



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEERISM POLICY

February, 2015

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FORWARD

The Ministry of Labour Social Security and Services is mandated under the Executive order No. 2 of 2013 to develop the National Volunteerism policy. The Ministry with other stakeholders has developed the National Volunteerism Policy draft. This Policy sets out the definition, guidelines, modes and principles of Volunteerism in Kenya. It identifies issues on volunteerism and outlines policy statements and strategic interventions. The Policy proposes the establishment of a National volunteer Board and Secretariat. It also provides for an institutional and implementation framework.

This policy was developed in a consultative and participatory manner in line with the constitutional requirement by involving the public and stakeholder engagement. A lot of dedicated effort and great commitment has gone into the development of this policy. I therefore wish to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to the Members of the National Steering Committee, the National Technical Working Group, UNDP/UNV and VSO Jitolee for their invaluable contribution towards the development of this policy. I am grateful to Dr. Manu Chandaria for his candid opinions and commitment throughout the development of this policy. Special thanks to staff from my Ministry, Volunteer Involving Organizations society, volunteers and members of the public who contributed in the policy development whose contributions helped in shaping the Kenya National Volunteerism Policy

The recommendations in this policy and their implementation will require huge financial commitments and technical support. I am confident that all stakeholders will work in partnership to help mobilise these resources as well as fully participate in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programs proposed in this policy.

It is our conviction that the policy will serve to facilitate the volunteerism programme in the economic and social aspects for our inclusive growth through Kenya Vision 2030, the second Medium Term Plan (MTP II) and other development frameworks.

**Amb. Raychelle Omamo, SC
Ag. Cabinet Secretary
Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services**

Executive Summary

The National Volunteerism Policy is anchored on the Constitution of Kenya, the Kenya Vision 2030 strategy and the Second Medium Term Plan (MTP II).

The overall objective of this policy is to provide guidelines on efficient and effective coordination, management and sustenance of volunteerism in Kenya. It will seek to ensure that volunteerism is embedded within the national economic policies.

This policy gives a working definition of volunteerism in Kenya. It highlights the current situation of volunteerism in Kenya that is not nationally coordinated. It also provides the volunteerism guiding principles, modes and categories.

The policy further identifies issues and challenges facing the volunteerism sector. Amongst these challenges is lack of a legal framework to promote volunteerism, lack of synergy of volunteerism programs, undefined program for National, regional and international volunteers. The policy indicates the expected technical support, funding, resource mobilization and management strategies. The government, non-state actors and academia are identified as the key players in the implementation of the policy. It recommends the establishment of a National Volunteerism Board and Secretariat to promote, regulate, coordinate and implement volunteer programs in Kenya. The policy recommends the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation framework, management information systems, and a communication and influencing strategies which the policy will be monitored and evaluated at the National level.

Owing to the emerging volunteering trends and priorities in Kenya, the policy is subject for review and update.

ACRONYMS AND ABREVIATIONS

CBO	Community Based Organisation
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
GoK	Government of Kenya
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IVD	International Volunteer Day
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information Systems
MTP II	Medium Term Plan II
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NYS	National Youth Service
NVS	National Volunteer Secretariat
NWW	National Volunteer Week
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
UN	United Nations
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VIOs	Volunteer Involving Organisations
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas

Definition of Terms

Volunteers: These are the individuals or groups that offer their time, skills or resources to provide services by free choice for the benefit of other individuals, communities or nations, without the expectation of financial gain other than reimbursement of reasonable expenses. It also includes the organization that offers such services.

Volunteerism: the offering of an individual's or group's time, skills or resources to provide services by free choice for the benefit of other individuals, communities or nations, without the expectation of financial gain other than reimbursement of reasonable expenses.

Academia: formal and informal accumulation of knowledge, and its development and transmission.

Unrelated: different in mandate and scope.

Formal volunteering: assistance provided through organizations, either mutual-benefit associations in which the beneficiary is the membership or community-oriented service organizations that benefit clients or others outside the organization

Informal volunteering: personal assistance that may not carry mutual benefits which benefit members of the community or even a particular organization.

National Volunteer Programs – Programs initiated and ran by Government and volunteer involving organizations society.

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND

1.0. Introduction

The Kenya Vision 2030, the Second Medium Term Plan (MTP II) and the Government's Social Economic Development Agenda consider volunteerism as a critical national asset to facilitate Kenya's attainment of its socio-economic goals; including the MDG's and thereafter contribute to Post-2015 development agenda.

Volunteerism contributes immensely to the country's social, economic and political development. Volunteer activities and practices have however remained uncoordinated and inadequately supported at national level.

Volunteering is considered a philanthropic act intended to promote good practice or improve the quality of life for the beneficiaries and society at large. Although certain characteristics of volunteerism are common, the terms that define it and the forms of its expression vary depending on the culture and geographical aspect. Its meaning and scope also vary.

In Kenya, volunteerism has been practised both informally and formally. Volunteers derive certain benefits from their volunteering activities by acquiring skills, knowledge, motivation, and enhancement of their networks. The act is carried out by youth and women, retired professionals, active professionals, persons with disabilities (PWDs) among others.

The volunteerism sector continues to grow with emerging trends. Such sectors include Government initiated volunteer programs.

This policy therefore, provides a framework through which the country can inclusively engage volunteers to optimize on their resources and opportunities. This will go a long way to supplement government efforts in attaining planned national goals, both at national and county levels.

1.2 The Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote and guide the development of a strong volunteer sector in order to optimize the sector's contribution to Kenya's economic, social and political development.

1.3 Rationale

It shall be the policy of the State to promote the participation of the various sectors of the Kenyan society, and as necessary, international and foreign volunteer organisations in public and civic affairs. It will further adopt and strengthen the practice of volunteerism as a strategy in order to attain national development and international understanding. The inculcation of volunteerism as a way of life shall foster social justice, solidarity and sustainable development.

1.4 Situation analysis

Volunteering is generally considered a philanthropic activity and is intended to promote good or improve the quality of life for the beneficiaries and society in general. Although it occurs in every society in the world, the terms that define it and the forms of its expression may vary in different cultures and languages. Its meaning and scope therefore vary from country to country or from region to region.

In spite of its ethnic and geographical diversity, volunteerism has certain common characteristics, on the basis of which the scope of volunteer activities may be delineated in the Kenyan context.

Volunteerism is recognised within many cultures and religious faiths. Certain types of volunteer activities may be considered as social or religious obligation and therefore entail a degree of compulsion. However, in such circumstances “social obligation, such as peer pressure, parental pressure, or expectations of social groups, does not make the activity compulsory.”¹

In Kenya, it is acknowledged that volunteers derive certain benefits from their volunteering activities e.g skills enhancement and increased possibility for regular employment, responsible citizenship and a sense of contribution to community development.

Volunteer management approaches, practises, guidelines and policies also vary from institution to institution leading to duplication and uncoordinated efforts. Different organisations have had distinct approaches towards mobilisation, recruitment, induction, training, engagement, motivation, retention and transition of volunteers.

The situation in Kenya has been characterised by volunteering in the forms of youth, retired professionals, women, active professionals, persons with disabilities among others.

1. 5 Guiding Principles

The following shall be the guiding volunteerism principles:

- i. Respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms as provided by the constitution, legislation and international instruments;
- ii. Volunteerism is not carried out in expectation of any financial gain;
- i. Volunteers participate on the basis of freely expressed consent;
- ii. Volunteering is not an alternate for employment or internship;
- iii. Volunteerism based on a National Volunteer code of conduct;
- iv. Volunteer recruitment based on equal opportunity and non-discrimination.

1. 6 Modes of Volunteerism

This policy recognises the following modes of volunteerism:

- a. **Disaster preparedness, management and response:** This relates to providing volunteer services in awareness creation on disaster mitigation measures and responding to emergencies.
- b. **Communal (Mutual Aid or Self Help):** These are collective endeavours where people with shared views, needs, interests or challenges join forces to address them.
- c. **Philanthropy:** Philanthropy involves providing individual or collective service to others in form of financial, professional or in-kind.
- d. **Advocacy and Civic Engagement:** This is a service offered by individuals or groups of people in creating awareness and lobbying for better governance.

1.7 Categories of Volunteerism

The policy recognises the following categories of volunteers:

- i. Youth Volunteers – These are young people aged between 18-35years as enshrined in the constitution.
- ii. Retired Volunteers – These are individuals retired from formal employment offering their services voluntarily.
- iii. Online Volunteers – Individuals or groups of people offering volunteer services virtually.
- iv. Institutional Based Volunteers– These includes individuals or groups offering volunteer services through organisations or institutions.
- v. International Volunteers – These are Kenyans and non-Kenyans offering volunteer services in Kenya and abroad.
- vi. Diaspora volunteers – These are Kenyan citizens living abroad who come to Kenya to offer volunteer services.
- vii. Community based volunteers – These are individuals or groups that are engaging in volunteer activities informally within their communities.
- viii. Children volunteers – These include Kenyans below the age of 18years engaging in volunteer activities under guidance of an adult or institution.
- ix. Government volunteer initiatives
- x. Professional volunteers – These are individuals who are in active formal employment in various sectors and offer their services voluntarily on part time basis.

CHAPTER TWO: POLICY OBJECTIVES, STATEMENTS AND INTERVENTIONS

2.0. Policy Objectives

The overall objective of this policy is to provide guidelines on efficient and effective coordination, management and sustenance of volunteerism in Kenya. The specific objectives are:

1. Establish a Volunteer framework and management systems.
2. To create guidelines for effective protection of the rights of institutions, volunteers and beneficiaries.
3. To establish a platform for quantifying and strengthening qualitative evidence-based volunteer contribution to national development.
4. To define volunteerism, its forms, categories and modes.

2.1 Policy Measures

The policy has developed measures to address some emerging policy issues and the strategies for their realisation. These issues and their consequent strategic intervention are as highlighted below:

2.1.1 *Definition*

There has not been a standard definition and understanding of volunteerism in Kenya. Volunteerism has been defined differently by different entities in line with their institutional understanding.

Policy Statement

This policy has provided a working definition of volunteerism in Kenya which is the offering of an individual's or group's time, skills or resources to provide services by free choice for the benefit of other individuals, communities or nations without the expectation of financial gain other than reimbursement of reasonable expenses. This can be done directly or indirectly through VIOs and Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) including national, international public, private and civil entities.

2.2. Policy and Legislative Measures

There is no legislation, regulations or laws guiding volunteerism in Kenya.

Policy statement

The Government and stakeholders shall develop an Act of Parliament on volunteerism.

2.3. *Coordination*

VIOs' and MDAs' volunteer activities are not coordinated.

Policy Statement

The Government in collaboration with stakeholders shall put in place an effective coordination mechanism for all volunteer activities.

2.4. Ineffective *Data management*

Data on volunteerism is segregated and not updated in a centralized area. Lack of this researched, qualified and quantified information makes the Government unable to include volunteer activities in its development plans and budgets.

Policy Statement

The Government in collaboration with stakeholders shall conduct periodic surveys/studies on volunteer contribution to the country's development goals including to the GDP. The management of the data will be centralized

2.5 *Volunteerism and Formal employment*

Volunteerism is equated to formal employment by the country's labour Laws.

Policy Statement

The Government in collaboration with stakeholders shall lobby for the recognition of volunteerism to the existing labour laws.

2.6 *Rules and regulations for Volunteers*

Inadequate guidelines on protection of rights and welfare of volunteers; incentives, trainings, taxes, allowances, safety and insurance.

Policy statement

The Government in collaboration with stakeholders shall provide guidelines and measures to protect and promote volunteer welfare.

2.7 *Resources*

Inadequate financial and technical support from Government to VIOs and MDAs, those contribute significantly to national development goals.

Policy Statement

The Government shall support VIOs and MDAs that significantly contribute to the national development agenda with technical and financial support.

2.8. *Volunteerism Awareness*

Volunteerism in Kenya is sometimes equated with internship and compulsory community schemes in various institutions.

Policy statement

The Government in collaboration with stakeholders shall create national awareness programs on volunteerism

2.9 *Arbitration, Sanctions and accreditation*

No national structure exists for the coordination, accreditation, arbitration, recognition, motivation, sanctions and award system for volunteers, VIOs and MDAs.

Policy Statement

- i. The Government in collaboration with all stakeholders shall put up a national institutional structure to coordinate all volunteer activities in the country.
- ii. The National Volunteerism Board will be established.

2.10. *Empowerment programme*

The spirit of volunteerism is not institutionalised and inculcated amongst Kenyans.

Policy Statement

- i. The government with stakeholders shall establish a program to institutionalize volunteerism within families' structures and education curriculum.
- ii. The National and County governments shall spearhead mainstreaming and promotion of volunteerism within MDAs and the private sector.

2.11 *Implementation platform*

No program for professional Kenyan volunteers at national, regional and international level.

Policy Statement

The government shall establish a program for professional Kenyan volunteers at national, regional and international levels.

2.12 *strategic interventions*

The Government with other stakeholders shall use the following strategic interventions for the promotion of volunteerism and implementation of this policy.

- i. Develop an Act of Parliament on volunteerism
- ii. Establish the National Volunteer Secretariat and Board
- iii. Conduct surveys / research on volunteerism contribution to the country's development goals including to the GDP and centralise data management
- iv. Support VIOs and MDAs that significantly contribute to national development
- v. Develop an acceptable volunteerism curriculum for basic and higher education and programs for the family unit to inculcate volunteer values
- vi. Mainstream volunteerism within MDAs, County Governments and private sector
- vii. Develop and implement programs for national, regional and international volunteer programs for Kenyan professionals
- viii. Lobby regional and international political bodies to recognize Kenyan regional and international volunteers
- ix. Observe every year the National Volunteer week (NVW) preceding the International Volunteer day (IVD) every 5th of December.

CHAPTER THREE: FUNDING AND SUPPORT

This policy identifies the following modes of funding and technical support for volunteer practices in Kenya:

3.0 Government Funding

The Government shall make efforts to fund and provide technical support to VIOs and MDAs in order to enhance their service delivery and promote volunteerism in Kenya.

The Government shall endeavour to;

- i. Ensure that adequate resources are allocated to volunteerism in a predictable, gradual and long term manner;
- ii. Encourage the use of devolved funds to support volunteerism;
- iii. Support the National Volunteerism Secretariat to establish systems to ensure equity, transparency and reporting on volunteerism;
- iv. Facilitate the National Volunteerism Board, National Volunteerism Secretariat and oversight committee through funding by the exchequer to execute their functions.

3.1 Non – state Actors’ Funding and Support

I. The Private sector

As a Corporate Social Responsibility, this policy expects the private sector to fund and provide technical support to the volunteerism sector in Kenya.

II. Development Partners

The Government and its development Partners shall work closely to ensure that volunteerism thrive and is funded in a regular, predictable and sustainable way.

III. Volunteer Involving Organizations

NGOs, Trusts, CBOs, Self Help Groups, Foundations, and FBOs are recognized as major supporters of volunteerism in Kenya. They shall be coordinated and assisted by the National Volunteer Secretariat to review, strengthen and align themselves to those other actors to maximize of the synergies thereof.

3.2 Academia

The Ministry of Education in collaboration with the ministry in charge of volunteerism and other stakeholders shall endeavour to encourage educational institutions to support and fund volunteerism.

Management of Finances

The finances allocated to volunteerism shall be managed efficiently for the benefit of the beneficiaries.

CHAPTER FOUR: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

One of the critical challenges facing volunteerism in Kenya is the lack of an institutional framework and a coordination mechanism for volunteer efforts. Currently, volunteer activities are managed differently by VIOs, line Ministries and agencies. As a result there has been lack of synergy and proper documentation in the volunteerism field.

4.0 Role of Government

The Government shall facilitate and encourage the participation of the volunteerism sector in the promotion, utilization and recognition of volunteerism in national development and international cooperation. This shall be achieved through the provision of enabling and conducive environment for volunteer work.

4.1 National Volunteerism Board

The Government shall establish a National Volunteerism Board that shall be responsible for overall legislation, policy coordination, strategic interventions, programs and resource directions on volunteerism in Kenya. The Board shall be the highest organ in spearheading the promotion of volunteerism in Kenya.

The Board shall be appointed by the Cabinet Secretary in charge of Volunteerism from a list of nominees submitted from VIOs Society and MDAs.

4.2 Role of the National Volunteer Secretariat

The National Volunteer Secretariat (NVS) shall be established to coordinate and manage volunteer activities within the Ministry responsible for Volunteer activities.

The Secretariat shall implement all decisions made by the Board.

4.3 National Volunteerism Trust Fund

A National Volunteerism Trust Fund shall be established and managed by the National Volunteerism Board. The Trust comprising of the Government, the private Sector and Volunteer Involving Organizations Society will govern the finances for the National Volunteer Programs.

CHAPTER FIVE: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A framework within which the policy will be monitored and evaluated at the National Level shall be developed. It will be monitored under the framework of NIMES. Volunteerism measures shall be monitored within line ministries, VIOs and the National Volunteerism Secretariat which shall specifically monitor the strategies, programs and interventions developed within the framework of this policy. Monitoring shall focus on whether this policy is being implemented fully and within the set timeframes.

Evaluation shall be conducted by the National Volunteering Secretariat to ascertain whether the policy objectives are being achieved within specified timeframes against measurable indicators. Impact assessment surveys shall be conducted by VIOs and implementing agencies together with the National Volunteerism Secretariat. This shall aim at ascertaining the impact of Volunteer contribution to the GDP, and towards achieving national goals.

The Government and other stakeholders shall use the M&E reports in designing and planning for follow up programs. An M&E framework shall be developed to track and review progress against performance targets and indicators that shall be used from the lessons learnt to adjust the programs when and where necessary. VIOs and other volunteer agencies shall be crucial in the implementation of the M&E framework and the Government shall consider them as partners in ensuring that this policy is put into effect.

CHAPTER SIX: MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

Management Informational Systems (MIS) and a communication framework are essential to the implementation of this policy. An effective MIS and communication framework enables stakeholders to communicate both vertically and horizontally. This information helps management to make strategic, tactical and operational decisions in an efficient and productive manner.

6.0 Objectives of the MIS:

1. Strategic objective ~ Tracking outcomes and the effectiveness of strategies and resources in enhancing volunteerism
2. Operational objectives ~ Tracking outputs and determining implementation plans and delivery systems that can be strengthened to increase the achievement of outputs.
3. Learning objectives- Providing evidence to improve on volunteerism outcomes, identifying strategies and policies that work, and ensuring that all lessons learnt are shared with all the stakeholders.

Various VIOs and Government agencies in the field of volunteerism have datasets that are fragmented and uncoordinated.

Innovations in information and communication technology shall be used to manage and facilitate running of the MIS. The MIS shall also link with the other Government information systems such as the e-government and County Information and Resource Centres.

6.1 The MIS shall specifically perform the following functions:-

- i. Maintain an updated database on all volunteerism stakeholders including VIOs, MDAs and individuals.
- ii. Maintain an inventory of all volunteerism programs and activities.
- iii. Maintain and distribute records of volunteer contributions to the country's goals on quarterly and annual basis.
- iv. A platform for learning, knowledge sharing and planning.

6.2 Collection and Management of Data

All implementers in the volunteerism field shall be responsible for the collection and management of data that shall feed into the national MIS created at the National Secretariat.

The National Volunteerism Secretariat shall assist the VIOs and other stakeholders to:

- i. Develop information systems by establishing and improving their data collecting systems and establishing common information systems.
- ii. Participate in the development and adoption of guidelines to improve in data collection.
- iii. Set up common databases and reporting systems.

- iv. Develop systems to facilitate the management, sharing and wider dissemination of information.
- v. The National Volunteerism Secretariat shall help stakeholders to collect data and to prepare annual and other regular reports.

Policy statement

The Government in collaboration with other stakeholders shall;

- i. Develop a data base on all forms of volunteerism and volunteer activities in Kenya.
- ii. Capture VIOs' and MDAs' volunteer programs at each county and maintain records of the same at national level.
- iii. Develop result indicators for all volunteer programs that shall be used at all levels to measure progress and impact.

6.3 Communication and Influencing Strategy

The Government recognises that volunteerism in Kenya is understood differently and at times misunderstood in the same measure. This has led to misconceptions and misinterpretation of volunteerism. This policy recognizes the importance of communication and advocacy on positively influencing mind sets on the wider understanding of volunteerism and its impact in the achievement of the national goals.

Policy statement

The Government in collaboration with stakeholders shall formulate a comprehensive National communication and influencing strategy.

7. CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The Government in collaboration with stakeholders shall develop an implementation framework to actualize this policy.

Five-year strategic plans shall be put in place to implement the policy and volunteerism plan in the country.

Policy Declaration

This policy provides flexibility to recognize emerging volunteering trends and programs in the country e.g. G – united.

CHAPTER EIGHT: POLICY REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed after every five years from the date of its adoption or at any time in response to the needs and demands of the people of Kenya.

Thematic Areas, Policy objectives and Recommendations.

See policy document

Achievements

1. The NVP has been developed with little financial resources within the shortest period. (Seven months)
2. Mobilization of an interministerial/agencies that formed the National Steering committee and the Technical working Group teams that helped the Policy development

Opportunities

1. Goodwill from the political arm, Corporate institutions, UN and influential individuals who are passionate with Volunteerism
2. A very good working relationships from the Volunteer involving

Challenges

Vested short time interests from some key stakeholders that may not be for the interest of long term volunteerism movement

Way forward

1. The Development of The National plan of Action for the implementation of the NVP
2. Establish the secretariat for to implement the policy recommendations/ programs at National, County and Sub County levels
3. Initiate activities for the development the national Volunteerism Act.
4. Coordinate the celebrations the UN day and week (international Volunteer Day) on 5th December at National and all Counties.
5. Launch the Policy immediately it is approved by the Cabinet.

Gekonge. J .G

THANK YOU