

# **The Art of Giving – Through Volunteerism and Philanthropy: The Ghana Experience**

CSPS WORKING PAPER SERIES No.2/12

**Ellen Bortei-Doku Aryeetey  
Dorcas Opai-Tetteh**

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APRIL 2012

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Ellen Bortei-Doku Aryeetey<sup>1</sup>  
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Published by  
Centre for Social  
Policy Studies (CSPS)  
Faculty of Social Studies  
University of Ghana, Legon

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Designed and Printed by  
Sundel Services, Accra  
0302 230474

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

ISSER            Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research

UNICEF        United Nations Children's Fund

MDGs           Millennium Development Goals

NGOs           Non-Governmental Organisations

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## ABSTRACT

The world has known a long history of philanthropy and volunteerism, in spite of its centuries of wars and often acrimonious social relations between adversaries. Traditional giving practices were and remain predominantly in the form of reciprocal exchange of goods and services between kin groups and their neighbours to sustain social capital. The objective of this working paper is to review the nature and practice of giving in general, but with special reference to Ghana. The aim is mainly to introduce the development community to the importance of social mobilization in the overall efforts at social progress by highlighting the contributions that charitable giving can make to social development. In the process the paper unveils some of the challenges that confront giving in Ghana. The discussion points out that while familial giving receives a lot of attention in the country, there is a growing incidence of civic giving taking place; some of it with support from public institutions. Having said that, it does appear that the scene is dominated by customary giving practices, which leave a lot of scope for advancing civic forms of giving. Religious beliefs, philosophical ideas and ethical principles have all contributed to the endurance of societal commitment to reciprocity and redistribution. The United Nations General Assembly in 1985 set aside 5<sup>th</sup> December every year to celebrate the International Volunteer Day. This has further created renewed interest in volunteer activities across the world. The paper relies mainly on secondary data on giving in Ghana and elsewhere. The main finding is that in developed economies where attractive policies are in place to encourage people to give to charity; huge amounts of funds can be mobilized for charity work. On the other hand in countries like Ghana though giving is common, especially as remittances and for funerals, philanthropy and volunteerism are largely unstructured and informal. . In addition, data on the scope and value of such practices is virtually non-existent, making it difficult to mobilize such funds for planned social development.

GLSS5	Ghana Living Standard Survey
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
VOLU	Voluntary Work Group Association
RVO	Robbooker Voluntary Organisation
VALCO	Volta Aluminium Company
YWCA	Young Women Christian Association
YMCA	Young Men Christian Association
GRC	Ghana Red Cross
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
NADMO	National Disaster Management Organisation
DVG	Disaster Volunteer Group

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The world has known a long history of philanthropy and volunteerism, in spite of its centuries of wars and protracted conflicts between racial groups, ethnic groups, clans, the rich and the poor or simply rulers and those they rule. Throughout history the practice of giving in its various forms has remained firmly embedded in human exchange. It is integral to the ancient practice of reciprocal exchange of goods and services between kin groups and their neighbours. Strong moral principles of fairness and social justice across religions, philosophical ideas and ethical principles have all contributed to the endurance of the commitment to reciprocity and social transfers.

In the wake of the social disruption from the industrial revolution in Europe philosophers like Immanuel Kant argued for the acceptance of a moral principle in his 18<sup>th</sup> Century - 'What I ought to do' - the idea of 'an unconditional giving without expectation of reward or merit - selflessness (Paton, 1964). Social activists have long sought to capitalize on this moral resource. Benjamin Franklin for example, is credited with having organized the first volunteered-based fire service in the world in 1736 in Philadelphia (Clinton, 2007). Skeptics have criticized the moral argument that altruism through volunteerism is a desirable virtue, noting that it is simply a Christian missionary tool used to control people and their resources. For philosophers like Illich (1968) volunteering especially overseas (by Americans) was nothing more than smokescreen for paternalism in international relations between rich and poor nations.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the scope of social problems that accompanied urbanization had led to the emergence of charities providing relief for the poor and destitute (Williams, 1999). The practice of giving began to take on formal characteristics. New organizational and legal structures were introduced to streamline the management of giving. This process intensified following the Second World War where philanthropy and volunteerism became institutionalized in the modern economy of Western Europe

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to thank the Centre for Social Policy Studies (CSPS) for the opportunity to present the original version of this working paper at the CSPS Monthly Seminar Series. I am equally grateful to the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (IS-SER), which funded primary data collection on volunteerism and philanthropy practices in Ghana, as part of a large panel study on living standards in Ghana. The final report on this topic based on the field data is under preparation. Many thanks also go to the CSPS Administration and publications staff who processed this document for publication. Last but not the least; I thank my colleagues Daniel Doh and Paul Andoh for their useful comments on drafts of this working paper.

## **1.1 Brief Background to the Practice of Charitable Giving**

Giving is the outcome of social mobilisation for people to go beyond their normal call of duty – popularly known as going the extra mile. It has been defined as the act of rallying people around common goals through voluntary commitment (UNICEF, 2011). This may be in the form of periodic campaigns or standing arrangements such as tax incentives. Social mobilisation creates a pool of combined energies from volunteers to achieve selected objectives for economic and social development. It involves a process of dialogue, negotiation, consensus and commitment of resources around issues and priorities for social action from local to international level. Typical forms of social action that flow from social mobilisation include provision of material benefits such as basic needs including food, clothing and shelter, as well as education, health care. In addition, social mobilisation is increasingly being used to promote governance and political capital through empowerment of vulnerable groups, partnership building, information dissemination, advocacy and lobbying for policy change, evolving common ideals. It is essential to have in place an attractive tax regime to encourage giving:

### ***1.1.2 Defining Charitable Giving***

To 'give' implies a positive act involving resource distribution, often free-of-charge. The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005) states this quite clearly:

*"Give [Provide] - To offer something to someone or to provide them with it". (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005 p.536)*

*"To give something to someone without asking for payment". (Ibid: P537)*

*"Give [Do] to perform an action." (Ibid. p537)*

and America. Steps were taken by various governments to clarify the goals, strategies and intended impacts of giving for a wider public. Demand for greater accountability in the operations of volunteer groups and charities increased, as well as, the need for more open and credible avenues for mobilizing gifts of funds or other materials and people's time and for distribution of such resources.

The objective of this working paper is to review the nature and practice of giving in general, but with special reference to Ghana. The aim is mainly to introduce the development community to the importance of social mobilization in the overall efforts at social progress by highlighting the contributions that charitable giving can make to social development. In the process the paper unveils some of the challenges that confront giving in Ghana. The discussion points out that while familial giving receives a lot of attention in the country, there is a growing incidence of civic giving taking place; some of it with support from public institutions. Having said that it does appear that the scene is dominated by customary giving practices which leave a lot of scope for advancing civic forms of giving.

Regrettably there is no database on the funds, donations in kind and time spent for free in the context of giving in Ghana. The paper forms part of a larger ongoing study on volunteerism and philanthropy in Ghana at Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana, involving about 5,000 households.

Information for the paper relied on a desk study of giving in Ghana. Data was gathered mainly from secondary sources. Most of the documents used were annual reports and progress reports of organisations involved in charitable giving. This was supplemented with limited interviews with some of the key organisations involved in mobilising donations and volunteers in the country.

### **1.3 The Significance of Giving in People's Lives and in Development**

For poor households everywhere volunteerism and philanthropy constitute major assets in their portfolio of social capital in general, providing safety valves against shocks, and filling gaps in basic needs that their own resources or the state cannot cover. In this respect giving is due recognition as an essential instrument in the attainment of the Millennium Development Goal 1 to halve poverty in the world by 2015.

Many development experts have already suggested that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cannot be realised without considerable volunteering effort and philanthropy from all countries. At the International Conference on Volunteerism and the Millennium Development Goals, which took place in Islamabad, Pakistan in 2004 it was made clear that volunteerism could have a major impact in identifying and supporting 'out of school youth' to return to the classroom or to learn employable skills.

## **2. CONTEXTS AND PATTERNS OF GIVING**

Volunteerism and philanthropy are key forms of giving in most countries and capture the breadth of Clinton's (2007) four elements of giving including time, money skills and things (ibid). While a lot of such action is invisible and informal it appears that a growing share of giving is channelled through charities, especially those associated with religious bodies, endowments, trusts, foundations, selected individuals and groups. Giving is further recognised as a catalyst of participatory democracy by bringing civil society into the arena to contribute to development work, or pressure for positive change (Council of Europe, 2000). Four broad objectives of volunteering have been identified in the literature and include:

- i. Mutual aid or self-help,
- ii. Philanthropy or service to others,

Synonyms of the word 'give' clearly suggest that it is associated with transfer and service. They include for example: to deliver, to impact, to impart, to devote, to pledge, to donate, to grant, to hand over, to contribute.<sup>2</sup>

## **1.2 Policy Environment for Giving**

The state is widely regarded as the appropriate authority to take programmatic and legislative action to nurture and streamline giving in its various forms. Legislation is necessary to define and support acceptable initiatives that individuals as volunteers and private donors can take to help others. In addition, such legislation would clarify what channels can be used by volunteers and other private donors in their efforts to provide civic service. Typically the state initiates drafting of legislation on such matters as the modus operandi of charities in Ghana. Clinton (2007) endorsed this view strongly as follows:

NO BOOK ABOUT public service by private citizens would be complete without recognising the essential role of government – its laws, regulations, programs, and grants – in advancing the common good and the importance of citizen activism in securing good government. (Clinton, 2007: 185)

As noted earlier the state has so far not been successful at presenting a draft that suits all the major stakeholders. Rather than wait for the state to draft legislation at the national level, companies are increasingly pursuing in-house policies on giving as part of their framework for corporate social responsibility by putting in place a congenial atmosphere for this to take place. Part of the enabling environment for 'giving' takes the form of organised reward systems that recognise the work of people involved, through honours and accreditations or even material support for their favourite causes.

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<sup>2</sup>'Give', however, does have negative connotations such as to recede or to yield to pressure, but this side of the meaning is overshadowed by the positive meanings.

Profiles of the kinds of people who volunteer reveal a relatively diverse mixture of people. This is very much rooted in the social, cultural and economic contexts of different countries. But there is some evidence that in industrialised societies and to a less extent, other parts of world, volunteers tend to be people with higher educational backgrounds and stronger religious affiliation (ibid.) However, such information should be treated with some caution. In Ghana for example, it is quite common for relatively unskilled unemployed youth to join volunteer efforts organised by the Fire Service or National Disaster Management Organisation, with the hope of receiving some allowance. More rigorous work is required to ascertain the true profile of volunteers in developing countries. It is quite likely that the profile of volunteers differs by type of activity and the target of giving. People who might be interested in donating their time to support school children in after school programmes for example, are expected to be different from the group of people who volunteer their time to help a neighbour weed his or her farm.

## **2.1 Past and Present Directions in Philanthropy**

Philanthropy is fundamental in the norms of social exchange in any society. Most people are compelled when the need arises to donate funds to support other people to whom they may or may not be related. For example, giving within the kin group is common among both literate and non-literate Ghanaians, and for many, this is part of their charitable giving – to support a relative in bereavement, or on the occasion of marriage or birth within the family or indeed sickness. This is often ad hoc and unaccounted for in the expenditure plans of the givers.

While a lot of philanthropy still remains ad hoc, benefactors with substantial resources to give away now look for more systematic and strategic avenues to donate their funds. On the surface all such transfers may pass as philanthropy. But there is a need to distinguish between mutual aid, which refers to reciprocal exchange between people of similar socio-economic status and transfers from the better-offs to less endowed individuals and

- iii. Campaigning and advocacy and
- iv. Participation and governance.

In each of these types of giving there are influences from the social history of the place, such as religious beliefs and practices and trends in both local and national level politics. The role of corporations in promoting social mobilisation also plays a part in shaping the eventual forms of volunteering in a society.

Where the art of charitable giving is well organised and actively sought after as an additional channel for resource mobilisation for development, it has shown tremendous potential for raising armies of volunteers to participate in public campaigns and other forms of social and economic development. A considerable amount of International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) funding is mobilised in this manner to support philanthropic causes around the world (see Giving USA, 2011).

The UN has many reports of the significant impact that social mobilisation in aid of civic causes can make. In 2000, 10 million people volunteered to support immunisation of 550 million children as part of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. The vast majority were concerned citizens, volunteering in their own communities. The total value of their support was estimated at US\$ 10 billion...capacity was developed in the process... local volunteers received health training and became entry points for future developments in their community (WSIS 2004). It has been found that in countries where there are statistics on volunteering, the contribution of volunteering has been estimated at 8% to 14% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (ibid.). Estimates from countries that have started gathering statistics on volunteers suggests this is a very dynamic sector. In Argentina for example the proportion of the population who volunteer increased from 12% in 1998 to 32% in 2001 (Nelson, 2005).

scribes this as “Gifts that keep on giving.” (Clinton, 2007:109). It is the idea that philanthropy can be used to build people’s capabilities to provide for themselves. This is built on the Chinese philosophy of teaching people to fish rather than offering them fish!

In cases where the donors are looking for a medium for giving long-term assistance they turn to investment in money markets, through trusts and foundations to manage and grow the funds in an efficient manner. To these outlets donors then regularly channel money to be used to support social action in aid of the poor and vulnerable or innovative activities. The Gates Foundation initiated by Bill and Melinda Gates with a seed capital of \$ 35 billion, is one of many such pots of funds that have been put aside by the original owners to help overcome inequality in poor communities (ibid.). A growing trend involves contributions by wealthy donors to other people’s foundations. This has happened where such people such as Warren Buffet do not wish to manage their own charities. Examples of such philanthropy pools include Robin Hood Foundation (founded by Paul Tudor Jones), Angel Network (founded by Oprah Winfrey) and Kitchen Tables Charities Trust (UK NGO). The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have become a critical focus of philanthropists hoping to accelerate the attainment of these goals by 2015.

Tweneboah-Kodua et.al. (1991) in a study on social mobilisation in Ghana concluded that the country has a significant but untapped potential in trade unions, mass media, citizen’s social organisations for civic engagement for health communication. They recommended that the Ministry of Health should engage these groups as social partners to promote child health.

In Ghana, NGOs and Foundations engaged in philanthropy have substantially increased their funding and technical assistance to capacity development to better equip the poor and other vulnerable groups to stand on their own feet. District assemblies and other local authorities have supported this process with the establishment of education scholar-

groups. Philanthropy refers more to the latter case and implies a sacrifice with no expectation of material reward. Even in traditional social systems it is common to find social arrangements linked to festive occasions that promote unconditional giving to others. Home town associations which are formed by migrants in urban areas often become the magnet for mobilising resources for home towns or place of origin, to support development projects including social infrastructure and educational scholarships.

The importance of philanthropy has grown around the world. It is estimated that about 70% of American households donate money to various courses every year, which in 2006 amounted to 2% of GDP valued at \$300 billion (Clinton, 2007). On the whole the most popular avenues for donating for individuals and groups include religious organisations; churches for example, regularly collect sometimes quite substantial amounts of cash through contributions from congregations. Across the world every Sunday and other worshipping days worshippers give money to promote charity. In addition, people also respond to fund-raising appeals in the event of disasters or acute illness, or identified needs among vulnerable groups.

It is fair to say that many philanthropists are quite moved by disaster to contribute to relief funds, even when the funds are destined to support people in foreign countries. In contrast it seems more difficult to organise long-term regular donations for development rather than relief causes. The bulk of such funds however come from corporate social responsibility money rather than private individuals. But the culture of responding to public appeals for funds however is relatively weak in the general population; the public is more inclined to donate to groups that are linked to the giver in one way or another, rather than anonymous groups.

By all indications the original outlook of philanthropy has undergone some expansion to include long-term capacity enhancement, also described as empowerment. Clinton de-

(UNESCO, 2001). Resolution on *Follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers (A/RES/57/106)* was co-sponsored by 146 states and adopted on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2002. This followed the earlier success of the Resolution on the *Recommendations on Support for Volunteering (A/RES/56/38)* co-sponsored by 126 member states and adopted on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2001.

Despite what is known about the value of giving it has been difficult to quantify in many countries since so much of it still remains ad hoc and outside the Public Accounts System of many countries. But even where it has been possible to ascertain the financial worth of giving as in parts of Europe and America, few would disagree that quantitative measurements alone overlook the intangible value of giving – e.g. promoting social cohesion, common purpose, and spirit of communitarianism. As was suggested at the 108<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Santiago Chile (2003), voluntary community-based and non-government organizations have a critical role to play in achieving the goals of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and governments must provide an enabling environment for them to succeed (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2003).

The issue of giving has made a comeback in development discourse, as one of the significant engines of local and global social responsibility to build social capital and transfers to support those in need. Corporations have come under pressure to respond to this movement. If global social responsibility is on the increase, some of the credit should go to champions of global peace, such as the UN and international non-government organizations (INGOs). Despite the Cold War (1945-1989), the relatively peaceful co-existence many countries enjoyed following the Second World War made it possible for people to devote their energies to civic action. Similarly, as result of improved international and national legal frameworks in the sphere of business, people have been able to create and secure vast fortunes for themselves in the post-war capitalist economies of industrialized countries, which have provided opportunities for the rich to give to others to promote

ship funds for bright but needy children. Chiefs have been part of this process with the most notable being the Otumfuo Education Fund, which was established in 2001 and has since supported several basic school pupils, senior secondary school students and university students (GNA, 2005).

## **2.2. Institutionalising Volunteer Activity: the Role of the United Nations**

Now more than ever it has become clear that the contributions of time, money and other in-kind materials provided by philanthropists and volunteers are among the world's biggest assets for rapid response to disaster and other crises. As a result volunteerism has gained recognition at local, national and international fronts. Notable amongst them are the World summit on Social Development at Copenhagen 1995, which acknowledged contributions of voluntary and community organisations in social development. Also during the *First Preparatory committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit on Social Development* in 1995, Japan, a major contributor to global volunteer statistics through Japan International Cooperation Agency (JiCA), proposed that the importance of volunteering for social development be addressed in the special session in June 2000. Volunteering plays a significant role in the welfare and progress of industrialised and developing countries alike and is also recognised as the basis of NGO work. (UNV, 1999).

The United Nations has been at the forefront of efforts to mainstream volunteering as a powerful tool for mobilizing resources for development. As far back as 1985 the UN General Assembly tabled the International Volunteer Day which was accepted on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1985. It adopted 5<sup>th</sup> December as International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development (IVD). To further strengthen this commitment the UN tabled a number of resolutions at the UN General Assembly in the early 2000s which were successfully adopted. For example, the 39<sup>th</sup> session on the Commission for Social Development was devoted to discussing the role of volunteerism in social development

both developed and developing countries in the growing global demands for new approaches to social protection.

Volunteers tend to operate in groups, rather than work alone. Usually volunteers mobilise around causes such as food security, preventive health, disaster relief, conservation, democracy, women rights, human rights, HIV/AIDS, etc. It is not unusual that these support activities may lead to a local or international campaign being launched, as happened in the case of the campaign to ban the use of antipersonnel landmines. Three hundred million volunteers in 100 countries and their agitation prompted 122 countries to sign the Mine Ban Treaty in Ottawa in December 1997 (UNDP Evaluation Office, 2003).

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) has identified at least seven assets that volunteers can bring to the effort to achieve the MDGs, including for example, transnational presence - over 5,500 UNVs working in 140 countries; direct link to UNDP - the UN itself has piloted many projects on volunteers to build capacity and to forge networks across regions; capacity to seize opportunities such as International Volunteer Day; World Volunteer Web; Online Volunteering Service that address MDG core issues (UN V, n.d).

Several industrialised countries have relied on volunteers to develop their programmes of technical cooperation with developing countries. Thus volunteerism is a major strategy for international cooperation. Typical examples include Volunteers Services Overseas Corps of the UK, JICA of Japan and the Peace Corps of the USA, as well as the UN Volunteers scheme. In Australia it has been reported based on results of Voluntary Work Survey (2006) that about 34% of the population of 18 years plus undertake voluntary work, contributing over 713 million hours to development related services.

According to a UNV Expert working group meeting report (1999) on Volunteerism and social Development, volunteerism makes an important economic contribution to society.

their social ideals of fairness and equity. Lastly the information technology revolution has not only disseminated volumes of information about people's needs and dilemmas around the world, but also made it easy for donors of all sizes to make direct donations through e-transactions to philanthropic causes (Clinton, 2007).

In 1985 convinced by the tremendous contributions that volunteers and philanthropists were making to community improvement and wider level development, the UN adopted the International Year of Volunteers to be celebrated on 5<sup>th</sup> December every year. The UN was convinced that volunteering was critical to the development process as a whole, not just for providing material support but as an ingredient in civic empowerment:

*Voluntary action involves learning, sharing and helping others and enables all citizens to play a part in the democratic process* (Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, 2000: 1)

In an attempt to streamline the wide interpretations that are given to the concept the UN the expert group on Volunteering has identified three key defining characteristics of volunteerism as follows:

- i) The activity should not be undertaken in return for financial reward, though taking reimbursement is appropriate,
- ii) It must be done out of one's free will. However, under emergency situations it may be necessary to persuade people to undertake voluntary work. Finally, one of the key defining factors is that
- iii) The activity should be of benefit to someone or people other than the volunteer.

Organisational arrangements for volunteerism derive their strength from relatively flexible operational procedures and limited bureaucracy which enables volunteers to respond quickly to emergency situations. This makes them important allies of governments in

- ii) Volunteers can more quickly be enlisted for action
- iii) Fund-raising can more rapidly be launched and mobilised.

Now that people can rely on ICT to mobilise volunteers building a cadre of people ready to give of their time to assist others is no longer limited to territorial boundaries, though effective machinery on the ground is still essential for getting operations moving.

Reports from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) indicate that it has managed to mobilise 97 million members and volunteers, partly through electronic networking. This confirms the importance that civil society organisations now attach to ICT and especially on-line or e-volunteering, in their quest to expand their reach.

In many parts of the world these potential benefits of ICT for volunteering and philanthropic acts seem far off. Internet access is limited in many regions of the globe and even where access may be reasonable, the average person does not have a credit card to facilitate registration and payment for other logistics. Africa is said to be the least networked, with an access rate of only about 4% compared to 11% in Asia and 16% in Latin America.

ICT is not only used to recruit volunteers but also to offer volunteer services. Various capacity building programmes have been offered free to others in the areas of literacy programmes and skills training. In addition, volunteers have set up community telecentres to augment the availability of ICT in poor countries (WSIS, 2004). In places like Ghana however, the internet has played a limited role in volunteering in general, for the simple reason that there is very low access to the internet in both urban and rural areas. Internet usage in June 2010 was estimated to be just about 5% and mobile penetration stood at 74% (NCA, 2010; see also: [www.internetworldstats.com](http://www.internetworldstats.com)).

Countries where volunteer work has been empirically studied, the contributions are estimated at 8% and 14% of Gross Domestic Product.

Analysts contend that Non-Profit Institutions (NPI) in general rely greatly on volunteers to meet their requirements for labour, as their activities tend to be labour intensive. In a study of seven countries to measure civil society and volunteering contributions to the economy, it was found that 24% of NPI contribution to GDP in these countries came from volunteering.<sup>3</sup> Besides it was noted that gifts of time surpassed gifts of cash in all the countries except one.

It is widely claimed that the daunting tasks of combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, Tuberculosis (TB) and other communicable diseases in Africa and other developing regions can be overcome through community based volunteering interventions. Volunteers can help to significantly scale-up the coverage of health campaigns. This is required to reach as many households and social groups as possible to achieve behaviour change, which lies at the heart of the success of the battles that have been highlighted above. For the MDGs therefore, this is a potentially invaluable resource to tap into.

### **2.3 The Use of ICT to Mobilise Volunteers**

Electronic communication has greatly revolutionised the creation and sharing of knowledge. With the help of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) networking and social mobilisation around a common cause is much broader and faster than in the past. Consequently giving has become an organising principle for social media. Today the internet ensures that

- i) Campaign messages are quickly spread around the globe

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<sup>3</sup>Salamon, Lester M., Megan A. Haddock, S. Wojciech Sokolowski, Helen S. Tice, 2007. Measuring Civil Society and Volunteering: Initial Findings from Implementing the UN Handbook on Nonprofit Institutions Working Paper No. 23, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies. The study of Belgium, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Canada, United States, Czech Republic.

2004 and by 2010 this had gone up to about US\$290.89 billion (Giving USA, 2010). Preliminary findings in a Swiss study suggested that:

“Voluntary workers in Switzerland put in 44 million hours of their time every month for no reward...Four out of ten people in Switzerland work as volunteers, or have done so in the past....Translated into money terms, such work is valued at SFr20billion (\$16 billion) a year, according to estimates from the Swiss Federal Statistics Office.”

(Tognina, 2004:2)

The two illustrations show clearly that fund-raising performance can be quite good if organized properly. In general social mobilization provides the conduit through which potential ‘givers’ are persuaded to donate their resources.

Many countries now collect statistics on working hours which are then used to calculate the monetary equivalent donated by volunteers (or volunteer hours contributed), and this approximately becomes the monetary value of donations. The estimated value is then further analysed as a proportion of GDP. Other countries have tried to determine the returns on government investments in national volunteer programmes. In the U.S.A. for example, new measures have been taken to track inputs and outputs in a model known as the Volunteer Input and Value Audit (VIVA). This is used by organisations to monitor their expenditure in relation to recruitment for, and management of volunteer related activities. Other efforts at measurement are directed at the human capital value of giving. For example, it has been cited for its capacity and skills development potential that can transfer employable skills, as well as leadership skills to the individuals involved. As the value of giving spreads, new innovative ways of mobilising people to give to others through volunteerism and other donations are being pursued, especially through the use of ICT.

By all indications radio is by far the most frequently used medium for appeal for support in Ghana, which is no surprise, given the relatively low literacy rate of about 50% in the country (GSS, 2008). It is estimated that 96% of Ghanaians listen to radio at least once a week (Bowen, 2010), indicating a heavy dependence on radio for vital information. Broadcasting channels regularly support fund-raising around civic causes, a typical example is the annual fund-raising exercise for the Joy FM Easter Soup Kitchen. Sick and other needy persons, as well as orphanages have been assisted by radio and television stations to undertake fund-raising on a regular basis to finance medical treatment locally and overseas. The daily papers often carry stories of such appeals to corporate bodies to make donations from their social responsibility funds. But a UNV supported study conducted by the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI) reports the media including newspapers do not find CSR stories sensational enough to sell papers. In consequence many fund-raising initiatives go unreported (UNV/AGI/NAB).

#### **2.4 Measuring the Benefits of Giving**

Giving has been attracting more serious monitoring and evaluation studies than it did in the past. With the recognition that giving makes a significant contribution to national development, more rigorous attempts are being made to measure its value. In order to improve the assessment of giving the United Nations Volunteer (UNV) Programme has spearheaded the development of a toolkit to measure volunteer behaviour, to demonstrate to governments this untapped wealth hidden in social mobilization. UNV has argued that the measurement of giving in general will shore up support for this activity, by demonstrating to the state and society what potential contributions public spirited individuals can bring to the development process. This revelation can serve as an incentive for others to volunteer (Independent Sector and United Nations Volunteers, 2001). Funds raised this way can be enormous. For example charities in America raised \$248.5 billion in

nity or occupational affiliation. Many of these are described as mutual aid societies (At- ingdui, 1995). Perhaps the best known of these is the practice of funeral levies, which is found all over the country. Every Ghanaian belongs to a clan and all clan members, as well as in-laws are required by custom to pay this levy at the funeral of a relative or an in-law. Adults who violate this convention are often ostracised and their funerals boycotted by the extended family. In addition, voluntary donations from friends and family are widely anticipated by bereaved families. But there are several other occasions on which well-wishers give of their time and material resources to support another, for example, during the performance of other rites of passage such as naming (out-dooring) and marriage ceremonies. The clearest indication of philanthropic acts on the part of Ghanaian households is the now well documented phenomenon of remittances or income transfers.

### ***3.1.1 Remittances***

The extent of commitment to social transfers within the family and community is demonstrated in the flow of remittances from migrants back to their families and other dependents. Mazzucato and others (2005) observed in a study on Ghana that remittances are mainly unregistered transfers, implying that the actual figures could be well in excess of Bank of Ghana estimates. Evidence from the Ghana Living Standards Survey Round 5 suggests that less than 5% of transfers to beneficiaries pass through the banking system. Table 2 below shows the flow of remittances from giving households to receiving households, and who they target for support (GSS, 2007).

In Ghana the general context in which people provide humanitarian assistance has remained largely informal and ad hoc, in spite of the apparent increase in the practice since independence. In local communities there is a long established practice of volunteering to give labour assistance to neighbours, known in Akan as *nnoboa* (*work together to help each other*) and in Ewe as *fidodo*, (*work together to help each other*), to mention a few. There is also a vibrant enduring practice of funeral levies and donations to support each other in bereavement. These are so organised that in some communities official records of contributors and their payments are kept by the secretary of the kin group.

The official position on giving in Ghana has gone through various cycles for and against the practice. This has been marked by reservations about ‘hand-outs’ at one point, but in more recent times, the mood has swung towards an acknowledgement of the need for social assistance to support households that are unable to satisfy their minimum basic needs. To its credit, the state has established minimum incentives to encourage giving. For example, tax instruments have been introduced to encourage giving. The Internal Revenue Regulations 2001 L.I. 1975 Part I Division II (2, 4, and 6.6) spells out tax deductions on private donations. But little publicity is given to this provision and the incentives are widely seen to be unattractive. Besides, since only a few individuals and businesses pay income tax, this incentive is not available to many people. Apart from that the state itself is now engaged in cash transfers to the poorest households among the extremely poor in Ghanaian society, through its Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme, under the National Social Protection Strategy (MESW, 2007).

### **3. GIVING IN GHANAIAN SOCIETY**

#### **3.1 Giving within the Family and Community**

Ghana has a long history of informal volunteering and philanthropy consisting largely of volunteering and donations among friends and relations, either based on ethnic, commu-

Within the civil service the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) under the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare (MESW) is required to register NGOs that meet specified requirements, as a step towards the streamlining of their programmes. Implementation of this mandate by the DSW has been fraught with challenges over the years. It is fair to say that the oversight functions of the Department have been weak due to its numerous capacity challenges. These have been captured in a review of the Department by Laird (2008), which enumerates the several resource constraints facing DSW.

In 1993 attempts were made by Government to formulate a legislative framework for giving, with the introduction of the *Draft NGO Bill of 1993*. This effort collapsed for several reasons. Apart from the unwillingness of the public officials in charge of the process to shift from their position on the Bill, NGOs also were also not keen on negotiating a compromise Bill. NGOs decried their lack of active involvement in shaping this critical document and withdrew their support for the process. The matter was subjected to considerable discussion between government representatives and civil society groups to no avail (Oquaye and Katsriku, 1996), consequently the Bill was withdrawn. Nearly ten years later in 2004, another attempt was made to develop a policy framework – *National Policy for Strategic Partnership with NGOs*, this time with the direct involvement of a National Consultative Group with a large NGO membership. Again this effort was fruitless as no concrete outcome was achieved. An *NGO Policy Guidelines* proposal was later designed in 2007 which was modified into the *Draft Bill for Trust and Non-Profit Making Civil Society Organisations*, led by the MESW. As on the previous occasions this new draft has attracted a lot of negative reviews from NGOs who see it as an attempt to stifle their autonomy ( Atuguba, 2007).

In the situation where it has been difficult to establish a legal framework for non-profit activities current locally initiated practices of volunteering and private donations are erratic, and marked by weak targeting, duplication and lack of sustainability. Equally seri-

**Table 1: Income Transfers from Giving Households to Recipient Households, 2005, in Percent.**

Relationship of Giving Hhd to Recipient Hhd	Urban		Rural		Ghana	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Parent	26	42	13	23	18	31
Spouse	1	5	1	6	1	5
Child	26	14	41	26	35	21
Brother / Sister	19	13	18	14	19	14
Other relative	22	21	21	26	21	24
Non-relative	6	5	6	5	6	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Ghana Statistical Service: Ghana Living Standards Survey 5. Accra.

What is remarkable about the findings of the GLSS5 is the very low proportion of recipients who are non-relatives of givers of transfers, lending more support to the notion that giving to a large extent in Ghana is driven by fraternal or familial interests rather than civic concerns.

### 3.2 Regulatory Framework for Giving in Ghana

Despite the growing interest in philanthropy and volunteering among government and civil society agencies, there is an absence of a broad-based policy and the legal framework is fragmented. At present non-government organisations are required to register under the Companies Code 1963 as Companies Limited by Guarantee (not-for-profit organisations). In addition unincorporated voluntary associations are registered under the Trustees (Incorporation) (Amendment) Law, 1993. It has also been recommended that all public agencies should have NGO desks to provide proper structures for collaboration, but the implementation of this directive has been uneven.

the firm which emphasised the profit-centred model for shareholder wealth maximisation (ibid.). As Ofori and Hinson (ibid.) note, a socially responsible firm promotes the adoption of business practices and policies that go beyond its core business and seeks to contribute to the welfare of its key stakeholders.

The bigger the company the higher the value of the CSR funds. The costs of these donations can be considered as long-term social capital investment or goodwill. There is no doubt that the advertisement that comes with CSR helps to generate sales and foster brand loyalty in potential customers. In consequence it is no surprise that an increasing number of businesses are moving forward from minimalist approach to a discretionary more generous disposition to social responsibility. How to do this without deviating significantly from the core business of the corporation is not without its problems.

The trend is for companies to establish foundations to carry out their CSR agenda. CSR contributions are largely limited to cash donations (80%). Only a handful of donors pursue in-kind donations, of which volunteering time by employees is the least popular giving option (UNV/AGI/NAB, 2003).

The efforts of businesses to support civic projects have attracted a lot of attention from civil society. In a recent survey 58% of 442 civil society organisations ranked corporate giving as the commonest form of giving in the country.<sup>5</sup> CSOs actually expect companies to undertake such projects as a matter of social obligation. By their reasoning it is seen a small price to pay for the social costs that are sometimes associated with the operations of companies in the communities (UNV/AGI/NAB, 2003). The mining industry and the banks have been particularly active in pursuing social responsibility goals.

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<sup>5</sup> United Nations Volunteers and New Academy of Business teamed up with Association of Ghana Industries in 2001 to conduct this study in 2006.

ous, the full worth of their contributions to national development is poorly accounted for in regular monitoring of development efforts and in national accounts. One of the things that the UN Handbook advocates is the proper valuation of volunteer labour based on an assessment of the extent of volunteering; converting volunteer time into full -time equivalent workers; assigning a value to volunteer time.<sup>4</sup>

A low appreciation of civic social responsibility coupled with general poverty among the public may explain some of the lukewarm attitudes to formal giving, but weak professional management of volunteerism and private donations have been cited as a major contributory factor to the state of affairs. Furthermore, corruption and mistrust of civic leaders among the general public limit people's willingness to make formal donations for civic causes. To address this challenge the UN Volunteers Programme in conjunction with The Johns Hopkins Centre for Civil Society organised a workshop for African practitioners on the UN Handbook on Non-profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts. The Non-Profit Institutions Handbook seeks to define NPIs and discusses how best to assemble data on NPIs such as through registries and tax records.

### **3.3 Corporate Giving: Growing role of Social Responsibility Funds**

Business firms over the past ten years have become keenly aware of the public relations benefits of donations or sponsorship packages, beyond the tax relief they receive. Some have argued that such actions constitute an emerging value-based and integrative perspective of a company's corporate strategy framework (Ofori and Hinson, 2007). Officially these actions have come to be known as 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (CSR) which promotes a socially responsible model of the firm. Part of its goal is to promote a form of giving which has become an integral part of corporate public relations and also as a marketing strategy. This is in sharp contrast to the classic definition of mission of

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<sup>4</sup> UN NPI Handbook, Africa Implementers' Meeting, March 21-22 2006. MaputoMozambique: 3-4

of programmes that are compatible with the companies own business profile. Many companies also engage in cash donations, especially among the local companies.

In addition to that companies are now setting up their own Foundations and Trusts to manage endowment funds for socio-economic development. Examples include the VALCO Trust Fund and MTN Foundation.

### **3.4 Civil Society and Volunteerism in Ghana**

Drah and Oquaye's (eds.) (1996 ) study of civil society organisations in Ghana revealed the central role that mutual aid societies occupy in providing support to members. Dixon's (1987) volume on Social Welfare in Africa provides a useful comparative backdrop to perspectives on Ghana, highlighting the preponderance of informal practices across the continent. The practice is carried along to foreign lands by migrants to help them support each other in their new locations. Arthur (2000) in his study of Ghanaian immigrants in the USA confirmed the critical role that such societies play in their lives. This corroborates findings from elsewhere in Europe, Canada and Britain (see Manuh (ed.), 2005).

In addition to indigenous cultural forms of giving there has been a long history of private voluntary organisations in Ghana, which were introduced in the colonial era. Common among them are the Ghana Red Cross Society, Girls Guides, Scouts, Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). In the past educational institutions were active recruiting grounds for these clubs or associations, but that practice seems to have declined as schools have reduced support to outdoor education activities.

Though official statistics are very hard to come by, some indication of this is given in Table 1 below.

**Table 2: Direct Voluntary Contributions to Socio-Economic Development in Ghana by Mining Companies, 2006**

ACTIVITY	DONATION (GH¢)
<b>Contribution to Communities</b>	
Resettlement Action Plan	2,516,525.00
Agro-Industry	1,225,181.00
Agriculture	1,167,017.00
Education	1,065,008.00
Alternative Livelihood Projects	836,419.00
Water	701,618.00
Roads	552,461.31
Health	434,587.52
Electricity	167,282.00
Sanitation	83,166.00
Housing	18,566.00
Ghana @50 Secretariat	503,500.00
Others	2390471.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,978,817.53</b>
<b>Statutory Payments</b>	<b>100,431,914.44</b>

Source: Daily Graphic, Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

As to whether Ghanaian firms generally endorse CSR, a study of 112 firms made up of 38 international and 74 local firms confirmed that the idea currently enjoys popularity among businesses. Among the local firms (SMEs) 87% of them agreed that CSR was essential to a company's core business. The findings further revealed that most companies target their CSR actions at specific groups, communities or causes. The main areas considered to be appropriate for corporate social responsibility action were also identified as education for both local and international companies, safety of employees, environmental protection. These philanthropic actions typically take the form of sponsorship

Fund-raising and effective leadership are critical to the survival of voluntary organisations and the Ghana Red Cross Society is no exception. The Red Cross Society raised an amount of GH¢47,440 in 2005 for its activities across the country as is summarised in Table 2.

**Table 4: Funds Raised by Regional Branches of the Ghana Red Cross Society in 2005, in Ghana Cedis (GHC)**

<b>REGION</b>	<b>FUNDS RAISED</b>
Headquarters	29,500.00
Greater Accra	9,300.00
Eastern	1,400.00
Volta	370.00
Central	3,150.00
Western	950.00
Ashanti	850.00
BrongAhafo	Not available
Northern	Not available
Upper East	1,920.00
Upper West	Not available
<b>Total</b>	<b>GHC 47,440.00</b>

The contributions of volunteers of the Ghana Red Cross (GRC) have had a significant impact in crises situations around the country, due to their relative quick response in relief situations. This was borne out in the work of the GRC during the floods of 2007 as is summarised in Box 1.

The Ghana Red Cross Society aptly illustrates the decades of volunteer service such organisations have provided to communities in Ghana. When the Ghana the Red Cross Society was established its main focus was initially on maternal and child welfare with a membership dominated by teachers, homemakers and nurses. Membership comprised four categories including the youth in and out of school; Mothers clubs; Chapters of 20 members each; and corporate members. As at December 2005, the Ghana Red Cross Society had 44,377 volunteers assisting in work in 86 districts. This is further explained in Table 1.

**Table 3: Schedule of Ghana Red Cross Membership as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005**

Region	Corporate	Chapters	Mothers' Club	Youth Links	Total
Greater Accra	?	?	?	-	-
Eastern	1	340	504	4723	5568
Volta	11	537	648	4468	5664
Central	-	300	525	1650	2475
Western	-	1339	1224	-	2563
Ashanti	-	828	813	1364	3005
BrongAhafo	-	556	1079	958	2593
Northern	-	574	1392	2690	4656
Upper East	-	2135	3900	8360	14395
Upper West	-	223	2545	690	3458
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6832</b>	<b>12630</b>	<b>24903</b>	<b>44377</b>

Source: Ghana Red Cross Society 2005 Draft Annual Report

The Society now focuses on five main programme areas, namely:

- Disaster Preparedness and relief
- Youth development
- Resource Mobilisation
- Promotion of Humanitarian Values
- Health and Care

(Source Ghana Red Cross Society Records 2007)

(DVGs), currently spread around the country (NADMO, Act 517, 1996). Box 2 below summarises the activities of the DVGs.

**BOX 2: NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION DISASTER VOLUNTEER GROUPS (DVGs)**

National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) Law, 1996 (Act 517) made provision for the establishment of Disaster Volunteer Groups (DVGs) to mobilise community participation in disaster prevention, risk reduction and management. DVGs consist of members of a community with a numerical strength of between 10-25 members. There are 5 registered groups in each district with a total membership of about 14,000.

***The roles of the DVGs include the following:***

- Sensitisation of the public on disaster issues
- Identification of hazards and early warning systems in the community
- Disaster risks reduction and mitigation
- Rehabilitation of victims of disaster
- Provision of volunteering labour for the restoration of services after disaster
- Environmental protection and management e.g. tree planting
- Clean up exercises

In addition to the disaster volunteer groups, disaster clubs have been formed in secondary and tertiary institutions throughout the country e.g. in the University of Ghana, Legon. Attention has also been given to the capacity building of local DVGs to train them in social mobilisation and DVGs concept; environmental hazard; sustainable domestic and environmental bush fire management; and first aid administration. So far 360 local DVG executives have been trained. Incentives for DVGs in the form of income generation activities have been designed, including micro credit, provision of seedlings, and tractor services.

Source: NADMO Records 2007

Box 2 shows quite clearly the dilemma of providing incentives for volunteers and some of the innovative responses that have evolved in Ghana.

**Box 1: Ghana Red Cross helps to Resettle Flood Victims in Bongo District**

Soon after the rains in the Upper East Region in August 2007, about 400 volunteers were sent to the aid of the people of Bongo District to assist with relief efforts. They were engaged in registering people and their needs and distributing relief items. Funding was provided by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva.

Source: Kero, Nora, 2/10/07. Volunteers helped Rebuild Houses in Ghana., World Volunteer Web. [www.worldvolunteerweb.org/browse/sectors/emergency-relief/doc/volunteers-help-](http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/browse/sectors/emergency-relief/doc/volunteers-help-)

**3.5 Volunteers working with the Public Service**

As noted earlier official confidence in volunteers has grown, which is demonstrated in the increasing use of volunteers by public institutions. Ghanaians recognise that development should not be the sole responsibility of central government (UNV/AGI/NAB, 2003) and expect non-state agencies to play a critical role in this process. This sentiment was forcefully made at the launch of the International Volunteer Day and Coalition of Voluntary Organisations in Ghana, by a Special Aide to the President. He asserted that “the Millennium Development Goals could only be achieved in Ghana if people are prepared to sacrifice and contribute to the socio-economic development of the nation” (Adjei, 2007).

Some institutions have already ceded key aspects of their operations to volunteers in a collaborative arrangement. For example, the Ghana Fire Service has trained over 54,000 Fire Volunteers at the community level since 1992 (Bushfires Law (Control and Prevention of Bushfires Law P.N.D.C. Law 229, Article (1)). In addition, the Police Service has agreed to work with community watch groups as partners in crime watch. The Service has gone ahead to inaugurate 184 Community Policing Watch Groups in 6 regions of Ghana. In the same spirit the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) has also trained volunteers who operate through about 550 Disaster Volunteer Groups

#### ***4.6.2 Ghana National Voluntary Service***

The Ghana National Voluntary Service was established in the 2003/04 academic year as a pilot project in the Upper East Region, with 53 graduate volunteers. The programme was introduced to other regions in 2004 and now operates in Upper East Region; Upper West Region; Northern Region; Central Region; Volta Region; Western Region; Eastern Region. The recruitment was initially slow, starting in 2004 with 56 teachers. By 2007 the number of teachers had risen to 8,551. Among the people who are attracted to the scheme are young unemployed people who have not been able to find regular jobs after their national service, and retired workers who wish to continue working. The programme has been able to provide teaching staff to deprived basic and second cycle schools throughout the country (see appendices 1&2). Volunteer staff has also provided critical support for local government service delivery in the 28 newly created metropolitan/district assemblies. In addition, the number of volunteers for the district assemblies rose steadily. Figure 1 illustrates the increase in the number of volunteers from 2004 to 2007.

The Ghana Health Service has come to rely quite significantly on volunteers to carry out its public health campaigns. For example, for each round of the polio immunisation campaign in the country the Service recruits over 40,000 volunteers. They are paid modest allowances to cover transport and incidental costs.

### **3.6 Volunteer Schemes in Ghana**

Many of the organisations that are devoted to managing volunteerism in Ghana are international bodies such as US Peace Corps, JICA and Volunteers Services Overseas. However there are a number of local organisations that officially recruit volunteers including for example, the National Service Secretariat and the Voluntary WorkCamps Association (VOLU), Ghana.

#### ***3.6.1 Voluntary Workcamps Association of Ghana (VOLU)***

The Voluntary Workcamps Association (popularly known as VOLU) was formed as far back as 1956 by a group of teachers and students led by Gordon Green, a teacher at Mfantshipim Secondary School in Cape Coast. Volu organises work camps twice a year (June-September; December-January) for periods of 3 to 4 weeks of camping to undertake rural development projects, in collaboration with beneficiary communities. These camps are sponsored by a wide range of organisations at home and abroad.

Though voluntary work camps have been in existence for quite a while effort to mobilise volunteers has been erratic. The main aim of the organisation has changed little over the years even if the approach to work has undergone some changes. VOLU is committed to community development work and to education. Through a series of restructuring exercises VOLU now collaborates actively with other organisations both locally and internationally to foster inter-cultural and inter-racial cooperation. The organisation has entered into exchange programmes which enables some Ghanaians to volunteer overseas.

### **BOX 3: Support of Volunteers at Senior Secondary Schools**

#### ***Kusanaba Senior Secondary School***

The Ghana National Voluntary Service has made a great impact in the academic performance of some school a case in point is the Kusanaba Senior Secondary School where the schools' performance in the National league improved from 4.55% pass in 6 subjects in 2003 to 34.36% in 2005.

**Table 3: Kusanaba Senior Secondary School - School Performance in National League**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>% pass in 6 subjects</b>	<b>Number qualified for University</b>
2003	448	4.55%	2
2004	420	21.43%	2
2005		34.36%	2

Source: Ghana National Volunteer Programme, 2006

#### ***Zamse Secondary Technical School***

Maintenance of discipline in the schools

'It has been a positively wonderful experience having volunteers with us. The matching of volunteers' ages to that of our students has made their impact on students learning positive. We wish to have more volunteers in the coming year'

Gregory Amoah (Headteacher – Zamse Secondary Technical School

December 2003)

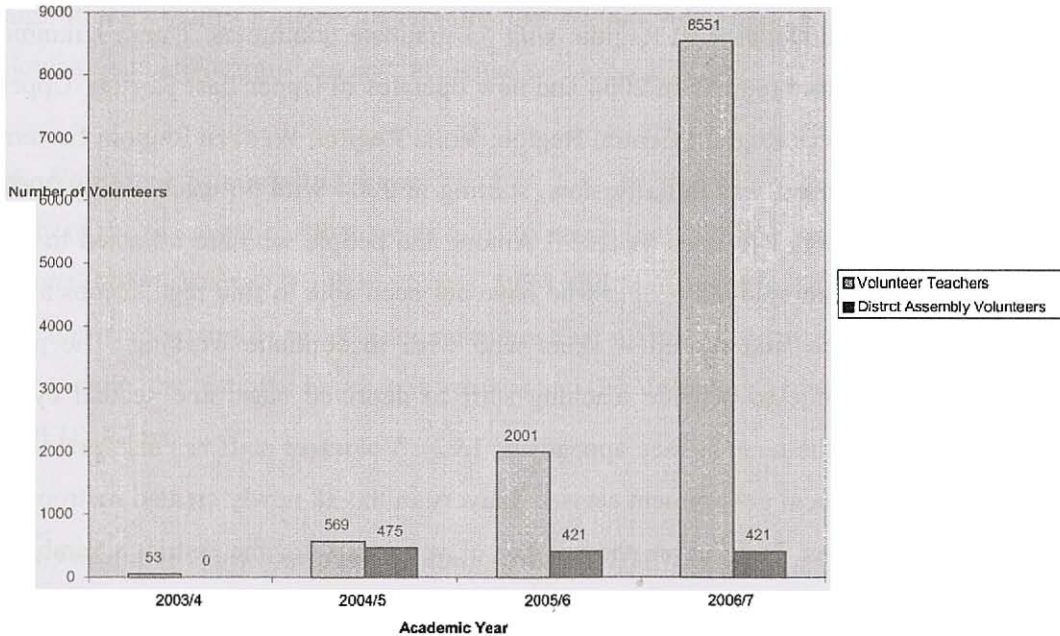
### **3.6.3 United Nations Volunteers (UNV)**

UNV has been operating in Ghana since the 1970s but a UNV Ghana country office was formally established in the country in 2002. So far, it has arranged voluntary service for 53 volunteers in Ghana and 187 Ghanaian volunteers working abroad. UNV has also supported 98 Ghanaians (69 males and 29 females) to operate as online volunteers ([www.undp-gha.org/unvghana](http://www.undp-gha.org/unvghana)).

### **3.6.4 The Robbooker Voluntary Organisation (R.V.O.-Ghana)**

RVO-Ghana was established in 2000 by Robert Booker, American Philanthropist and Richmond Amoakoh, Ghanaian Social Worker. RVO organises programmes in six areas including working with orphaned children, health education, teaching, community de-

**Figure 1: Deployment of Volunteers from 2003/4 - 2006/7**



In 2010 the Scheme registered 10,000 volunteers. The incentives offered by the Ghana National Voluntary Service to volunteers are quite modest. They are paid an allowance by the government which is roughly about 20% higher than the National Service stipend. Some suggest that volunteers are more committed to their jobs (because they opted for the jobs out of their own free will). Besides, volunteers have been very useful to their communities where they have played the role of community mobilizers. The documented experience of Kusanaba and Zamse Senior Secondary Schools outlined in Box 1 illustrates this point.

example, late payment of allowances; lack of incentives from the institutions that employ volunteers; lack of transport and communication facilities for those who work in difficult environments. To address these short-comings it has been suggested that payment of allowances should be decentralised and means of transportation communication should be provided for those teaching and working in remote places.

Most volunteer corps in Ghana are plagued with the issue of compensation. It is now accepted for volunteers to receive compensation for their contributions, especially in poorer communities where people have to struggle to maintain their livelihoods. But even for others volunteering may call for out-of-pocket expenses where people have to travel out of town to volunteer their time and skills. Where as in the past paying for volunteer's services was frowned upon, it is now considered to be appropriate to reimburse costs. Despite these developments many agencies that recruit volunteers have mixed feelings about their expectations and demands for compensation. In Ghana this is as true for community-based volunteer efforts such as Water and Sanitation Committee work, as it is for fire service volunteers in the Ghana Fire Service.

On the part of philanthropy Ghana follows some of the international practices for making it attractive to donate cash. For example, there are potential rewards for making charitable donations in Ghana through tax breaks and reaping goodwill to promote one's business. Needless to say for most people the ability to give is negatively affected by poverty and income insecurity, though as Sen (1999) and others have argued, a society is never too poor to support its needy groups. What is missing is a structured process of acknowledgement, which places value on people's contributions and forms part of the way in which the volunteers are assessed, both formally and informally.

velopment and cultural studies. Volunteers recruited by RVO are attached to local organisations involved in social development work. More than 300 volunteers have worked with RVO since its inception.

### **3.7 Challenges Facing Volunteers in Ghana**

Volunteering is only possible when people are able to make the time to give civic service. This is sometimes difficult due to family responsibilities and long working hours. Equally important, lack of information on volunteering opportunities and requirements leaves many people in the dark about such activities. While many applaud the philosophy and practice of giving to others the politics of giving is far from smooth. It is often faced with contestations about transparency, accountability and compensation.

Local volunteers unlike their foreign counterparts are often faced with scepticism about their intentions and capabilities, especially in situations where they clearly move to fill gaps that have been left unattended to by public agencies. Some have even argued that public attitudes to volunteers in African countries smack of stigmatisation (Chwaane, 2007). This is common where volunteers turn to government to support them to carry out work, which then puts them in direct competition with state agencies for government resources. Some have argued that when volunteers turn to government they siphon funds away from agencies mandated to perform those tasks. The fear is also that this negatively affects their performance. They succumb to the same red tape that is said to slow down public institutions. Ideally to avoid such criticisms volunteers should be seen to be sustained through their own fund-raising, rather than dependence on official grants.

On the operational side volunteers often face the difficulty of not getting proper support due to weak organisational facilities for managing their activities. But in addition, the few organised volunteer schemes are plagued with many challenges. They include for

#### **4.1 Looking Ahead to Promote Giving through Philanthropy and Volunteerism in Ghana**

Ghanaian society stands to gain considerably if it should take steps to formally recognise and foster the numerous benefits of philanthropy and volunteerism to society. The road to this goal, however, is long and needs careful consideration, as there are both legalistic and ethical questions to be addressed. For Ghana to make a head way in institutionalising giving a number of steps first need to be cleared, as discussed elsewhere by the European Council, to foster volunteerism in Europe ( European Council, 2000). Some of these steps are summarised below.

There is an urgent need for proper documentation of the nature and features of giving in Ghana. This calls for identification of research areas and support for such research to take place. Among other things credible documentation is essential for the design and implementation of a communication strategy about philanthropy and volunteerism to galvanise the society at large. This also becomes the basis for a transparent and accessible registry of volunteers and other donors.

The policy gaps that exist in relation to non-state actors and their participation in development process also ought to be addressed. This calls for in particular recognition of the democratic, humanitarian as well as social and economic value of giving. The success of such a policy framework to facilitate giving will also depend partly on the extent to which it grants voluntary workers and private donors legal recognition of their contributions. From this perspective it is incumbent upon the state to remove laws and tax pressures which may deter or penalise giving in general (European Council, 2000).

Along with according legal status, a fair measure of independence and financial resources to develop and manage volunteer programmes, in a socially accountable manner, would be required. Equally important, such a platform must incorporate a clear incentive

## 5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In some respects Ghanaian society has a long history of giving aid to others, even if a lot of these transfers tend to occur within family or kin group circles. Equally common are mutual aid networks in which reciprocity is not always equal, thus some benefit more than others from the relationship. Outside these kin networks and neighbourhood circles there is also the regular ad hoc donation or participation for a worthy cause. All of these show that there is a long history of social mobilisation around giving in Ghana, but much of it remains very informal and erratic. Besides, there is no clearing-house for monitoring and compiling data on these processes. Many groups and organisations who may wish to give towards social development will find that they are faced with a general lack of direction in this activity. It has been observed that volunteers rarely meet their full potential as a result of not being taken seriously and also having to live with chronic resource gaps in their operations. As such the potential to mobilise this force for structured development activity remains limited. Adding to the ambiguity associated with volunteering and other forms of giving is the weak policy direction that this kind of effort receives from policy makers and development practitioners in general.

It has not all been rosy for the image of philanthropy. On the down side there is evidence that philanthropic giving has been manipulated by some to purchase respectability and / or to cover their misdeeds. Take for example the suggestion that Charles Keating, a well known bank swindler, was a benefactor of mother Teresa's order! In Ghana it is speculated that many businesses that do not pay adequate taxes find it easier to make impressive donations to charity.

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system that encourages diverse social groups to give freely. Groups such as ordinary citizens, children, professionals, public officials, the elderly, the disabled, migrants and refugees have been closely associated with giving. All over the world there is concern that young people in particular should be introduced to volunteerism to socialise them with a civic spirit, for a future of giving service to their communities. It is important that a policy document should outline obligations that are required of volunteers and private donors, in order to avoid misunderstandings that arise and taint the credibility of giving.

From the state's side there are a number of activities that can promote charitable giving of funds and time. Safeguard charitable deduction; engender more donations through favourable tax arrangements; encourage special interest support such as for rural or low income households.

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## APPENDIX 2: NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME

### NATIONAL YOUTH VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

### VOLUNTEER TEACHER SELECTION DATA SEPTEMBER, 2006

Region	Post NSP Applicants	Post NSP Selected	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year extension	Total post NSP Selected	Retired Teachers Selected	Total Volunteers selected
Volta	500	418	56	474	550	1024
Central	600	539	144	688	255	938
Upper West	133	93	45	138	112	250
Upper East	245	274	134	408	73	481
Northern	900	762	289	1051	69	1120
BrongAhafo	684	666	129	795	411	1206
Ashanti	956	808	75	888	580	1163
Eastern	500	471	68	539	229	768
Western	470	347	80	427	268	695
Greater Accra	1145	502	95	597	9	606
Totals	6133	4880	1115	5995	2556	8551

  
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## APPENDIX 1: NATIONAL SERVICE SECRETARIAT

### NATIONAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

#### DEPLOYMENT OF VOLUNTEERS AS AT JULY 2006

Region	No. of districts	District Assembly volunteers	Volunteer teachers at post as at 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2006	Total volunteers at post as at July 2006
Upper east	8	16	259	275
Upper west	8	16	112	128
Northern	18	71	480	551
Eastern	17	29	154	183
BrongAhafo	19	48	180	228
Western	13	42	108	150
Ashanti	21	68	193	261
Volta	15	40	135	175
Central	13	8	184	192
Greater Accra	6	83	196	279
	138	421	2001	2422

### **About CSPA**

The Centre for Social Policy Studies (CSPA), University of Ghana was established to provide research and training in social policy issues in Ghana. The Centre has been involved in studies related to social protection, human capital, social mobilisation for development and livelihoods. The Centre is located in the Faculty of Social Studies building, University of Ghana

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