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Civil Society Volunteering Patterns in Africa: An analysis of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index 2008-2011 findings on volunteerism



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Abstract

The CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) is a civil society self-assessment and action research project conducted by civil society organisations (CSOs) on a national level in partnership with global civil society network CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. The aim of the project is to assess the state of civil society in a particular country in five dimensions – civic engagement, level of organisations, practice of values, perception of impact and external environment.

This paper observes two dimensions (civic engagement and level of organisation) to report on volunteerism in civil society in several African countries, taken into account direct and indirect, organised and non-organised volunteering actions and the opportunities and challenges for expanding volunteerism on the African continent. The quantitative and qualitative analysis is based on data gathered in eight African countries in the last phase of CSI, held from 2008 to 2011: Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo and Zambia. As two different methodologies were applied in four countries each, it uses quantitative data to profile four countries in particular (Ghana, Liberia, Morocco, Togo and Zambia), while also drawing where possible from the reports of four other countries (Guinea, Rwanda, Senegal and Tanzania).

The paper argues that although these countries have different socio-political and cultural backgrounds, most of them are characterised by a very high level of volunteer activity (up to 80%), and intensive involvement in multiple volunteering. Country profile maps were made to show the make-up of volunteering in CSOs, with the majority of CSO volunteering taking place in religious organisations. The paper also observes a common difference among volunteers who work for social organisations and political organisations: political volunteerism is less common than social volunteerism, and political volunteers are generally wealthier and older, with volunteerism for them being either occasional or very intensive.

Meanwhile, analysis of CSOs shows that although CSOs in Africa are deeply dependent on volunteer engagement, the lack of required skills or education is a barrier against volunteers playing a full role within organisations. That leads to recommendations to provide training and give practical experience to volunteers to improve their capacity, as well as to provide assistance to CSOs working with volunteers.

1 Introduction

The CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) findings present a picture of volunteering and voluntary action in the African context that is shaped by cultural, historical, socio-economic and political dynamics. Even though Africa is not a homogeneous entity, across countries and cultures the perception of volunteering is quite similar. The CSI reports high levels of volunteering to help a neighbour or a community, suggesting a strong source of social capital and potential to encourage civic activism.

The CSI is a civil society self-assessment and action research project conducted by civil society organisations (CSOs) on a national level in partnership with global civil society network CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. This paper draws from data gathered in eight African countries in the last phase of CSI, held from 2008 to 2011: Guinea, Liberia, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo and Zambia. (The quantitative data set for Ghana has since been finalised, while at the time of writing CSI projects were underway in Madagascar and planned in Uganda.)

This paper draws from both the quantitative and qualitative data gathered from the CSI. As two different methodologies were applied in four countries each, it uses the quantitative data to profile four countries in particular (Ghana, Liberia, Morocco, Togo and Zambia), while also drawing where possible from the reports of four other countries (Guinea, Rwanda, Senegal and Tanzania). Some secondary information has also been collected so as to offer a fuller approach, but it should be noted that little has been documented specifically about volunteer trends in Africa.

We first look into some definitions of volunteering before discussing some of the motivations of volunteering in an African context, and the differences between volunteering in organisations and direct volunteering in non-organisational spaces. The rest of the paper then looks at the patterns and features of volunteering in CSOs.

2 Defining volunteering

Although there are a myriad of definitions, essentially volunteering entails the self motivated act of a person(s) contributing their time, skills, ideas and talents for charitable, educational, social, political, economic, humanitarian or other worthwhile purposes. This may be done in one's community, country, region or personal choice of place without initial regard for compensation.

The recently published *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* from the International Labour Organisation and Johns Hopkins University states offers a definition of volunteering:

Unpaid non-compulsory work; that is, time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organisation or directly for others outside their own household.¹

An earlier report by ICNL/ECNL on volunteering in Africa stressed the importance of context, stating, "for the purposes of comparative analysis across countries and regions, it is essential to recognise the various ways that different countries and regions define volunteerism."² The report goes on to offer a typology of volunteering, as follows:

¹ Available at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---integration/---stat/documents/publication/wcms_162119.pdf.

² Available at <http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/themes/volunteerism/VolunteerismLaws2001.pdf>, Retrieved on 16 September 2011. Their regional analysis of volunteerism looked at policy dynamics and volunteerism in Benin, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania and Togo. Their analysis supports the main findings of the CSI and also provides insights into policies in place in countries not covered in the CSI, the challenges faced and some key recommendations.

- **An activity or work:** volunteering is a contribution in-kind (i.e. time, skills, or services) and should be distinguished from donations in goods, cash, or other valuable assets.
- **Done by people:** volunteers may act individually, as groups, or through associations and other formal organisations; but in all cases, a volunteer is a human being.
- **Done willingly:** individuals must make a free choice to volunteer. If an individual is compelled or coerced, then he or she is generally not considered a volunteer.
- **Done without pay:** in some contexts volunteers would not be expected to receive any kind of monetary compensation whatsoever, while in other places volunteers might be entitled to stipends intended to help cover their living expenses or reimbursements of expenses incurred (such as the cost of travelling back and forth to the volunteer location).
- **Done to promote a cause or help someone outside of the volunteer's household or immediate family:** Volunteer activity is usually done to benefit the larger community, an organisation representing community interests, a public body, or the common interest. While the individual volunteer's household or family might benefit from the volunteer work, some other person outside the family should benefit as well.

Such definitions are not without their critiques. For example, Bev Russell and Susan Wilkinson-Maposa, of Social Surveys South Africa and the Centre for Leadership and Public Values respectively, question the validity of terms such as unpaid and non-compulsory in an African context, and raise the question of self-help volunteering and volunteering within households, for example by fostering children.³ Nor can an element of compulsion or at least expectation to volunteer be discounted, for example, in the context of volunteering arising from notions of religious duty or of service customarily expected within the community.

It is also important to note the difficulty there may be in capturing or measuring volunteering in some contexts. The Senegal CSI partner, for instance, noted that, "it is very difficult to realistically calculate levels of volunteering since for most Senegalese people, the definition of volunteerism is unclear, and indeed, counting the time spent doing something is also unusual."

3 Formal vs. direct volunteering

It is further crucial to note that such typologies as set out above consider both formalised volunteering (institutional volunteering through organisations such as CSOs) and non-formal or direct volunteering (individual work or assistance). The policy weight given to these varies from country to country:

Many countries will regulate as "volunteerism" only work done through formal institutions, seeing no need to intervene with a law or regulation for informal volunteerism; whereas other countries (especially those with relatively fewer established NGOs) will adopt a more expansive view, including both formal and informal volunteerism within the scope of a law or policy.⁴

CSI African partners tend to emphasise the socially, culturally and community rooted wellsprings of volunteerism, which pertain both to direct and community volunteerism, and suggest some of the motivations which may spur people to volunteer within organisations. For example, in Liberia, volunteering is "a way of life, as people work together for their communities for free." In Guinea, volunteerism is "typified by assistance to a neighbour or a member of the community without

³ Presentation at International Society for Third Sector Research African Conference, Stellenbosch, South Africa, 23-27 August 2011. See <http://www.istr.org/networks/africa/Papers.htm>.

⁴ ICNL/ECNL report *ibid*.

expectation of being paid in return”.⁵ And in Rwanda, “on the last Saturday of every month between 7 am and 12 pm, everything in Rwanda stops. Or at least all the restaurants are closed, markets do not operate and public and private transportation is limited. The reason for this is that the entire country is supposed to take part in umuganda – community service. This includes digging ditches, sweeping the grounds, making compost, building houses, clearing land, or any other activity that is helping the country become better. Some people use this day to have a sleep-in but, at least in the countryside; every family has to have a representative in the umuganda in the village.”

Given this, it’s interesting to note that in Rwanda, only 21.4% of respondents reported that they volunteer in formal organisations. Many CSOs also state that not enough people are volunteering to fill existing gaps in human resources in Rwanda. In Guinea, it is reported that, “formal volunteering for a CSO is far rarer [than community volunteering] at 13.8%.” A similar trend is noted in Tanzania, which reports that few people volunteer in formal CSOs and many CSOs identify “a gap emerging between the well established CSOs based in urban centres, which are managed by well trained staff and the CSOs managed by voluntary staff, most of them temporary and lacking the required competences and mostly based in rural or provincial areas”. They note, “the implication is that only very few people are ready to volunteer in more than one CSO”. They also suggest which people are most likely to volunteer: “The rate of volunteering is high amongst CSOs members and job seekers, typically when CSOs are at formative stages.”

The Senegal report neatly captures this division: “The community survey shows that 81.2% of the sample is involved in volunteering. However only 15.7% of them are involved in volunteering within CSOs, which means that most of these activities take place outside the frame of any given organisation.”

CIVICUS’ overall CSI analysis suggests that considerable gaps exist between formalised forms of participation that take place within CSO structures, and less formalised forms of participation that take place outside organisational structures, including through direct volunteering and other forms of individual and community action. Typically, the CSI reports greater participation on direct volunteering than in that which takes place within organisations, and greater rates of volunteering in socially-oriented CSOs than politically-oriented CSOs (for a definition of the difference between these, see below).

The policy implication here is that interventions should focus more on addressing these disconnects and respecting a greater variety of forms of participation as legitimate and as part of civil society; and should focus on strengthening the connections between voluntary participation in all its forms, and civic activism.⁶ For CIVICUS, any act of volunteering must be understood as an instance of people’s participation, and as a source, whether realised or latent, of civic activism towards improving societies.

4 Who volunteers in CSOs? Country profiles

We now look at four different countries, from the point of view of volunteering in different aspects of organised civil society specifically, particularly looking for tendencies amongst that group of people who volunteer with more than one organisation. The 2008-2011 CSI methodology makes a distinction between socially-based CSOs, such as cultural, religious or sports associations, and politically-oriented CSOs, such as advocacy groups, NGOs and trade unions. Essentially the former

⁵ CSI Analytical Country reports from Africa, available at <http://www.civicus.org/news-and-resources/reports-and-publications/csi-reports/africa-country-reports>.

⁶ See also *Bridging the Gaps: citizens, organisations and dissociation*, summary report of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index 2008-2011, CIVICUS, 2011.

are assumed to largely encourage association for its own sake, often around a shared interest or identity, while the latter are assumed to have an explicit purpose of bringing people together to try to achieve some kind of policy or political change. The precise boundaries of these definitions are determined by national partners according to national contexts. CSOs are broadly defined here to include religious, sporting and recreational structures, which are often overlooked as aspects of civil society.

It should be noted that in sub-Saharan Africa specifically (the levels of participation in the one North African country surveyed, Morocco, being much lower), the highest levels of formal participation in CSOs are recorded. 76% of people surveyed in sub-Saharan Africa report they have volunteered with a socially-oriented CSO, compared to the global average of 23%. But people are much more inclined to volunteer with a socially-oriented CSO than a politically-oriented one: this latter category records less than half the number of people, at 31%. Again, it should be noted this figure is higher than the global average, which is 14%.

The implications of this is that people tend to volunteer the most with religious, cultural, sporting or recreational organisations, yet these are the organisations which are given less attention by those with an interest in civil society and participation, including those which seek through funding to strengthen civil society and foster greater participation. At the funding and policy level, far more attention is given to NGOs, particularly those engaged in advocacy and explicit campaigning, and yet it is these organisation types that people volunteer with the least. This suggests that those who wish to nurture participation and strengthen the fabric of civil society must take a broader view of the field, and embrace religious, cultural, sporting and recreational structures as legitimate areas for their attention and support.

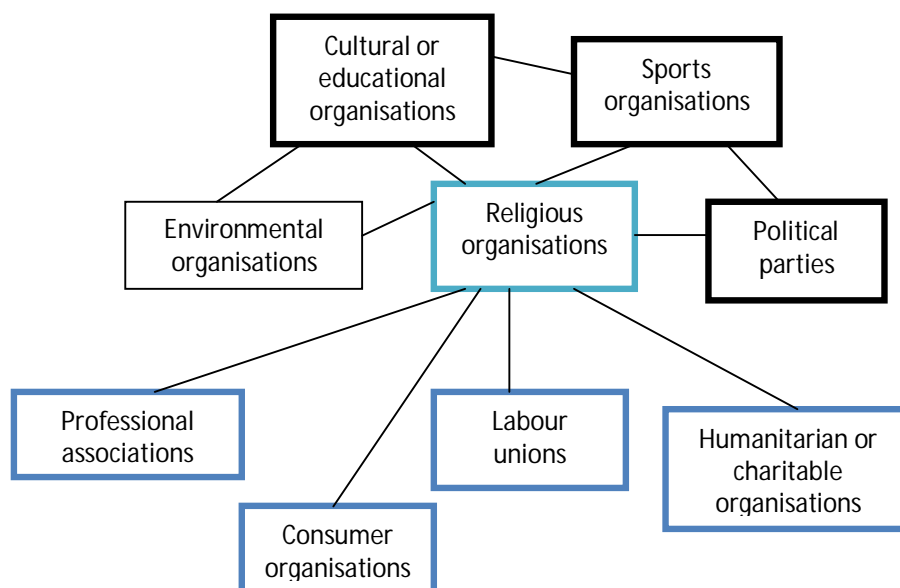
4.1 Liberia

The average portrait of a CSO volunteer in Liberia is one of a man, of adult working age (between 25 and 64), in at best the lower middle income bracket, living in a town or a city. (However, while only 7% of people in Liberia are in the high income bracket, this group also disproportionately volunteers.)

The Liberian CSI analytical report tells us that there is a marked inclination for volunteering with churches and mosques, rather than with political parties or civic organisations with political objectives, and suggests this is due to the still limited experience of democratic political processes in post-war Liberia, the somewhat fragile nature of the country's pluralism, and scepticism about party politics as it is currently practised. 37% of CSO volunteers in Liberia serve religious organisations only, while 41% involve themselves in multiple volunteering activity, i.e. for more than one CSO. However the intensity of this multiple engagement is low; most of those who are active with more than one organisation have an association with two or three others at most. This multiple activism is markedly higher in socially-oriented compared to politically-oriented CSOs: people who volunteer with two or more politically-oriented CSOs are five times fewer than those who volunteer with two socially-oriented organisations.

Half of CSO volunteers in Liberia spend from one to ten hours a month on their activity, while 36% spend from 11 till 40 hours a month. However, volunteers with religious organisations tend to devote time differently. 44% volunteer for between one and ten hours a month, while 42% spend between 11 and 40 hours a month.

Mapping the different volunteering affiliations of Liberians gives us the following series of connections:



The picture shows that Liberian CSO volunteerism centres on religious organisations, with strong connections between religious and sports organisations. The connections between volunteering in socially-oriented CSOs and politically-oriented CSOs are less intensive than those within these two types of organisations. However, 46% of people volunteering with socially-oriented CSOs also volunteer with politically-oriented CSOs.

If we compare volunteers with socially-oriented versus politically-oriented organisations, we see that volunteers with politically-oriented CSOs tend to be older, wealthier and have a higher level of male representation than those with socially-oriented CSOs. Volunteers with politically-oriented CSOs in Liberia tend to commit sporadically, for up to ten hours a month, or very heavily, for more than 100 hours a month. Volunteers with socially-oriented CSOs tend to sit somewhere in the middle – between 10 and 30 hours a month.

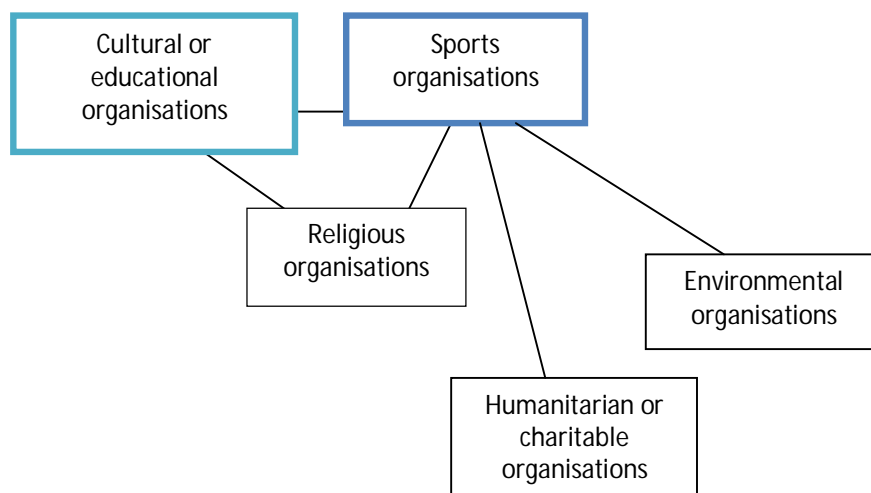
The Liberian CSI also suggests relatively high levels of people who are inclined towards individual political action, as expressed through signing a petition (45.2%), participating in a boycott (54.5%) and take part in an authorised demonstration (44.5%). This suggests a connection between high levels of volunteering and a high propensity to other expressions of participation and activism, at least in a Liberian context.

4.2 Morocco

In Morocco, according to the country's CSI analytical report, "People spend most of their time with their family and friends, and although some people make a significant time commitment to CSOs, civic engagement is not widespread. Sports, educational and cultural organisations represent the most common vehicles for civic participation."

Given this, it is not surprising that the map of volunteerism in Morocco differs markedly from that for Liberia above. When looking at the organisations that people who volunteer with more than one organisation volunteer with, there are five main types. Every tenth person in Morocco volunteers with a sport, religious or cultural or educational organisation, which are the major CSO types for volunteers. Volunteers with sports organisations have the most connections with volunteering with other types of organisations. People who volunteer with sports organisations also have a tendency

to volunteer with environmental organisations and humanitarian or charitable organisations, but interestingly, this is not the case for people who volunteer with cultural/educational or religious organisations. It is also rare for a CSO volunteer in Morocco to volunteer with more than three organisations.



One in ten people also volunteer with both a socially-oriented and politically-oriented organisation simultaneously.

As in Liberia, on average, volunteers with politically-oriented organisations are older, wealthier and more likely to be men than those with socially-oriented organisations. There are also differences in the amount of time per month people devote to volunteering depending on organisation type. Volunteers with politically-oriented CSOs are either more episodically involved (up to 10 hours a month) or heavily involved (more than 41 hours a month). Volunteers with socially-oriented CSOs tend to be somewhere in between, mostly committing between 11 and 30 hours a month. This pattern is, of course, similar to that in Liberia.

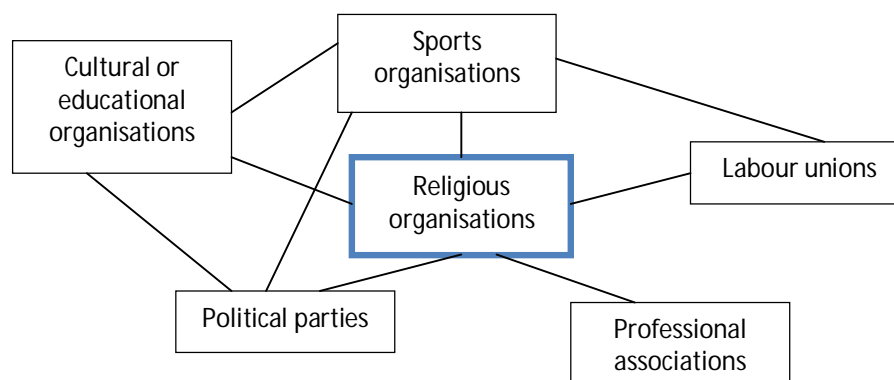
In Morocco, the understanding of volunteerism is associated with traditional forms of solidarity, namely the practice of *Twiza*, collective and communal cultivation of land. Voluntary work is referred to as *M'ajaania* (free work) in Arabic and voluntary service as *Tatoua'e* (act of voluntary service, also often free). In this case, volunteering can be seen to have deep cultural rootedness. A study carried out by Carrefour Associatif as part of the CSI research on volunteering finds that membership of CSOs is usually first caused by voluntary support for a civil society project and the ideal of "coming to the aid of others," and they therefore regard this as "a sign of strong civic engagement." However, another CSI indicator measures individual willingness to take part in classic expressions of political activism, such as signing a petition, participating in a boycott and taking part in a peaceful demonstration, and these are actions which respectively only 23.9%, 14.8% and 21.7% of those surveyed say they are willing to do. Compared to Liberia, this suggests the question of whether in Morocco volunteering and participation is leading to any greater tendency to become active in pursuit of social and political change, and where it is not, what the barriers are to this.

4.3 Togo

The level of CSO volunteering in Togo is the highest in the African CSI countries, with more than 80% of people surveyed reporting that they volunteer in this way. Once again, religious organisations play a central role in the map of Togo CSO volunteer activity, as 75% of people reported that they volunteer with religious organisations. However, volunteers with religious organisations are quite

active in other organisations too: for example, 25% of those who volunteer with religious organisations also volunteer with sports organisations, 16% volunteer with political parties and 14% with labour unions. An interesting deficit here is that volunteers with religious organisations do not in the main also tend to volunteer with humanitarian or charitable organisations, or environmental organisations. This is similar to the tendency noted in Morocco, suggesting there may be two distinct groups of volunteers, those who volunteer for politically altruistic causes, and those who are not. Few people volunteer for environmental, humanitarian or charitable organisations, while much more volunteer for labour unions or professional organisations.

The volunteer map for Togo can therefore be described as follows:



As can be seen, religious organisations play the central role, the connections implying that most people who volunteer with a non-religious organisation will also volunteer with a religious one as well.

Volunteering with socially-oriented organisations is higher than with politically-oriented organisations. Only 8% of people volunteer with two or more politically-oriented CSOs, while 21% of people volunteer with two or more socially-oriented CSOs. 37% of people volunteer with both a socially-oriented and politically-oriented CSOs.

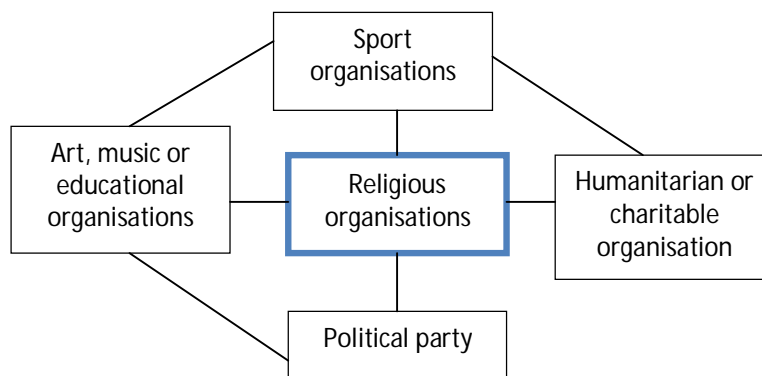
As we have seen in other countries, the average CSO volunteer in Togo is male, of adult working age, from the lower middle class and lives in a town or city. At the same time, one in four CSO volunteers is a young person. As in previous cases, a comparison between volunteers with socially-oriented CSOs and politically-oriented CSOs show that the latter group contains more men, are older and are relatively wealthier.

In Togo the majority of volunteers with socially-oriented CSOs spend up to 20 hours a month in volunteering, while 58% of volunteers with politically-oriented CSOs spend more than 20 hours a month, with a quarter of them spending more than 40 hours a month volunteering with a politically-oriented CSO.

4.4 Zambia

In Zambia, 72.8% of people surveyed volunteer with a socially-oriented CSO. Again, participation is mostly associated with religious activities. There is highest CSO volunteering with a 'traditional triangle' of religious organisations, sports organisations and cultural and educational organisations, with less with humanitarian or charitable organisations and political parties. When people volunteer with more than one organisation, in Zambia there is a high likelihood that at least one of these organisations will be a religious one.

The map of volunteerism in Zambia visualises this pre-eminence of religious volunteering, with all other organisational types playing a secondary role.



The picture shows that the connection between volunteering with religious organisations and volunteering with other organisations is stronger than volunteering with any two types of non-religious organisation. This is markedly similar to the situation in Liberia.

As in other African countries, volunteering with socially-oriented organisations is more widespread than in politically-based organisations: 16% of CSO volunteers with Zambia serve three or more socially based organisations, while only 7% of people volunteer with three of politically-based organisations. At the same time volunteering with both types of organisations simultaneously is quite common – 43% of people reported that they are involved in the activity of both a socially-oriented and a politically-oriented organisation.

The average CSO volunteer in Zambia is of adult working age, describes her/his income as lower-middle class or lower, and lives in a town or city, with no significant difference between women and men. The income distribution of CSO volunteers in Zambia does not differ significantly from the income distribution of people as a whole.

More than half of CSO volunteers in Zambia spend between 10 and 40 hours a month on volunteer work, with no real difference between volunteering with social and political CSOs. The level of episodic volunteerism (defined as up to 10 hours a month) among volunteers with socially-oriented and politically-oriented CSOs is also very similar. A more significant difference is seen amongst those who volunteer for 41 hours a month or more; there are more volunteers in politically-oriented than socially-oriented CSOs who devote this amount of time to volunteerism, which seems to be consistent across the countries studied. One can suggest this heavy time allocation arises out of deep commitment to pursue a particular cause or interest.

4.5 Ghana

CSI in Ghana used the results of World Values Survey to examine civic engagement level. This research hasn't covered volunteerism questions in Ghana. That's why the level of organisational volunteerism is assessed according to the results of the Organisational Survey. 90 CSOs in Ghana were surveyed and the absolute majority reported that they use volunteers in their daily activity. However the level of intensity in using volunteer forces is low – the average amount of volunteers in the organisation is 6. Individual political activism can be used as indirect indicator of volunteer engagement. 13% of people in Ghana took part at least in one type of political actions (signing petitions, joining boycotts or peaceful demonstrations). Half of them took part in peaceful

demonstrations and another half used the other two types of activities to express their political interests. The interesting issue should be highlighted – individual political activists in Ghana are two times less trustful than those who don't participate in any kind of political actions.

5 Volunteers as essential resources in CSOs

One of the pictures that emerges from the CSI in Africa is of a heavy reliance by CSOs on volunteers to fulfil their functions.

For example, in Morocco the view is that “unpaid volunteering is an important pillar of the functioning of most organisations ... volunteering without any reimbursement is the case for 86 out of 104 members of professional associations, for 46 out of 70 members of development organisations; and for 40 out of 49 members of environmental organisations.” They add, “Voluntary work is crucial, especially since a vast majority of CSOs do not have any salaried employees. The development of civil society therefore strongly continues to rely on voluntary workers' contributions. With CSOs lacking in their own financial resources, voluntary workers are a vital source to the development of civil society.” In Zambia, 70% of CSOs surveyed report that they depend on volunteers to function.

This reliance by CSOs on volunteers presents challenges both for volunteers and CSOs: turnover of volunteers as compared to paid staff presents a challenge for CSOs in the continuity of their operations, while the financial and infrastructural challenges of many CSOs mean they are often incapable of supporting volunteers adequately. Zambia, for example, reports that, “after volunteers have joined the organisation and received training, they move on to bigger CSOs or international donor agencies for more attractive conditions of service”. Similarly, Tanzania notes, “Volunteering within organisations is not permanent and it is unreliable. As evidenced above, human and financial resources are the major challenges that affect civil society.”

Morocco reports that often, because of gaps in education and employment, “voluntary workers lack the necessary skills and experience needed and that affects the quality of output or outcome of CSOs and their projects. Further, mobilising voluntary workers seems to be becoming difficult due to potential volunteers' lack of time and competition with paid activities. Organisations are said to have significant needs but find it difficult to define them, organise them and then mobilise the required human resources. CSOs also note that the reception arrangements and proper management systems of voluntary workers is generally very weak or even non-existent. Voluntary workers are often left by themselves unsupported and rarely receive any positive feedback for their work.”

6 Gender and diversity in volunteering

Gender and diversity indicators for the eight countries examined presents varying evidence on the participation of women, men, young people and rural and urban people in CSO volunteering. Depending on the context and reason for volunteering, there are instances in some of more volunteering and active participation by women than men, while in others the inverse is true. There is also evidence of healthy participation by young people as volunteers.

Morocco for example presents a mixed picture of gender representation and diversity depending on context. For instance, although 4.6% of men compared to 2.9% of women volunteer in organisations, women are more involved than men (1.4% versus 0.9%) in human rights organisations. As for educational and cultural organisations, female voluntary membership is relatively high, at 5.4%, but compares to 6.9% for men. In sport and recreational organisations voluntary rates are relatively

higher all round, but with a significant gap between men and women (9.1% versus 6.2%), while in professional associations, voluntary rates are at similar levels depending on gender (1.1% for women and 1.2% for men). Voluntary workers in Morocco are predominantly young people, defined in this context as people under 35 years old.

Similarly in Zambia, women's participation in various political processes was lower than men's, and young people were reported as mostly engaged in sports-related activities. However in Tanzania, youth and women's organisations were noted as having more members who tend to volunteer.

7 Challenges to volunteering

The challenges to volunteering captured in the CSI include those of the effects of rural to urban migration and modernisation, which sees a concentration of CSOs in urban areas and a loss of traditional community ties that might motivate volunteering.

Barriers against more politically-oriented volunteering include the broader barriers against political expression and weak practices of democratic pluralism in some contexts. Political systems that favour a particular party and silence alternative viewpoints chill the space for political expression and action.

In Zambia, there is a sense that participation is on the decline: "Compared to the early 1990s, when multi-party politics were reintroduced in the country, there seems to have been a gradual drop in citizen participation in political activities over the years." Among other reasons given for declining participation is that people have insufficient time, as they spend much of their time at places of work or in search of work and money. The effects of the economic crisis on participation and volunteering still need to be assessed and understood.

8 Recommendations

Recommendations given by the country partners to promote volunteering in Africa include the following:

- CSOs should engage volunteers in long-term, regular commitments, rather than ad-hoc projects.
- Volunteering should be better recognised and should have meaningful impact in CVs, including through award or recognition schemes.
- Those who receive volunteers should prepare certificates recognising voluntary workers, volunteers and trainee's contributions. Their contribution could be taken into account in the development of their professional careers and in their social development.
- Better management systems should be in place for volunteer sending and receiving organisations.
- CSO should clarify processes and procedures for the voluntary worker while specifying the reception arrangements, the follow-up mechanisms and the ways of expressing gratitude towards voluntary contribution, in particular by keeping records of the time they devote to civil society.
- CSOs should be given training and capacity building in working with volunteers.
- Governments and CSOs should make large-scale calls for voluntary work initiatives.
- Governments should create new opportunities of undertaking voluntary work especially in education and recreational areas.

- Governments should develop and adopt a status that specifies the duties and the rights of the active voluntary worker.
- CSOs should consolidate and develop partnerships with the state by receiving skilled and voluntary personnel from governments to contribute to their activities. This could also be a reciprocal process with CSOs sending volunteers to state institutions.
- CSOs and academia should develop the practice of professional supervised and valuable internships and promote the carrying out of studies on civil society by young researchers.
- CSOs should develop collaborations and partnerships with universities, research centres and training institutions.