

Youth Volunteering for Development in South Africa

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Abstract

Youth unemployment and the quest for empowerment have led to a growing surge in youth volunteerism in South Africa. The objective of this paper is consequently to examine how youth volunteer activities (YVAs) have offered opportunities and created an enabling development environment for young men and women to be employable, thereby improving their quality of life. To be able to achieve this objective, the researchers used quantitative methodologies to generate data for analysis. The researchers relied on secondary information from Statistics South Africa's (StatsSA) database. The study found that the youth volunteer rate has increased over the past decade by 2.1 percentage points from 3.7% to 5.8%. It also found that youth volunteerism has become a way of life and a route to fulltime employment that assured them and improved their quality of life.

Keywords: *Youth, volunteering, South Africa, community, employment, empowerment, development*

Résumé

Le chômage des jeunes et la quête d'autonomisation ont conduit à une augmentation croissante du volontariat des jeunes en Afrique du Sud. L'objectif de cet article est donc d'examiner comment les activités de volontariat des jeunes (AJV) ont offert des opportunités et créé un

environnement de développement permettant aux jeunes hommes et femmes d'être employables, améliorant ainsi leur qualité de vie. Pour être en mesure d'atteindre cet objectif, les chercheurs ont utilisé des méthodologies quantitatives pour générer des données à analyser. Les chercheurs se sont appuyés sur des informations secondaires de la base de données de Statistics South Africa (StatsS A). L'étude a révélé que le taux de bénévolat des jeunes a augmenté au cours de la dernière décennie de 2,1 points de pourcentage, passant de 3,7 % à 5,8 %. Il a également constaté que le volontariat des jeunes est devenu un mode de vie et une voie vers un emploi à temps plein qui les a assurés et amélioré leur qualité de vie.

Mots-clés : Jeunes, volontariat, Afrique du Sud, communauté, emploi, autonomisation, développemen

Introduction

Youth volunteerism is an activity that has attracted scholarly attention in the past few decades in South Africa. Volunteerism is a multi-dimensional phenomenon involving human capital development, serving as job creation platform and socio-economic assistance for the poor and all who need it (Toraldo, Contu and Mangia, 2016). Widespread socio-economic hardships can trigger volunteering among populations sympathetic to those experiencing such hardships, setting in motion mutual aid, solidarity and self-help (Mati, 2017). Youth volunteer activities (YVAs) can deliver substantial benefits to young men and women, enhance social cohesion, encourage human and social capital formation and improve the quality of life in communities (International Labour Organisation, 2011). There is also the idea of volunteerism driven by philanthropy; that is, people from more affluent communities giving some of their skills, time and resources to help the more deprived in society. The prevalence of youth volunteerism and other forms of providing social and economic assistance at community levels in South Africa are responses to high incidences of poverty, poor health and diseases such as TB, HIV/AIDS and other pandemics (Mati, 2017). A current typical example is the mass registered volunteer youths mobilised to screen, take samples and trace contacts of infected Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) victims. The above assertion is also supported by Caprara, Mati, Obadare and Perold (2012), who state that the prevalence of humanistic life philosophies and policies such as *Ubuntu* in South Africa, Harambee in Kenya, Ujamaa Ujini in Tanzania, Umuganda in Rwanda, or Edir in Ethiopia, requiring empathetic responses by groups, have all triggered volunteerism in those countries. It can also be said that underlying all forms of youth volunteering activities in South Africa are the inherent mutual social assistance and guaranteed future employment or self-employment for the youth in the communities and sectors where they are engaged (StatsSA, 2014).

In Africa, governments have continued to stress the importance of youth development by investing in youth volunteerism (Population Reference Bureau, 2017). Subsequently, the

African Union (AU, 2015), through the Agenda 2063, has prioritised youth development as contained in its Aspiration 6. The aspiration seeks to ensure that opportunities are available for youth self-realisation and the creation of enabling environment where the youth have access to education, jobs and healthcare, among others (AU, 2015). In South Africa, all national policy instruments such as the National Development Plan (NDP, 2030), Vision 2030 and the National Youth Policy (NYP) 2015-2020, express the South African government's determination to empower the youth and to improve human capital through various means not limited to youth volunteer activities (YVAs), but also the protection of the youth from sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned teenage pregnancies. It can be deduced from these that human capital development, youth empowerment and employment are at the centre of all government policies towards socio-economic development. However, within the communities, there abound 'armies' of youth without hands-on skills to fill the few open spaces in the job market. It is believed that the filling of these job spaces can be achieved through youth volunteerism.

Furthermore, there have been many agitations and demands in the various municipalities for quick and effective service delivery, which the municipalities have failed to satisfy. This has been the result of a backlog of skilled manpower and unfilled vacancies or vacancies being occupied by unskilled and unqualified personnel in the municipalities (Mafikeng Municipal IDP, 2019). One would therefore venture to ask: "What are the available alternate tools needed by the youth to obtain relevant experiences required for them to be marketable?" Secondly, "Is volunteerism a pathway to youth capacity building or empowerment, full-time employment and self-employment in South Africa?" This study consequently had sought to establish whether youth volunteerism is a means to empowerment and self-sustenance; and also, to test the veracity of the proposition in the research work of Delany and Perold (2016), which argues that, "volunteering can serve as a means to enhancing youth employability in many South African municipalities" (Delany and Perold, 2016).

Rationale

The main rationale for this study is that African socio-economic structures, cultural dynamics and political histories have incubated a complex volunteering phenomenon and it is worth determining the rate of occurrence upon which development policies can be based (StatsSA, 2017).

Research objective

The study had as its goal to investigate the extent to which youth volunteering could lead to self-empowerment and full-time employment in South Africa's municipalities, which are littered with mass unemployed youths, currently above 27% (StatsSA, 2018).

Methodology

The methodology used for this research is quantitative and secondary data analysis. To achieve the study's objectives, a number of academic literature studies on the topic were perused, reviewed and analysed. Statistical figures were sourced from Statistics South Africa's community survey documents. Incorporating these statistics enabled reliable and valid conclusions to be made in this paper.

Conceptualising youth volunteerism

The youth population and development

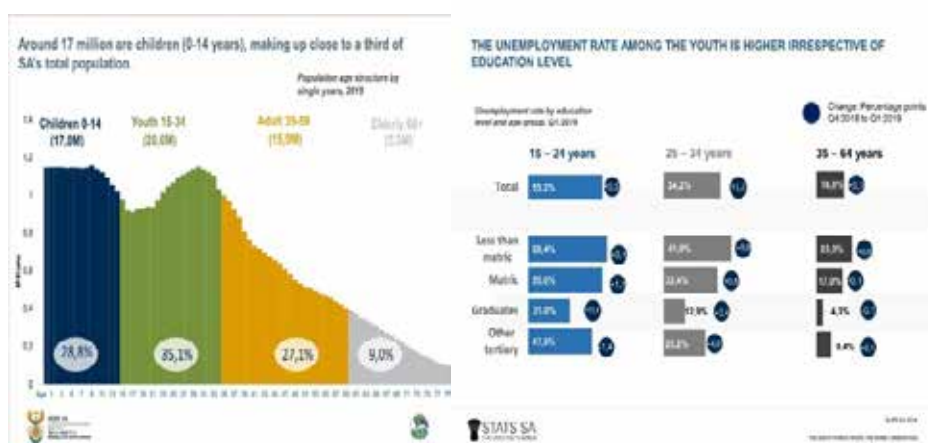
Who are the youth? Youth, for the purpose of this paper, is defined as those persons aged between 15 and 35 years based on South Africa's National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) declaration (NYDA, 2015). Chigozie and Botchway (2018), on youth, refer to the term "... 'Youth' as the state or period of change from dependence in childhood to adulthood independence... a flexible period of progression/transition from childhood to adulthood." They go on to indicate that the definition "...varies from country to country and society to society." From the definitions, youth classifications can be narrowed to two, i.e. "... primary and secondary youth." Primary in South Africa, youth are defined as those young men and women within the age group of 18 years to 35 years (NYDA, 2015). This definition could be traced to the South African struggle to embrace much of the historically marginalised population; therefore, we see that the NYDA's age limit is 35 years, which differs from the UN's limit of 24 years. The UN, within the context of statistics and consistency implications, defines and classifies youth as "those population groups between 15 and 24 years". Within these are teenagers between 13 and 19 years of age; and young adults between 20 to 24 years of age. The latter group of youth are seen as youth in the age of majority. They can enter into a business contract independently without the requirement of parental, guardian or representative consent. The Secondary youth are those young men and women of ages of 14 and 17 years. This group of youth are seen as youth in the age of minority. They can enter into a business contract only with the support and consent of parents, guardians or representatives. From Chigozie and Botchway (2018), we can conclude that, in most countries and regions of the world, the numbers of youths who fall into the primary youth sector have over the years widened the unemployment gap. These are those ready to volunteer their labour or knowledge.

Statistics show that youth volunteer rates in South Africa are high among all youth age groups (StatsSA, 2017). South Africa's population sex ratio statistics also show that there are more male adolescents than their female counterparts; though statistical

figures of the general population reveal that there are more females than males. The sex ratio is 101 male adolescents per 100 female adolescents (StatsSA, 2017). According to the mid-year statistical estimates of 2019, the youth aged between 18 and 34 years constitute almost a third of the population, about 17.84 million. In terms of gender, there are 9.04 million males and 8.80 million females (StatsSA, 2019).

Figure 1, culled from StatsSA (2018), graphically shows the country's youth population and compares it to the unemployment rate. It is important to mention that this study is not comparing youth population growth against youth unemployment, but using the graphs below to support the contextualisation of youth volunteering activities in South Africa.

Figure 1: Youth population and unemployment rate



Source: StatsSA, (2019)

In Figure 1, children (aged 0-14 years) make up 28.8% of the total population of the country as compared to the adults and elderly who make up 27.1% and 9%, respectively. The youth aged 15-34 years make up the highest proportion of the population at 35.1%. Irrespective of educational levels, the graph shows that unemployment is highest among the youth. Breaking these down into provinces, with regard to residency and participation in youth volunteer activities (YVAs), Gauteng has the highest number of youths in the country residing in the province, constituting almost 30% (5.10 million) of the country's total population. The mid-year report also notes that KwaZulu-Natal comes second, accommodating 19.4% or 3.47 million youths. It is followed by the Free State with 4.7% youth, and the Northern Cape accommodating 2.0%, the lowest proportion of youth.

Referring to trends in educational qualifications in Figure 1, approximately 13% of the youth aged between 20 and 34 are graduates. At provincial level, the more rural provinces

such as the Eastern Cape and Northern Cape have significantly lower proportions of young graduates. This can be attributed to a number of factors that include migration to seek employment elsewhere. Interprovincial as well as international migration patterns are noted to have significantly influenced the provincial population numbers and structures in South Africa (StatsSA, 2018). These demographic issues have been dealt with to establish that it is the youth who are more likely to volunteer and the larger their numbers in a province, the more volunteering activity one could expect in that province.

Volunteerism in the development discourse

Volunteering in the development field and discourse is triggered when a community or an organisation seeks assistance for an activity that its members alone cannot perform and it may not have the financial means to do so (Everatt and Solanke, 2008). It is a concept that has been celebrated throughout generations in Africa and elsewhere in all spheres of life and has in some instances, been made a policy in recent decades. The academic literature abounds of such volunteerism and related activities. Scholars such as Graham, Patel, Ulriksen, Moodley and Mavungu (2013), Grizzle and Yusuf (2015), and Toraldo, Contu and Mangia (2016) all agree that different social, cultural and political histories have produced forms of volunteering that are particularly diverse and highly contextualised.

From the works of these scholars cited above, in particular Toraldo, Contu and Mangia (2016), it can be found that in Africa, there is a high prevalence of volunteering among the poor and rural dwellers of low-income status (Caprara *et al.*, 2012). Consequently, the youth decision to volunteer for any good cause is influenced by their horizontal linkage and affiliation to a socio-geographic community (StatsSA 2018b; Mati, 2017). That is why Wilkinson-Maposa, Fowler, Oliver-Evans and Mulenga (2005) write that there is a high social value attributed to non-material contribution of time, labour and skills in helping others in a community. Volunteering practices are encapsulated in communal philosophies, which embody a worldview of privileges and wellbeing of the collective over individualism. Ingrained in volunteerism are principles such as reciprocity, counter-obligation, collaboration, cooperation and altruism.

Fundamentally, volunteering is about providing an unsolicited service for free or without any pecuniary gain to a cause one believes in. In our definition, as supported by Everatt and Solanki (2004), it is about giving/devoting one's time, energy and skills freely to assist those in need within a community. This is in line with StatsSA's (2019) position as it is referred to in the academia as community service, which could transform the living conditions or wellbeing of the people. Volunteers decide on their own to help or sacrifice a portion of their resources – in this case, time and energy – for any cause of goodwill. Volunteers are regarded as 'do-gooders'.

According to the Good Deed Organisation (2019), a youth volunteer gets a sense of achievement after having committed to help and at the end of it all, realising he/she participated in the transformation of a community. Upon completion of some tasks, the volunteer becomes more knowledgeable and more enthusiastic in continuing to pursue other altruistic ventures. Toraldo *et al.* (2016) argue that youth volunteers' motivations need to be contextualised. This means that there are many different motivating factors for volunteering. For example, volunteers may be motivated by socio-cultural factors and a shared philosophy of life.

There is also some discourse in participatory development that volunteerism could easily lead to exploitation and community exhaustion. In other words, there is also a downside to volunteerism, which could also be abused by the powerful to mobilise 'cheap' or free labour in providing a service (further studies are needed in this area).

In their 2011 State of the World's Volunteerism Report, the United Nations Volunteers advanced three criteria for determining whether or not an act is voluntary (UN, 2016). A voluntary act must be "free-will, non-pecuniary motivated, and of benefit to others" (Leigh *et al.*, 2011). In South Africa, the YVA adds that it is a pro-social behaviour undertaken by people and that volunteerism is characterised by three main features (StatsSA, 2019).

Firstly, volunteering is non-compulsory. Volunteers are not coerced or forced externally by law, contract, academic requirement, or other powerful social influences to undertake the activity. However, Leigh *et al.* (2011) argue that though the "decision by South Africa's youth to volunteer for any good courses stems from their free-will, in certain circumstances it is influenced by peer pressure, or cultural and social obligations".

Secondly, the youth may receive some reimbursement or other support such as financial payments particularly to those new school graduates (StatsSA, 2017). This does not mean that the good course of volunteering by the youth is done primarily for monetary or such similar gains (Tanguchi, 2011). It is also argued that the payments the youth receive in monetary terms are usually less than the economic value of the volunteer work they had performed (Leigh *et al.*, 2011; Mati, 2017).

Finally, volunteering serves as a useful means and platform from which the youth gain sizeable experience and exposure to leap into the world of work, thereby improving their wellbeing. It is therefore important to build the CV of young people and enhance their employability.

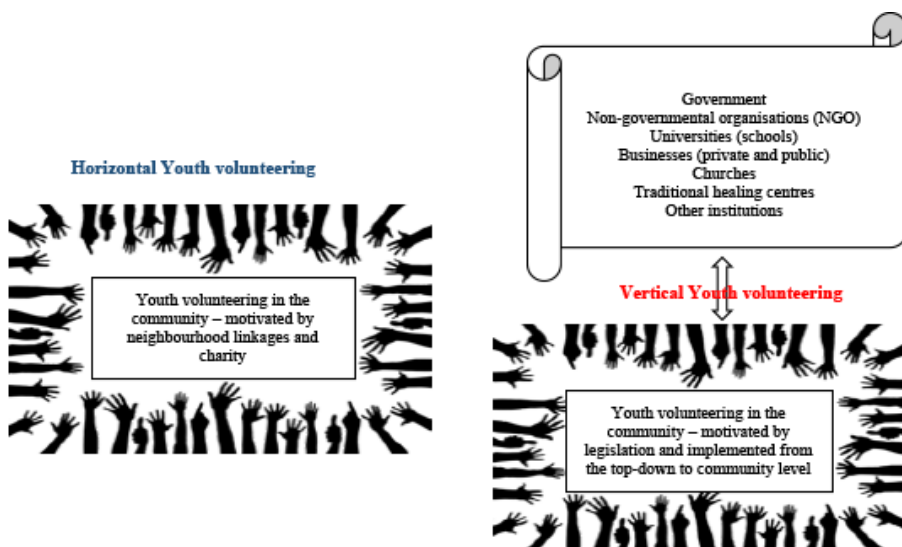
Treading the middle ground, Toraldo *et al.* (2016) share the view that youth volunteering has some economic value, it constitutes a symbolic resource, and can be motivated by social drivers. Therefore, on the other hand, not all volunteering should be regarded as wholly freewill and with no pecuniary motivation or is with survivalist mutual aid goals. The type of rewards received are mere tokens, to cover transport cost and incidental expenses, and do not measure up to the real monetary value of the services the volunteer provides or renders (Leigh *et al.*, 2011).

Types of volunteering

There are two types of volunteering – vertical and horizontal. *Vertical volunteering* refers to youth volunteering at the State or Government affiliated institutions and organisations. It is a voluntary system whose activities are structured and follow a vertical hierarchical order (Taniguchi, 2011). This type of system is usually found in organisations with clear organisational structures. It has a top-down, authoritarian approach to volunteering. The youth who volunteer in such organisations are either *passive* or *active* volunteers. *Passive volunteers* are the volunteering population that has no clear objective for volunteering, but is required by government to devote their time and resources for national services. This is the case of Nigeria's "*National Youth Service Corp (NYSC)*", Okafor and Ani (2014) and Ghana's "*National Service*", Kehinde (2016), in which all fresh university graduates in both countries devote one (1) year voluntary national service and receive some monetary allowance/stipend. This is primarily done to inculcate in the youth the spirit of selfless service to the community, and to emphasise the spirit of oneness of all, irrespective of cultural or social background.

In South Africa, it is likened to the "*Learnership programme*" policy (National Youth Commission, 2014). In this case, the South African government, in partnership with various relevant stakeholders, is engaged to ensure that the youth access opportunities that enable them to grow, develop and prosper, to become responsive and productive citizens. Stakeholders support the youth who, by virtue of their vulnerability and other constraints, find themselves relegated to the margins of society and are unable to benefit from the policy dispensations (NYP, 2014). Unlike the former, the latter volunteer youth are not obliged by any policy instrument to participate. The other vertical type, *active* youth volunteers, are those who willingly, based on clear objectives of what they want to achieve at the end of the volunteering programme, put themselves forward to participate actively in the volunteer programme.

The second type of volunteering, which is *horizontal volunteering*, aligns itself to the community with humanitarian and charity philosophies. Groups volunteering are neighbourhoods, group of friends and other informal networks. Participation or engagement in this type of activity is usually at local community level, with the altruistic aim of doing a service for humanity or for kinship's sake or due to the spirit of *Ubuntu* (Mati, 2017; Mati and Perold, 2011; Lough and Mati, 2012). People engage in it informally; that is, there is no formal recruitment of participants. Informal volunteering involves unpaid work carried out for a charitable, social or political purpose through an informal network of extended families, friends and neighbours. Engaging youth in *horizontal volunteering* is crucial to local development and it is common in poor disadvantaged communities (Taniguchi, 2011). The horizontal volunteering has a more pre-eminence and preference over the vertical in local poor communities.

Figure 2: Types of volunteering

Source: Authors' design (2021)

Volunteerism and sustainable development

Statistics South Africa (2014) defines volunteers as “persons, mostly youth above the age of 15, who do any ‘unpaid non-compulsory work’”. The individuals devote their time to perform activities either through an organisation or directly for others outside their own household without pay. It is their firm belief that their actions would ensure development in the communities in which they are engaged. Their activities are also meant to motivate community members to participate in the communal activities as well as own the projects they are engaged in and to sustain them. For successful and sustainable development to occur in communities, Coetzee (1987) as well as Chambers (1997) emphasise that it should be by the people themselves (Botchway, 2001). Therefore, without the participation of the local youth, the projects in which volunteers are engaged within the local communities will not be sustainable (Lea and Chaudhri, 1983, Todaro and Smith, 2015). Many voluntary activities are undertaken by the youth who consider them as the development of their own society and self-empowering. Consequently, with the youth horizontally volunteering in their local communities, comes local development, social and human capital formation and self-capacity building. As a result, the volunteer rate of this age group is highest among all age groups in South Africa (Chigozie and Botchway, 2018).

Youth volunteer rate is the expression of the extent to which youths engage in voluntary activities. It is computed by dividing the number of volunteers identified by the population aged 15 years and older in a habitat during a reference period (StatsSA, 2014). A volunteer activities survey (VAS) was first conducted in South Africa by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) in the second quarter of 2010, and the second in the second quarter of 2014. It is important to note that the methodologies used in carrying out VAS differ from one country to another and very few countries measure volunteer activities.

Level of youth volunteer activities (YVAs) in South Africa

Youth volunteer activities (YVAs) in South Africa are a critical part of any government development strategy, be it social, economic, infrastructure, research or any other sector as the case may be. This is because the youth constitute the future of the country and they form the backbone of the working population. YVA contributes to building strong, inclusive and resilient communities in South Africa. It triggers innovation and social change, as well as awareness of community needs and challenges. YVA brings together the youth to support the local human capital and assets of communities (Volunteering Australia, 2015). The South African household survey recorded that between 2010 and 2018, there were 2.7 million volunteers compared to 1.3 million volunteers in 2010, showing an increase of 1.4 million during the eight-year period (StatsSA, 2018).

Unlike the classic north-south volunteering, which is seen as vertical because youth volunteers within this context are more predominantly from privileged socio-economic backgrounds, the south-south (horizontal volunteering) context of formal volunteering model has evolved to a new category of a formal African volunteer structure, whose socio-economic profile is not dramatically different (Wilkinson-Maposa and Fowler, 2009; Einolf and Chambré, 2011). In South Africa, Mati argues that unlike horizontal informal volunteering, formal horizontal volunteering is actioned through a formal organisation. In many instances, this can be either through a non-governmental or a governmental agency (Mati, 2017).

Furthermore, unlike the United States where volunteerism has tools by which one could predict which young people would volunteer and to what extent, Mary (2004) argues that in South Africa, the trend shows for example that a college-educated youth would be more likely not to volunteer compared to rural young people who are school dropouts. She states: "...*Simply put, university graduates would consider white collar job to volunteering*" (Mary, 2004). The statement implies that the higher the educational status of the youth, the less likely they are to volunteer. The above statement notwithstanding, the level of volunteer participation in South Africa is premised on how well the South African government, private organisations and civil societies organise, promote,

publicise and fund volunteers in the country. We can therefore deduce that volunteering activities in South Africa are structurally organised, vertical and formal. The better the organisation the higher the volunteer rate.

From the literature, it can be realised that rural youth and those who live in smaller, close-knit communities are more likely to volunteer than those in urban cities (Gamm and Putnam, 1999; Oliver, 2000). While others such as Lesk and Zippel (1975) and Steblay (1987) found that there is no significant difference in the volunteering rates between people living in urban and rural areas, Mary (2004) argues differently. Mary (2004) points out that many hours spent watching television (TV) by some South African youth make them to devote less time for volunteering. In fact, the youth who watch a great deal of TV spend much less time volunteering than those who spend less time watching TV. Consequently, keeping indoors watching television is detrimental to volunteerism. Further to this, there is considerable evidence that a youth's social and economic characteristics or upbringing influence his or her propensity to volunteer, Mary (2004) argues. She concludes, however, that there is little evidence that characteristics such as a society's per capita income as opposed to an individual's income can explain collective-level or individual-level variation in volunteer participation rates. Consequently, one can surmise from Mary's argument that a person's social upbringing plays a vital role in his/her potential willingness to volunteer.

In line with Mary's (2004) argument, South Africa's National Development Plan aligns with formal horizontal volunteering as a strategy for job creation in line with the President's proclamation of 2 million jobs by 2029, organisations can use the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 to guide and attract youth volunteering initiatives in a number of ways. Therefore, the NDP serves as:

- A general guide to good volunteering practice.
- Audit tool that provides a picture of how well organisations are transforming in response to government project for job creation against best practices for volunteer involvement.
- Checklist to help organisations identify opportunities for young people.
- As a framework of reference to assist in planning and establishing a new volunteer service.
- A baseline from which progress in making improvements can be monitored and measured.
- As a way of gaining formal recognition for good practice and meeting the NDP employment and job creation priorities.
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Advantages of volunteering

Findings by some humanitarian organisations in South Africa, such as the Red Cross and the Gift of the Givers Foundation, as presented in the survey by StatsSA (2014), regarding volunteerism, indicate that the youth are happier, healthier and have a greater sense of purpose when they are offered volunteering opportunities in these organisations where they could test their skills and competencies. This study therefore articulates that youth volunteerism not only has personal welfare benefits, it also brings awareness of community participation and development, and also has various other business benefits, as shown below.

- *Skills, work ethics, innovation and cooperation:* Volunteering in organisations in teams allows the youth volunteers and the organisations' staff members to know each other at one level and at another level learn more about each person's strengths, characteristics and work ethics (Good Deed Organisation, 2019). A youth who is cooperative and teams up well with staff is a valuable asset to any employer and can be readily absorbed in the organisation. Mixing with staff leads to skills transfer, innovation, transformation and good learning experience for both volunteers and the organisation (StatsSA, 2018b).
- *Networking:* Volunteering often offers young people the privilege and opportunities to network. While volunteering, they get the opportunity to meet and network with influential and helpful people in other departments who they ordinarily would not have met (Lough and Mati, 2012; Hacker *et al.*, 2016).
- *Business opportunities and volunteer self-growth:* Instituting volunteering programmes in a business or an organisation provides it with the opportunity for growth and increasing profits. Good Deed Organisation (2019), after studying some companies with effective volunteer programmes for a period of over 15 years, notes that volunteerism assisted some organisations to grow at an average of \$1.28 billion. While 94% of volunteer employees learnt new skills, had benefits by getting their first jobs by being absorbed into the organisation, others gained experience for future self-employment. Therefore, it can be seen here that youth volunteerism has great advantages for businesses and individuals' self-development.
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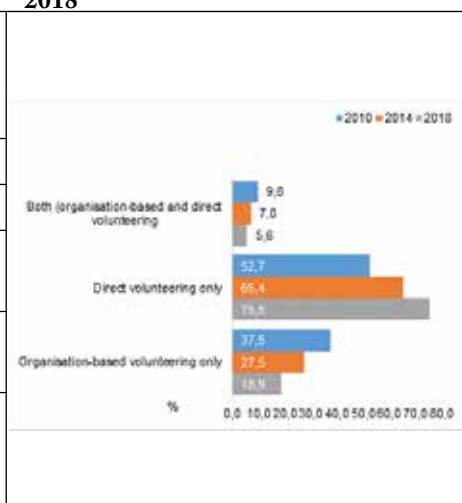
South Africa volunteer data: 2010-2018 analysis

Table 1 below provides statistical focus and understanding of volunteerism in South Africa and compares the distribution of volunteers by type and number of volunteer activities between 2010 and 2018 in Figure 3.

Table 1: Distribution of volunteers by type of volunteering and number of volunteer activities, 2010-2018

Type of volunteering	Year			Total change
	2010	2014	2018	
	In thousands			
Total Volunteers	1308	2206	2746	1438
Organisation-based volunteering only	491	607	519	28
Direct volunteering only	689	1443	2074	1385
Both (organisation-based and direct volunteering)	128	155	154	26

Figure 3: Proportion of volunteers by type of volunteering and number of volunteer activities, 2010, 2014 and 2018



Source: StatsSA 2018b

As shown in Table 1, in 2018, there were approximately 2.7 million people aged 15 years and older involved in volunteer activities. This was an increase of 1.4 million above the number of volunteers recorded in 2010 (1.3 million), and only 540 thousand above the 2014 figure of 2.2 million. The largest increase in the number of volunteers was among those who volunteered directly, resulting in an increase of 631 000 between 2014 and 2018. In Figure 3, over 75% of the volunteer activities were performed directly in 2018, 65.4% directly in 2014 and 57.2% in 2010. This shows that a growth of 10.1% in volunteer activities occurred between 2014 and 2018, while only 8.2% growth occurred between 2010 and 2014. Volunteering through organisations accounted for 37.5% of all volunteer activities in 2010, declining by 10% to 27.5% in 2014. It further declined by 8.6% in 2018 from 27.5% (2014) to 18.9% (2018). Among the three different means of volunteering over the reference period, direct volunteering increased in its share of total volunteers, while those who volunteered through organisations and both organisation-based and direct volunteering declined.

Figure 4: Number and distribution of volunteer activities, 2010-2018

Number of volunteer activities	Year		Total change 2010-2018	
	2010	2014	2018	
	In thousands			
One	1167	2016	2544	1378
Two	112	164	165	53
Three	29	25	37	8
Total volunteers	1308	2205	2746	1439

Source: StatsSA 2018b

Table 2 and Figure 4 above show that between 2010, 2014 and 2018, volunteer rates increased for all the age groups in volunteer activity ‘one’. However, looking at activities ‘two’ and ‘three’ during the same period of 2010 to 2018, the graph shows that the volunteer rate among all age groups declined. About nine out of 10 volunteers were involved in one volunteer activity, while the share increased over the period. Comparing the same period, the volunteer rate increased across all labour market statuses for both adults and youth, with the highest increase among discouraged and other inactive adults.

Volunteering in activity ‘one’ increased from 89.2% in 2010 to reach 91.4% in 2014 and 92.6% in 2018. It shows that the total number of volunteers in activity ‘one’ increased by 1.4 million, from 1.2 million in 2010 to 2.5 million in 2018. Of those who participated in ‘three’ activities, the number of volunteers decreased from 29 000 in 2010 to 25 000 in 2014, and increased to 37 000 in 2018. Consequently, we can conclude that in 2018 a large number of volunteers participated in one particular activity.

Table 3: Number of volunteers, hours and volunteer rate, 2010-2018

Volunteers			
Years	Total population ('000)	Number of volunteers ('000)	Volunteer rate (%)
2010	35 332	1308	3.7
2014	38 159	2206	5.8
2018	41 288	2746	6.7
Volunteer hours			
Year	Total annual volunteer hours ('000)	Full-time year-round job equivalent (jobs) ('000)	Sum of average annual volunteer hours
2010	419 241	202	321
2014	610 478	293	277
2018	639 689	308	233

Source: StatsSA 2018b

Analysis of Table 3 above also shows that, from a population of 41 288 million people aged 15 years and older in 2018, only 6.7% participated in volunteer activities in 2018. This amounts to total hours' contribution of 639.7 million devoted to volunteering activities during the 12-month period. We can find that, by calculation, the 639 689 million hours worked in 2018 translate to an average of 308 000 jobs created in that year. It gives an increase of 15 000 full-time jobs compared to the 2014 volume of work, which was equal to 293 000 full-time jobs. The year 2018 also shows an average volunteered hours of 233 hours. This is a decline by 44 hours from the 2014 number of 277 hours and a decline by 88 hours of the 2010 number of 321 hours as shown in Table 3; meaning that from 2010 the average volunteer hours have been declining steadily up to 2018, and this decrease could be as a result of volunteers' reward and motivation. Therefore, although more South African youth volunteered in 2018 compared to 2010, the average hours of volunteering per youth volunteer declined over the same period.

Figure 5: Volunteer rate by sex and population groups in 2010, 2014 and 2018

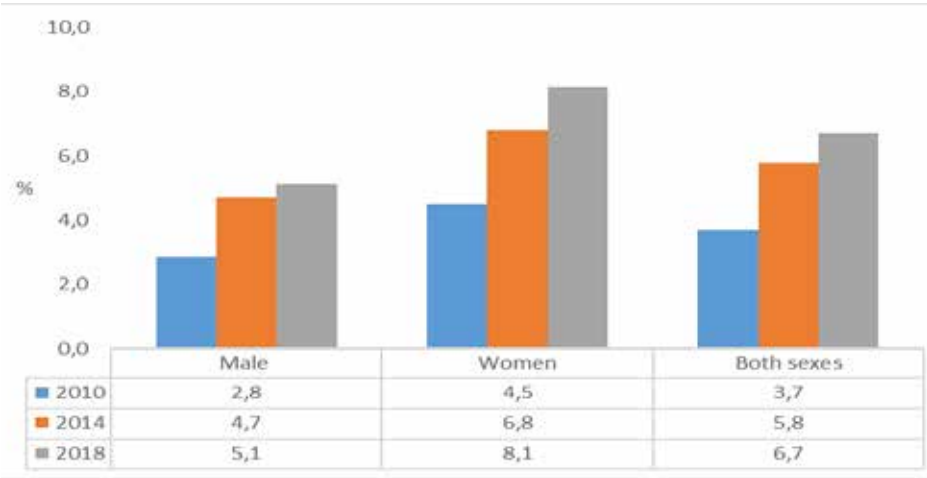
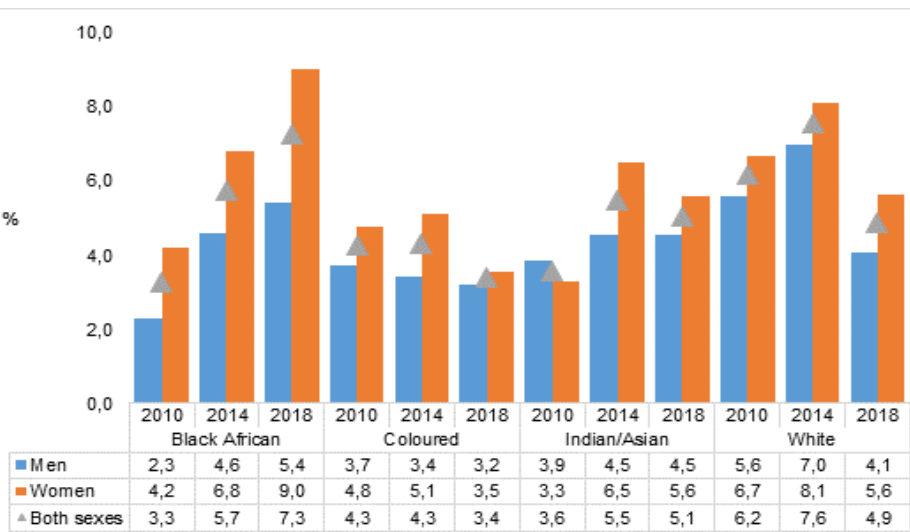


Figure 5.1: Comparison of volunteers



Source: StatsSA 2018b

Furthermore, in Table 3, out of the 2.7 million people who volunteered in 2018, 62.9% or 1.7 million were women, while 37.1% or 1 million were men. In Table 3, the 2010 and 2014 figures reveal that women were more likely to volunteer than their male counterparts. The table shows again that between 2010 and 2018, the combined total number of hours volunteered by men and women dedicated to volunteer activities

increased from 419 241 in 2010 to 610 478 in 2014 and 639 689 in 2018. Therefore, there occurred increases in the population of men and women who volunteered between 2010 and 2018. Volunteered populations in 2010, 2014 and 2018 were 35 332 000, 38 159 000 and 41 288 000, respectively. The majority of the hours were spent through direct volunteering and limited hours were spent participating in both organisation-based and direct volunteering activities.

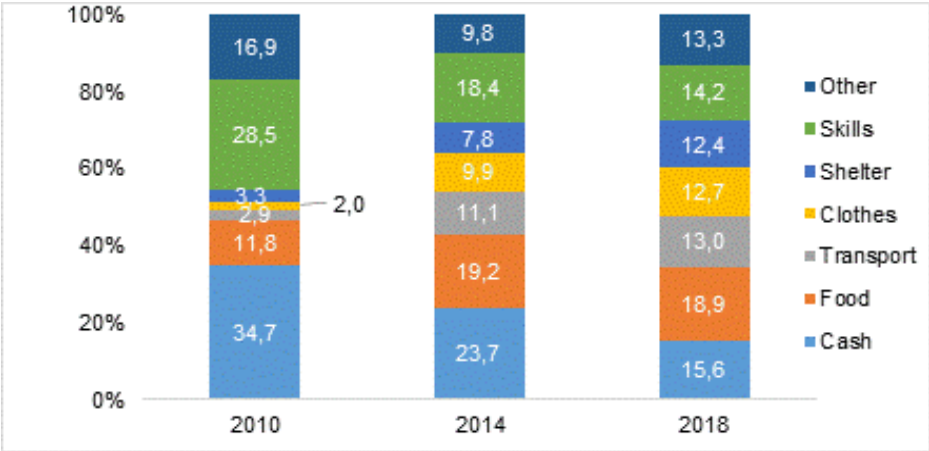
Between 2010 and 2018, as shown in Figure 5 and Figure 5.1, volunteer rates by both genders increased from 3.7%, 5.8% to 6.7%, which indicates percentage increases of 2.1% and 0.9%, respectively. The figure also shows that the volunteer rates among women are higher than for men over the period 2010 to 2018. Between 2010 and 2018, the volunteer rate for women increased by 3.6 percentage points while the change for men was 2.3 percentage points.

Reviewing 2010 and 2014, Figure 5.1 above shows that the white population are more likely to participate in volunteer activities compared to other population groups. In 2018, the volunteer rate among black Africans was at its highest at 7.3 percentage points. In 2010, black African men recorded the lowest volunteer rate of 2.3% and were the only group with the rate below 3.0% for both sexes. The volunteer rate for black African women increased over the period to 9%, while among other population groups, rate of participation increased between 2010 and 2014, then decreased from 2014 to 2018.

Youth volunteer rewards, 2010-2018

The study took an in-depth look at the types of activities the population groups participated in during the period 2010 to 2018 and rewards received. Figure 6 below demonstrates expectations or what the volunteers received for volunteering for the period under consideration, apart from the personal satisfaction that accompanies it.

Figure 6: Distribution of what volunteers received 2010, 2014 and 2018



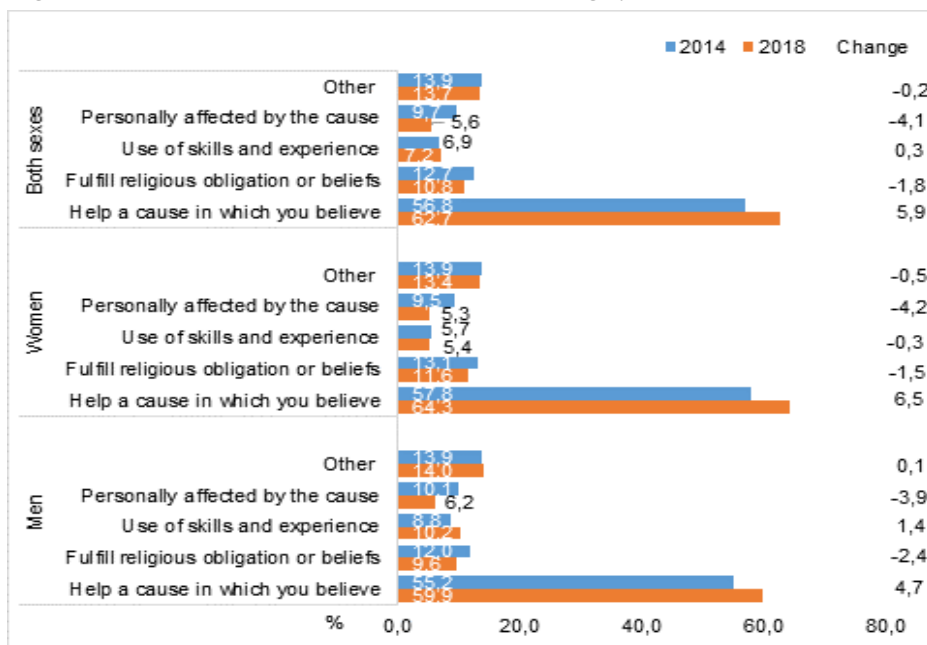
Source: StatsSA 2018a,b

From Figure 6 above, the distribution of volunteers who received or were expected to receive something in return for their voluntary work, apart from personal satisfaction, varied over the period 2010 to 2018. From 2010 to 2014, the majority of those volunteers received or were expected to receive cash in return for their volunteering services. On the other hand, in 2018, the majority of 18.9% received or were expected to receive food parcels as their compensation. The declared volunteer reward of cash and obtaining skills in exchange for volunteer work were also the two categories that incrementally decreased the most over the years. The proportion of volunteers who received or were expected to receive some forms of honorarium such as shelter, transport and clothes in return, increased by a little more than 10% in 2018. The lowest increase by 12.4% was observed among those who received or were expected to receive shelter. Volunteers who received food, cash and skills in the 2018 records amounted to 18.9%, 15.6% and 14.2%, respectively. Less than 40% of volunteers combined received or were expected to receive transport, clothes and shelter for their voluntary work. From these, one could state that volunteers received some rewards or honorariums for their services and as a result many youths had joined or participated in the YVA in their numbers as the years went by. What is also notable is the almost equal distribution among the type of volunteer rewards in 2018, with not a single reward dominating.

Comparing male and female youth volunteer numbers

Figure 7 below shows the reasons for participation in various volunteering activities between 2010 and 2018. The data in the figure demonstrates that men and women in South Africa volunteer for social inclusion, most believe in a good cause, and others, to fulfil community, personal and religious obligations or beliefs.

Figure 7: Distribution of the reasons for volunteering by sex, 2014-2018



Source: StatsSA, 2018a,b

In Figure 7, by comparing 2014 and 2018 records, one finds that 62.7% of all types of gender volunteers reported that the reason for volunteering was to help a cause that they believed in by 2018. This is an increase of 5.9% on that of 2014. Furthermore, in 2018, women volunteer participants' record shows 64.3% for the reason of helping a cause in which they believed (6.5% more than 2014); and only 11.6% were with a reason of fulfilling religious obligations. Men, on the other hand, record a 59.9% participation lower than that of women for the same reason in 2018 and an increase on the 2014 participation by 4.7%, an increase (1.8%) lower than that of women. The percentage of those who volunteered to gain skills and experience by men in 2018 was 10.2% compared to 5.4% of women who volunteered for the same reason in 2018. This shows

a difference of 4.8% of men over women. Men whose reasons for volunteering were 'personally affected by a cause' decreased by 3.9 percentage points, from 10.1% in 2014 to 6.2% in 2018; while women who participated for the same reason in 2018 were 5.3%, a decrease of 4.2% on the 2014 participant percentage. Men's participation decreased insignificantly by 0.3% less than women. Therefore, comparing male and female youth volunteer numbers for the same reasons, one can conclude that the percentage of participation varies according to the reasons that motivate each group; and that while for one reason males' participation is higher than females, for another, female numbers are greater than men. There is, therefore, no overwhelming significant difference between male and female volunteer participation.

Limitation of the study

The article sets as research aim to investigate the extent to which youth volunteering could lead to self-employment and full-time employment in South Africa. We know the numbers of youth volunteers over time and the reasons for their volunteering activities from the data of Statistics SA, however, how many of these volunteering youths ended up being self-employed and how many ended up in full-time employment we do not know. Our research could be criticised to become an assumption-based calculus and more of sustained argumentation from the point of view whether volunteerism could contribute to employment. To be able to escape this criticism we would have to include case studies and real-life settings over an extended period of time. A methodology this paper did not embark on.

Conclusion

Deducing from the discussions and content analysis undertaken, it can be concluded that social relations matter significantly when it comes to youth volunteering in South Africa. It is exemplified in the formal and informal horizontal communal and societal support systems. As shown in the graphs and tables, South African youth volunteerism is triggered more by altruism, and they are more likely to volunteer (particularly women) for a good cause. They are readier to partner with people due to kinship and social identity, place of origin, having close physical proximity, and in the same socio-economic class to volunteer more than with total strangers (Everatt and Solanki, 2004, 2008; Caprara *et al.*, 2012; Atibil, 2014; Mati, 2017, StatsSA, 2018).

How the Covid-19 lockdowns have impacted on the South African volunteering landscape of youth, one can only speculate about. The chances are good that the numbers and hours of volunteering, with the subsequent benefits to individual and community, have declined since the Covid-19 lockdowns where face-to-face contacts were in many

ways restricted due to Covid-19 protocols and demands of physical distancing since March 2020.

The study agrees with Mati (2017), that the horizontal volunteering approach is fundamental in addressing poverty and unemployment issues among the youth in South Africa. This is an essential step to meeting the two million job creation announced during the South African President's 2019 state of the nation address that relates to the National Development Plan with the year 2030 as its fulfilment target. In response to the President's statement, there has been an emergence of different models and practices in volunteer recruitment, management and sending (VOSESA, 2011). However, further studies are needed to ascertain the opportunities that the vertical volunteering approach has for the youth of South Africa.

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