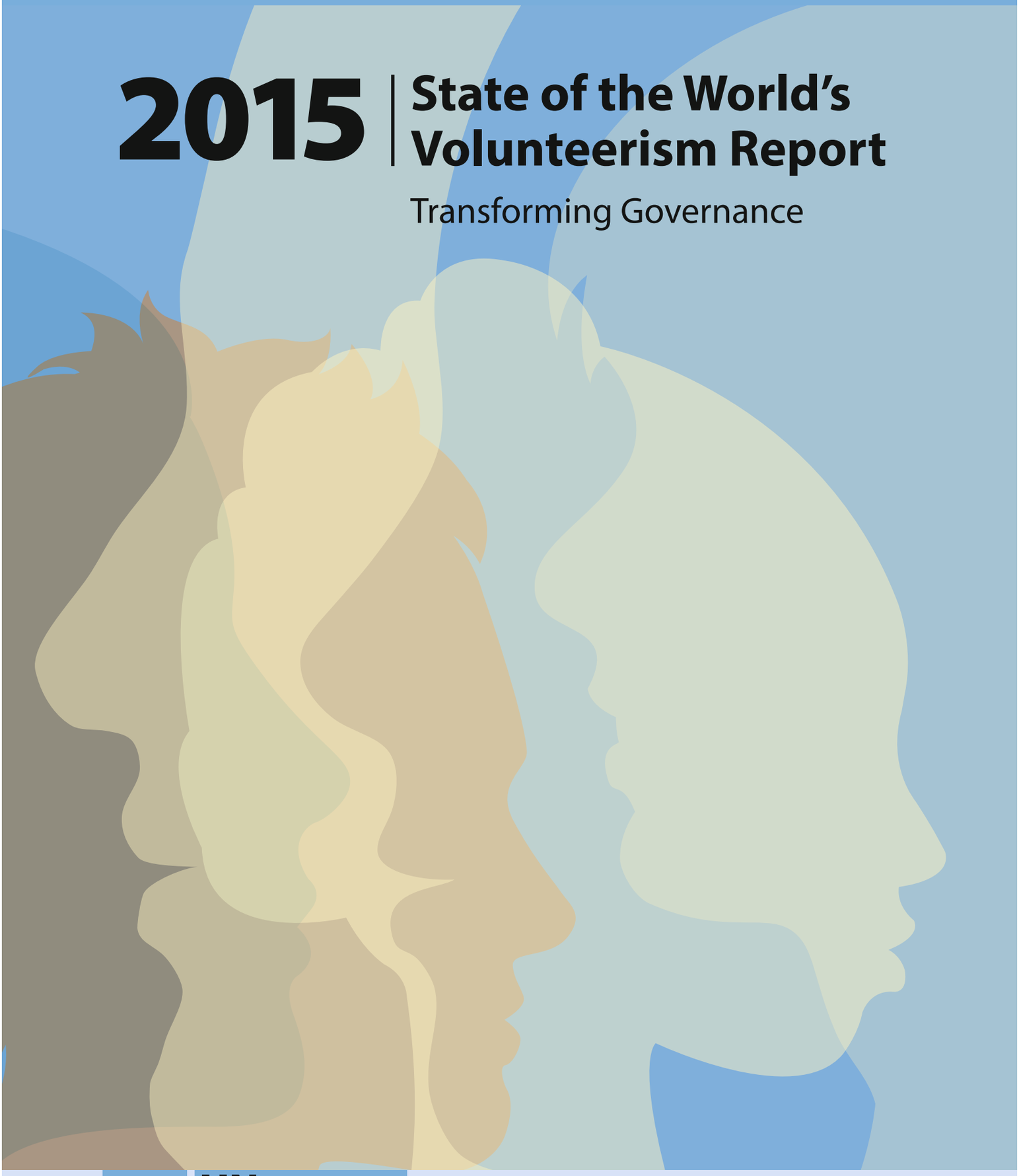
Executive Summary

2015 | State of the World's Volunteerism Report

Transforming Governance



UN Volunteers

inspiration in action

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide.

Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling development challenges, and it can transform the pace and nature of development. Volunteerism benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, and by purposefully creating opportunities for participation.

UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for recognition of volunteers, working with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing an increasing number and diversity of volunteers, including experienced UN Volunteers, throughout the world. UNV embraces volunteerism as universal and inclusive, and recognizes volunteerism in its diversity as well as the values that sustain it: free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity.

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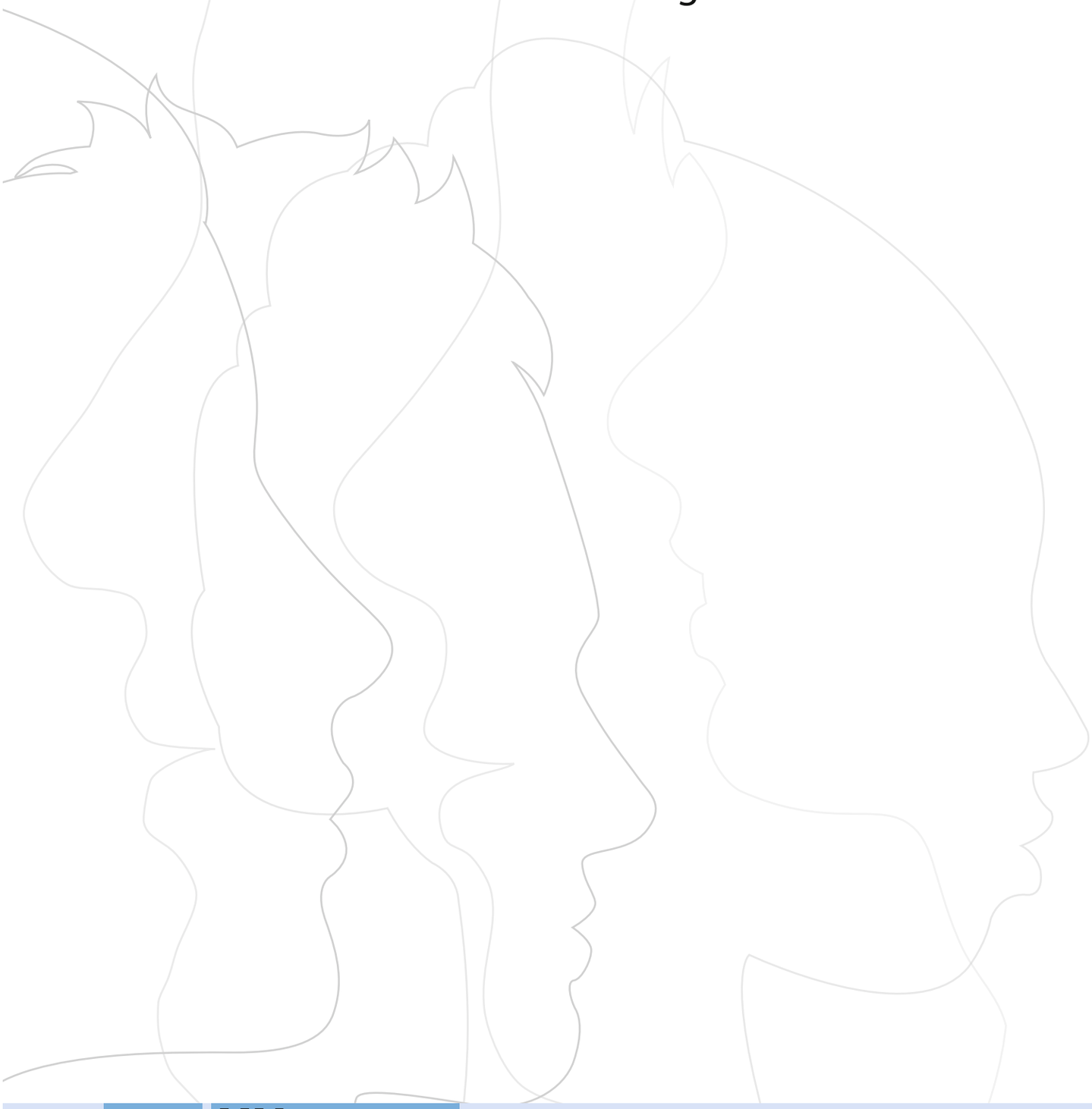

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Foreword

Discussions on the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda have drawn attention to the significant human development achievements many countries have made, in all regions of the world. They also shine light on underlying reasons why progress may falter or fall short. The lack of effective and accountable governance, for example, can be a barrier to progress, undermining national and local efforts to improve lives and the prospects of communities.

For the post-2015 sustainable development agenda to succeed, improving governance, tackling inequalities, and expanding voice and participation need to be addressed simultaneously. Volunteerism can help by giving voice to stakeholders and by mobilizing people and civil society organizations to contribute to solutions.

This report is designed to help governments, civil society organizations, bilateral and multilateral development organizations, and other stakeholders to realize the full potential of volunteerism at global, national and local levels.

At the global level, the report presents examples of how volunteer networks are using technology to build alliances which advance volunteerism and connect development actors. The rapid spread of mobile phone and other information and communication technologies is expanding the reach and scope of volunteerism. It enables motivated and engaged people and groups to interact, learn from each other, and find new opportunities and resources. The report suggests ways in which such efforts could be scaled up to help implement the post-2015 agenda, and to enable vulnerable and excluded people to have a say in the decisions which have an impact on them, including those at the UN and in other global fora.

At the country level, the report suggests that the ability of volunteers to support development progress depends on the willingness of national governments to ensure that the space and supportive environments which encourage their participation and initiatives are available. The Report finds that volunteerism can help to generate social trust, advance social inclusion, improve basic services, and boost human development. Volunteers and volunteerism bring the greatest benefits where enabling conditions like freedom of speech and association and an atmosphere of vigorous political debate are already in place.

At the local level, the Report suggests that volunteerism can increasingly be a vehicle for people in excluded and/or marginalized communities to be heard, and to access the services, resources, and opportunities they need to improve their lives. It recommends that volunteers form alliances with local governments and with like-minded local and broader civil society groupings to support people in marginalized groups, including women, to access the information and strengthen the capabilities they need to improve their prospects and hold local officials to account. The Report details how women volunteers in rural Uttarakhand, India, for example, formed 'whole village groups' which helped them learn from each other and build the confidence and capabilities they needed to engage local government officials, defend their rights, and become partners in improving their communities.

At UN Volunteers and at the UN Development Programme, we see how volunteers make a difference for the better. From our experience and as the evidence reflected in this Report shows, the motivation and commitment of individual volunteers needs to be matched by responsive and supportive governments and development actors. We hope that this Report will be considered, discussed and used for the empowerment of more people in more places to confront the exclusion, discrimination and inequalities which block development progress, and to help deliver on the shared aspirations of people and leaders everywhere to eradicate poverty in all its dimensions and achieve sustainable development for all.

Helen Clark
Administrator
United Nations Development Programme

Preface – The art of the possible

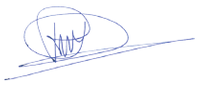
This second State of the World's Volunteerism Report on volunteerism and governance argues that volunteerism and placing people at the centre of development policy and investment offer untapped potential for sustainable development. The report posits volunteerism as an additional resource and vehicle for bringing skills, knowledge and expertise to enable voice and participation, accountability and responsiveness as key pillars of good governance complementing other development solutions and resources.

Based on a wide body of evidence, the report highlights how volunteerism can promote peace and development. It shows what has been achieved in certain contexts and thus draws out the potential contribution of volunteers and volunteerism. This "art of the possible" is illustrated by case studies, providing a striking range of examples of how people, as individuals and in groups, are pooling their energies to act in the different governance spaces. This report also shows that when governments and other governance actors create an enabling environment and invite people into closed spaces, change can emerge that is more broadly owned and supported.

Examples of formal and informal volunteering attest to the fact that those who are marginalized, such as women, indigenous populations and disempowered young people, can create spaces where their voices can be heard and where they can affect governance at local levels. This report addresses the issue of women's engagement, providing interesting examples of how women have been able to engage in spaces outside the traditional norms, hold authorities accountable and ensure responsiveness to their needs and those of their communities. One can clearly see how marginalized groups build alliances and work with the few resources they have to inform and make change in their communities.

Governance was the subject of an unpublished chapter in the first report released in 2011. Even with the knowledge that it would be challenging to gather evidence on volunteerism and governance, current global discourse on the sustainable development agenda and the recognition that new multi-stakeholder partnerships will be an essential part of the means of implementation have made it important that we tackle the subject now. Further research and innovative strategic partnerships are needed for better understanding, documenting and measuring volunteerism and its contribution to peace and development. This report starts a conversation that can and needs to be deepened.

With this report, we hope to show the art of the possible. When we bring all available resources to the table of development, we make the challenges of our times seem surmountable. By creating environments for people to volunteer their time, it is possible to use their skills and knowledge for the common good in the sphere of governance. It is possible that we can broaden the number of people who have voice, who can participate and who can hold governance actors to account.



Richard Dictus
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Executive summary

There is widespread agreement that the future development agenda has to see some radical shifts to better engage people in their own, their community's and country's development. Enhanced mechanisms for civic engagement are needed to enable new discussions, negotiations and decisions. This report shows, using a body of knowledge collected through case studies, that volunteerism provides a key channel for this engagement from the local through to the national and global contexts. As local to global levels become more linked through new governance actors, so too volunteerism is adapting and changing; active and global citizens are already engaged in different ways, at different levels, to address core traditional and emerging governance issues.

This report has identified key strategies, challenges and opportunities for volunteerism, focused on three pillars of governance – voice and participation, accountability and responsiveness – where volunteers have shown impact. Specific volunteer actions and strategies illustrate the diverse ways in which volunteers engage in invited spaces, open up closed spaces or claim new spaces. Invited spaces are those where governance actors invite participation by citizens or beneficiaries. Closed spaces are where the rules of access are defined and only certain people or groups qualify. Claimed spaces are where those who are less powerful or excluded may claim or create spaces informally through social movements and community associations, or organically as people voluntarily gather to debate, discuss and/or resist. Volunteers have the agency and will to contribute to positive change, but they face many challenges in relation to governance, especially inequality of resources and power. While raising their voices is a strategy to seek engagement, more opportunities are required to be invited as part of the discussions and decision-making by the key governance players at every level.

Volunteerism spans a vast array of activities at the individual, community, national and global levels. Those activities include traditional forms of mutual aid and self-help, as well as formal service delivery. They also include enabling and promoting participation and engaging through advocacy, campaigning and/or activism. The definition of volunteerism used in this report refers to *"activities … undertaken of free will, for the general public good and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor."*

Volunteerism provides a key channel for engagement from the local through to the national and global contexts

Volunteering in this report is also understood as overlapping and converging with social activism; while it is recognized that not all activists are volunteers, many activists are volunteers and many volunteers are activists. The terms volunteerism and social activism are not mutually exclusive. The idea that volunteers only serve to support service delivery or are only involved in charitable activities is one that is limited and provides a superficial line of difference between volunteerism and activism.

The report recognizes that volunteering is highly context specific and is often not on a level playing field. Women and marginalized groups are frequently affected by this unevenness; not all volunteers can participate equally or on equal terms in each context. Volunteerism is harder in contexts where people are excluded, their voices curtailed, their autonomy undermined and the risks of raising issues high. An enabling environment that respects the rights of all enhances the ability of volunteerism to contribute to positive development and peace. The report shows that creating a more enabling environment that allows positive civic engage-

ment in sustainable development is critical for success.

The case studies in this report show that when people are shut out of decision-making spaces and their voices are ignored, they find other means to demand entry into more formal decision-making spaces. They can challenge the formal and informal institutions of governance, demanding greater accountability and responsiveness from those in power, whether governments, corporations or multilateral agencies.

Creating a more enabling environment that allows positive civic engagement in sustainable development is critical for success

The studies also show that when governments take the initiative to leverage volunteerism for peace and development, the majority of volunteer engagements take place in invited spaces. When people seize the initiative, the greater part of such engagements takes place in claimed spaces, at least in the beginning. In later stages some of the action may move to invited spaces. In both cases, however, volunteers seek to influence decision-making in closed spaces with their activities in claimed and invited spaces.

The report calls for much greater engagement with volunteers and volunteerism in all its forms – formal (including international volunteering) and informal – and at all levels from the local to the global. This engagement requires understanding the needs and rights of volunteers and finding ways to resource, support and actively engage with volunteer work to improve governance.

The literature on volunteerism and governance is thin. This report represents a first step in collating a body of evidence on the contributions of volunteerism to governance, especially in developing country contexts. It is opening a new conversation on the role of volunteerism in governance that must continue.

KEY MESSAGES

The report highlights the following key messages as important considerations for development processes and for strengthening governance practices, policies and strategies:

Volunteerism at the local level builds capacity of people

Volunteerism at the local level builds capacity of people, including the marginalized, to work in alliance with local government and national or international civil society organizations (CSOs) in making the governance process more participatory and inclusive. For marginalized groups, particularly women, new and additional pathways for stronger voice and participation can contribute to their needs being taken into account and resources allocated to their unique needs.

National governments creating greater space for volunteerism bring social inclusion

National governments will find that creating greater space for volunteerism will see greater social inclusion, improved social and developments results and smoother-running services. Returns on engagement with volunteers and volunteerism are maximized when enabling conditions, like freedom of speech and association and an atmosphere of vigorous political debate, are already in place. Information and communication technology – including blogs, monitoring platforms and social media – enables volunteers to complement mainstream media with grassroots-generated real-time information and to find new entry points for voice and dialogue.

Global volunteer networks promote voice, participation, accountability and responsiveness

Global volunteer networks, using diverse strategies, are effectively promoting voice and participation, accountability and responsiveness linking local, national and global spaces. Technology is a major enabler of these processes, enhancing the speed and breadth of volunteer engagement, building alliances, sharing expertise and engaging

governance actors at all levels. The inequalities of access, however, must be addressed to ensure that the most excluded can join the debates.

Volunteerism will be valuable for drawing in resources for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda

Volunteerism will be a powerful resource to bring in the voice of all stakeholders and draw in all available resources to accompany the implementation and monitoring of the new post-2015 development agenda. Increased participation will need to be met by greater responsiveness from governance actors, including CSOs, the private sector and others who play increasingly pivotal roles in governance and service delivery processes. Opening up opportunities and spaces for volunteerism to realize this potential will require a range of strategies, partnerships and alliances across different levels of governance.

IMPACTS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Many millions of volunteers across the world are contributing to governance at the local level. In response to governments creating local mechanisms that encourage participation in decision-making processes, volunteers are increasingly involved in shaping policies and making decisions on issues that directly affect their lives. Concrete examples of government spaces widening are seen in village development committees in Nepal and village planning and community-development fund management in Kenya and Uganda. These mechanisms for dialogue provide governments (and other bodies involved in governance) with practical ways to relate and interact directly with citizens. At times these spaces provide opportunities for volunteers to help shape the policy and practice of how services are delivered and to monitor implementation.

Volunteers also operate outside formal local governance structures to ensure their voices are heard and that their governments respond to their needs. When they come together informally to address their needs and raise their voices, volunteers can influence and shape social norms and values. They can widen the parameters of debate, putting new ideas on policy agendas and challenging the status quo. While this may not influence decision-makers or policy outcomes in the short term, it can shift opinions and lead to long-term societal change. It can also engage with a plurality of opinions that in some contexts can make governments more responsive to a wider range of needs.

Volunteers can influence and shape social norms and values

Volunteerism practised at the local level enables people to learn new skills and deepen their understanding of their rights. It enables individuals to develop the abilities to engage and participate beyond the household or village; to monitor and track government commitments and spending; and to build groups to move beyond the local to the national and even the global level. For many women it can be an empowering approach, and for many previously excluded it can build their capacity to partner with local government institutions and national or international CSOs.

Community-based volunteering employs a variety of strategies to gain greater voice and participation to influence decision-making that affects the volunteers' communities communities. Some local volunteers work alone, others work in alliance with external actors such as national or international CSOs, others form networks, while still others partner with local government institutions to make governance processes more participatory and inclusive.

Volunteerism at the local level is not without its challenges. There is the risk of governments shifting the burden of work to volunteers particularly at this level. In addition, the continuing domination of elite groups in

participatory spaces could replicate rather than reduce inequalities in access to decision-making. Some "tokenistic" participatory forums may lack real power. And some volunteers face reprisals from those opposed to their views.

Despite these challenges, the evidence shows that local volunteering has the potential to expand and improve services, to build skills, to make voices of those most marginalized stronger, to incorporate local knowledge, to provide checks and balances, and to encourage a diversity of opinions. All this, depending on the broader context, can lead to greater voice and participation, and more accountable and responsive governance.

Large-scale mobilization is essential to the success of many bottom-up volunteer initiatives

IMPACTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Volunteerism is seen to work with governments on core governance issues in ways that enhance social inclusion, improve social and development results and foster peace. Two threads are distinguished, one where governments take the initiative to engage volunteers, and the other where people seize the initiative. Often governments invite volunteers to work with them on issues such as increasing transparency, monitoring service provision, setting up volunteer agencies and working closely with formal volunteers (national and international). As said, returns on engagement with volunteers around a range of governance issues are maximized when enabling conditions, like freedom of speech and association and an atmosphere of vigorous political debate, are in place. Volunteers also generate actions and engage in different ways to raise their voices, call for accountability mechanisms and ask for responsiveness – all essential for improving governance.

Where governments have put in place structures to enhance volunteer engagement, they have been able them to systematically leverage the power of volunteerism and created scope for volunteers to seize the initiative in areas important to national development plans. For example, in Honduras, Mozambique and Peru, high levels of stakeholder participation were encouraged by the governments in the course of the law-making process. Other governments in, for example, Ghana and Kenya have similarly brought in formal volunteer structures, underpinned by law and resources, to encourage young volunteers to give their time to promoting health and education in rural areas, to be gainfully employed and to learn the purpose and value of civic engagement.

Some governments have engaged citizens more systematically over the long term to inform and implement policies. In Brazil, close connections between the state and civil society enabled the formulation of a new health policy that reduced the inequalities in the distribution of public healthcare.

Large-scale mobilization is essential to the success of many bottom-up volunteer initiatives. To achieve it, volunteers often work in alliances. CSOs and champions within the government and legislature can be key allies. The success of Naripokkho in Bangladesh in advocating for women victims of violence and in influencing the law related to violence against women depended critically on their collaboration with the government as well as their alliance with the grassroots organization Doorbar. Where the stakeholder group has been small, cross-national alliances and recruitment of interlocutors have sometimes generated the necessary support. This can be seen in the nationality laws in the Arab region, where finding key allies in governments, parliaments and CSOs in other affected countries was the key to success in some countries.

Many volunteer initiatives turn to the media to raise awareness, sensitize policy-makers and mobilize public opinion. Naripokkho undertook media campaigns to bring visibility to domestic violence. A new generation of

technology-enabled volunteers is developing tools to provide real-time grassroots information. This complements the mainstream media by offering news and perspectives on their own websites and through blogs, lowering people's dependence on traditional media and in some cases putting the onus on traditional news sites to stay relevant.

A key influence in the success of volunteer-driven initiatives at the national level is the presence of a responsive government. Sometimes the movements themselves generate the political pressure necessary to make their government more responsive; at other times, volunteer initiatives are enabled and facilitated by a receptive government. Thus most successful bottom-up volunteer initiatives have sought to engage collaboratively with governments in certain spheres even as they contested and questioned governments in others.

A degree of responsiveness from the government, ruling group or elites is important to create an environment for widespread participation and the scope for listening to multiple voices, especially those of the most harmed, allowing them to be heard, helping to create lasting peace and healing social fractures. While voice and participation can elicit responsiveness in conditions of stability and peace, responsiveness might need to precede voice and participation in certain conflict and post-conflict situations. In Sri Lanka formal and informal volunteers were critical in enhancing the engagement of citizens in the process of healing once a more responsive government took the first steps towards reconciliation. Following the end of the civil war between government forces and the Liberation of Tamil Eelam in 2009, the Government of Sri Lanka in 2011 endorsed the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Committee (LLRC) Report and Recommendations, which highlighted a number of priorities including a clear role for partnership between civil society and local government. Volunteers then took the report to communities, enhanced awareness and understanding, and engaged them in the peacemaking process.

IMPACTS AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL

The report focuses on volunteerism that addresses the governance pillars in the context of the diverse, cross-sectoral global governance actors who are influencing all levels of society – local, national and global. Global engagement through volunteerism most often encounters closed spaces, because governance actors, including sometimes governments, tend to prioritize their relations with other stakeholders, such as donors, member states, shareholders and investors, over citizens and communities.

A key influence in the success of volunteer-driven initiatives at the national level is the presence of a responsive government

Volunteering campaigns that have linked transnationally have sometimes been able to claim local, national and global spaces to increase accountability. Strategies to link global policies and conventions with national volunteer voice and participation have raised accountability issues, sometimes with positive responses. However, CSOs with roots in local volunteerism must resist the globalization pressures to pay too much attention to those with power, which can weaken their links to local constituents and their legitimacy with local governance actors.

Building alliances within and across sectors and levels can contribute to enhancing the accountability and responsiveness of global actors. Volunteers from business, government or civil society build alliances, share expertise and enable citizens to engage with diverse governance actors at all levels more effectively. No single group or organization can achieve the scale of mobilization needed to effect changes in policy at the transnational level or the state of the discourse at the global level. Building complex alliances has been instrumental in, for example, the success of initiatives like Jubilee 2000 or the Control Arms campaign,

which depended on diversity built across countries, actors and stakeholder groups. Farmers and agrarian producers of West Africa influenced regional policy by virtue of their strength as a network, not of individuals but of organizations. To conduct the post-2015 agenda consultations, the United Nations sought to engage in partnerships with civil society and volunteer-involving organizations to expand its reach in the grassroots. The Occupy Wall Street Movement and the People's Climate March relied on numerous alliances to build momentum and reach to generate debate globally and to be heard across the world. While neither led to concrete policy changes, the ability of individuals and groups across nations to interact directly to generate and sustain a conversation about issues of common concern outside traditional intergovernmental fora is one that has a tremendous potential to change the way nations and people interact in global fora. This is an emerging phenomenon.

Volunteerism can contribute to the implementation of a truly people-centred development model

Technology is a powerful tool for civic engagement that needs to be developed globally in a way that allows its inclusive potential to be realized. It is enhancing the speed, breadth and diversity of volunteering engagement opportunities, whether online or in person, to address local, national and global issues. There is a need to address the digital access divide that affects women across the world, as well as rural, marginalized and poor communities. Access to the Internet is still limited in many countries, and fewer women have access to the Internet than men. In 2013 only 17% of Sub-Saharan Africa population had access to the Internet, compared with 84% of North America's population. Globally, only 38% of people have access. This is despite the fact that between 2000 and 2013, Internet penetration grew phenomenally in the developing world, by over 4,662% in Sub-Saharan Africa's, 4,210% in the Arab world and over 3,404% in South Asia. In addition the majority of the global online conversation takes place in English, even though sites like change.org enable people to engage in different languages. This limits who can participate, and who can be heard.

Volunteers using diverse strategies that can engage back and forth among local grassroots constituents, national policy-making fora and global fora are effectively promoting multiple voices and increasing participation in global debates; they are vocal in calling for accountability and responsiveness among the diverse global governance actors.

CONCLUSIONS

From evidence drawn from volunteer work at different levels, in different spaces, using a range of strategies in very diverse global contexts, five major policy threads stand out.

Volunteerism can contribute to enhancing voice and participation, accountability and responsiveness with a range of actors and at all levels

Although not the only answer, volunteerism can contribute to the implementation of a truly people-centred development model. It provides a real gateway into engaging more voices, supporting civil society initiatives and complementing government efforts to widen participation, strengthen accountability and draw out institutional responsiveness at all levels for sustainable peace and development. It does this in multiple ways, especially the mobilization and engagement of local volunteers within communities who commit long term to addressing the problems of governance that shape their daily lives, such as on boards, on committees and in other governance mechanisms. Volunteers are key implementers of many frontline programmes, although rarely are they identified or named as volunteers or included in the analysis of success and failure and whose contribution was critical. Participatory governance will thus require a shift in how volunteers are

acknowledged and spaces is opened for more volunteers. It will also require other governance actors to listen to the voices of these volunteers, who may be expected to help to deliver the work but who are rarely involved in designing and planning the work, or in evaluating it.

The playing field of volunteerism must be level

Volunteers are of course a highly diverse group across location, the structures of volunteering, age, education, sex and abilities. The report shows that volunteerism itself does not occur on a level playing field and has its own power dynamics and hierarchies. Volunteer spaces are gendered, and different volunteer groups have differential access to funding and support as well as access to people in power. Volunteers face different obstacles and have different opportunities as well as differential access to key spaces.

So while in many communities and societies women are the majority – working as volunteers, providing caring and support roles, participating and raising their voices in claimed and invited spaces – most do so without much funding or support. They are often subsidizing processes that governments cannot fund. And in the invited spaces created, in order to enable more women's participation, they frequently find their voices are not listened to. Poor women often find it hard to access formal volunteering structures, for reasons of, for example, mobility, illiteracy, lack of experience in public spaces or money for transport. There is also a real gender divide in access to new communications technology, which is key for engaging globally. The world's poorest, particularly women, are often excluded from accessing formal forms of volunteering at national and global levels, meaning their voices are still often not heard in national or global fora.

Creating an enabling environment is the sine qua non for volunteerism to fully contribute to realizing any future sustainable development agenda

For volunteerism to maximize its contributions to the common good, it needs an enabling environment. The overall social, legal and political context matters greatly in terms of what volunteers can or cannot contribute to improving governance. The political bargain between states and citizens, the constitution in place, the legal framework, the social fabric in different countries, the interaction between local, national and global governance, the diversity of governance actors working at any given level – all are elements that affect who can and who cannot enter the different spaces, whose voices are heard, and who influences decision-making.

Where governments have created a conducive environment for civic engagement – more particularly for volunteers to participate – or where they have been responsive to volunteer-led community initiatives, more people have participated in decision-making. Volunteerism is most effective in enhancing civic engagement when the greater legal-institutional framework is enabling. This includes freedom of speech and association and the presence of sufficiently inclusive spaces for engagement.

Collaboration, alliances and multi-stakeholder partnerships are essential for volunteerism to succeed

Collaboration between governments and civil society has led to successful adoption of laws and structures. Enabling closer interaction between governments and CSOs can create channels for volunteer engagement to enhance the capacity of governments to implement policy.

Civil society has also sought to build alliances with government, the private sector and other actors, engaging volunteers for a common cause. As communities gain in understanding and knowledge of the changing

nature of the rules of engagement, especially through collective action at local level in informally claimed spaces, they can see the value of building alliances and partnerships as a strategy for addressing the governance-related development issues that transcend local, national and global boundaries. As volunteers use their time, knowledge and expertise to address social, economic and environmental global challenges, they can complement, challenge and question government and wider civil society efforts. At the global level, volunteer groups with common agendas collaborate across borders and express voice and participate in global venues. Many opportunities exist for promoting supportive global agreements, policies, conventions and volunteer standards. These, in turn, can add legitimacy, knowledge and resources to local and national efforts.

Data challenges remain real and must be addressed if the potential of volunteerism as a resource is to be fully realized

Deepening understanding through research is critical

This report starts a conversation on what volunteers bring to support participatory, accountable and responsive governance processes at different levels and in different spaces. But the data challenges remain real and must be addressed if the potential of volunteerism as a resource is to be fully realized over the coming years. One challenge is defining and describing the immense range and diversity of volunteer forms across the world. A second is capturing the size, scope and scale of different kinds of volunteerism through quantitative measures. A third is capturing the nuances, distinctions and complex contributions through more qualitative case studies rooted in diverse contexts. All three would benefit from further interrogation. Also required is a serious commitment to better data collection, including qualitative data culturally grounded in how volunteerism is defined and practised in different countries.

Measuring the contribution of volunteers to development is important. So is enabling volunteers to monitor and report on development locally, nationally and globally. To this end, technology coupled with people's willingness and determination to engage in development, to hold governance actors to account and to ensure responsiveness provides another opportunity to engage citizens as volunteer monitors and reporters of progress against any development agenda. Millions of people participated in the MY World survey, and volunteers facilitated community engagement to ensure maximum engagement. As more people have access to both Internet technology and mobile phones, the opportunity should be grasped to ensure that governance at all levels is participatory, accountable and responsive.

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