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Volunteer-based solution for the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development :

Volunteer Contribution in the SDGs process, Accomplishments, and the Way Forward

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Abstract

On 17 November 2020, in close collaboration with the UN Volunteers Programme and Social Change Factory, UNIDEP organized a webinar “Transformative Youth Volunteerism to Accelerate SDGs during the Covid19 Period”. Distinguished speakers) stressed the needs of special support for the members and leaders of the youth community including women, in the context of Africa and in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, ii) presented best practices on effective interventions through volunteering in the global, regional and national level, and iii) put forward recommendations to further advance the work building upon the accomplishments (Centre for social Change, 2020, UNV,2020).

As a key document following the above-mentioned webinar, this policy brief is to provide decision makers and -advisors engaged in the leading process of national economic and social planning with the overview of latest research results. The research includes the value and the benefit of encouraging civic engagement through formal and informal volunteering, as well as special efforts made for guidance and intervention in global, regional and national level, which furnishes a foundation of their intelligence in realizing the opportunity of volunteering as citizen’s contribution to national prosperity. This policy brief will conclude by proposing the way forward to build upon the pivotal milestones achieved so far to further advance the public welfare.

Hence, at the end of reading this policy brief, readers will have immediate answers to questions as follows:

- Volunteers worldwide - what scale are we talking about it?
 - o What is the economic contribution of volunteering ?
 - o What kind of social benefits are expected from volunteering ?

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- Volunteers worldwide - what scale are we talking about it?
 - o What is the economic contribution of volunteering?
 - o What kind of social benefits are expected from volunteering?
- How is volunteering relevant to Covid-19 intervention and support for youth in African context?
- What are the efforts made in the promotion of volunteering and what are the accomplishments, especially following the whole of UN approach?
- What can be potential framework(s) to further acknowledge contributions of volunteering?
- What is the urgent homework to realize more effective and efficient promotion of volunteering and acknowledging the contributions of volunteering in the SDGs processes?

1. Background

1.1. Economic contribution : Volunteering, what scale are we talking about?

'One billion' is the number of populations in entire Sub-Saharan Africa or of the whole American Continent. Globally, an estimated one billion volunteers carrying out a range of roles in their communities and societies for the greater good. The amount captured as the economic contribution of those one billion volunteers worldwide is 'Two trillion USD' in consideration of the global GDP in 2019. This is more than the highest annual GDP of Sub-Saharan Africa in history was recorded at 1.827 trillion USD in 2014 (UNV, 2015) "The current global partnership for development has failed to redress the patent imbalances in the international trade and financial systems" (Karingi et alii, 2015: 112). The question is: How can Africa address, from a macroeconomic perspective, the imbalances in the international trade and financial systems, especially in the context of a global health emergency that will deepen social and economic inequalities?

The United Kingdom estimates 13 million volunteer hours per year supported by 78,000 volunteers in the health sector. Mongolia estimates volunteers' contribution nearly 4 million hours of service which is a value of 2 million USD per year (UK Department of education, 2019) Rwanda's peace was made by the Abunzi mediation committees comprising 18,000 volunteers providing alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. In Cambodia, 240,000 people were provided to access to medical services by 3,600 volunteer doctors (UN SDG Knowledge Hub, 2018)

1.1. Economic contribution : Volunteering, what scale are we talking about?

On top of its economic contributions, volunteering is acknowledged as an essential component of the fabric of a "good society". 'Social capital' is an important concept to understand how volunteering contributes to national peace and development. Social capital often occurs with shared norms, values and understandings based on the trust of members of society and, therefore, it facilitates cooperation within or among individuals and groups. Studies have shown that civic engagement, like volunteering,

and trust of members of society are closely and positively related, which strongly implies that volunteering brings social capital. Recent UN-led studies also conclude that people of a nation, where social trust is built, are happier, irrespectively of its national wealth. No doubt that a country with its satisfied people will likely prosper with national peace and development.

Against this background, volunteering is one of the indicators as resources for the future well-being of a country. Volunteering produces benefits not only for the beneficiaries but also for the volunteers themselves as it helps people to acquire skills and enhance career development or employment prospects, and it has correlation with levels of life satisfaction and health. This is well-portrayed by century-old wisdom: “Those who are happiest are those who do the most for others” - Booker T. Washington.

Figure 1. Population in 2020 Estimated (except Asia) and the Total Number of Volunteers Worldwide Estimated ¹³

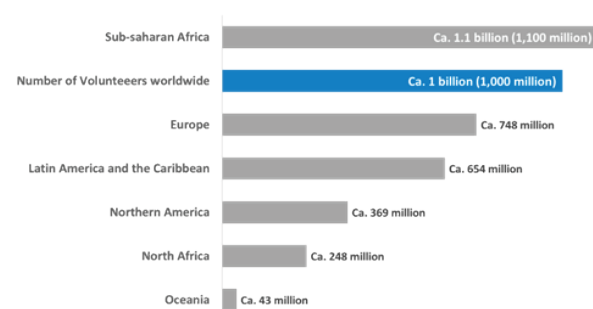
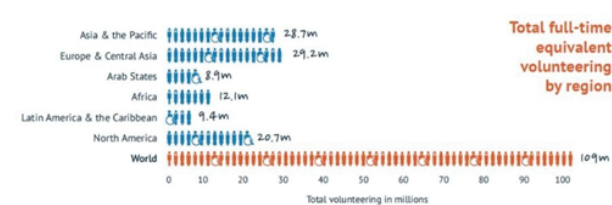


Figure 2. Total Full-time Volunteering in Millions ¹⁴



Putnam, R.D(2000). Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. New York: Simon & Schuster; ISBN: 978-3-658-1321-5

Helliwell, J.F., Layard, R., Sachs, J. and De Neve, J.-E., Eds. (2020) World Happiness Report. Sustainable Development Solutions Network, New York.

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11 Up from Slavery by Booker T. Washington Chapter 4: Helping Others

<https://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/92/up-from-slavery/1581/chapter-4-helping-others/>

Worldometer (2020) Regions in the world by population available online at

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<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2018%20The%20thread%20that%20binds%20final.pdf>)

The socioeconomic impact of the pandemic and the role of debt and fiscal policies in the crisis mitigation

According to WTO, the world trade is expected to fall by between 13% and 32% in 2020 as the Covid-19 pandemic disrupts normal economic activity and life around the world. Crisis might also mean opportunity: the COVID-19 might have a positive impact over trade on individual member-states, according to the If similarly, African countries refrain themselves from controls over imports/exports within the continent and other restrictive measures to free trade, the AfCFTA will be a crucial tool over domestic resource mobilization, as stated in (i) and (ii):

i. AfCFTA priorities

Health related and social services were not immediate priorities on the AfCFTA. Therefore, UNECA recommends the African countries to submit liberalized services schedules, using COVID-19 as an opportunity to boost intercontinental free trade and services, these last ones also stemming from the private sector. This is the momentum to take maximum advantage of the AfCFTA, considering that Africa's global GDP is particularly dependent on its commodities' trade.

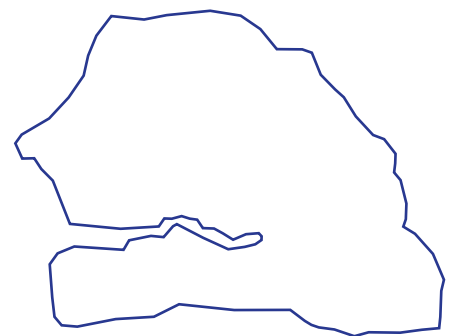
ii. AfCFTA and trade policy responses

Concurrently to recommendation stated in (i), WTO defends that the AfCFTA shall drive the post-pandemic economic recovery and sustainable development on the African continent, combined with national trade policy responses focusing on facilitating imports of food and medical supplies. This can be achieved by simplifying the customs procedures for the entry of goods and waiving applicable customs duties.

Senegal: sharing good experiences

Senegal resilience

The Republic of Senegal, like governments worldwide has enacted measures to address and contain the crisis and keep the economic flow. The Economic Advisor at the Office of the President, Daouda Sembene (PhD) reflected on those measures, sharing the clear roadmap that Senegal has adopted and its effectiveness and measurability in the short and long run.



The monetary and financial impact and the optimal responses from the monetary and fiscal perspective that can be implemented by governments: Senegal's experience:

A two-folded approach on the fiscal and monetary policies have been adopted by the government of Senegal:

Government Response

- **Central Bank**
- **Strengthening of the health system**
- **Enhancement of Social resilience**
- **Preservation of macroeconomic and financial stability to support the private sector and protect jobs.**
- **Supply chains mechanisms.**
- **Interest rate cuts.**
- **Easy access to refinancing options.**
- **Supporting microfinance institutions.**
- **Promoting the use of digital payments.**

UN Support to the Senegalese Response to Covid19 pandemic: the perspective from the United Nations (UN) Secretary General recommendations

The UN, through its 27 agencies in Senegal have adopted a nimble and responsive approach to the changing perspective of the pandemic. The vision of tackling the pandemic is per the Paris Climate and the Agenda 2063 frameworks with guidance from the country's national plan. The key overarching objectives are to suppress the transmission of the virus to control the pandemic; safeguard people's lives and their livelihoods and to learn from this crisis in order to be well prepared.

The UN Resident Coordinator, Lena Savelli, shared the Secretary General's sentiments that congruence, collaboration and coordination between all UN agencies is critical at this time in the organization's quest of ensuring that no one is left behind and also to leverage on the comparative advantage and the expertise that these bring forth. Through these concerted efforts, a gender sensitive approach to the critical needs and areas have been identified and are currently being responded to as quickly as. These being:

- **Gender inequality**
- **Socio economic assistance and issues of disproportionate vulnerabilities**
- **Human rights**
- **Social protection**

The afore listed issues are being tackled using the UN Framework for immediate socio economic response

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