garden provides fresh vegetables to the children at the day care centre, while the garden and recycling programmes also provide much needed income to the residents, many of whom have been affected by HIV and AIDS and are supporting others who have been affected. Organised by Bridgett Harris (Volunteer Manager, FNB) the site visit provided staff with an opportunity to learn about the partnership behind this project and how meaningful engagement with beneficiaries through "community conversations" helps to strengthen corporate employee volunteering projects.
- **loveLife** hosted a site visit to their Orange Farm Y-Centre to meet their team of passionate groundBREAKERS and *mpintshis* who implement Cyber Ys, Radio Ys, a full range of sports activities including basketball, the Cultcha Factor Loving Life and Body Ys Healthy Sexuality in schools. Vulnerable young people in Orange Farm are linked to the Y-Centre by loveLife's senior corps of goGogetters, older women volunteers supported by loveLife to care and support orphans and other young people made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. A groundBREAKER led the site visit with the support of other young people involved in the programme, and the site visit was organised by the loveLife Provincial Manager, Sidwell Sekgobeta.
- **loveLife** also sponsored a site visit to goGogetters programme in Alexandra and Tembisa townships. The programme aims to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy and support orphans. Organised by Nkagare Makhudu (National Manager: Youth Leadership Development, loveLife) and supported by Sidwell Dekgobeta (Provincial Manager, Gauteng, loveLife), the site visit provided participants with an opportunity to meet with loveLife's teenage pregnancy reduction team in the area as well as the goGogetters team. Participants also visited the Winnie Mandela Clinic, which is partnering with loveLife's groundBREAKER programme to implement Body Ys Healthy Sexuality and lovingLife programmes in the surrounding schools.

Note: Due to service delivery strikes, the **South African National Youth Development Agency** sponsored visit to YouthBuild was cancelled and participants were redirected to the FNB and SMILE Impact supported Mooiplaas Community Gardens site visit.

Closing session



Participants watched an inspiring video address by Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda (General Secretary, World YWCA). As a daughter of the region, she commended the unsung efforts of community-based volunteers who help to support communities in the face of government failure and noted that volunteering has a special role to play in fostering social cohesion. To strengthen volunteer action in the region, she recommended that young people be put at the centre of volunteering initiatives, that more research be conducted on the value of volunteering in the region, that community innovation be scaled up and that the empowerment of women continue as a priority. Following this, youth participants at the conference read out the Conference Declaration which was then adopted. Naheed Haque (Deputy Executive Coordinator, UNV) shared closing comments about the importance of placing volunteerism at the centre of the development agenda and the need to continue to support young leaders in the region who are agents of transformational change. She also thanked that many organisations and individuals who supported the convening of the conference.