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What is This?

Civic Service in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Civic service in Sub-Saharan Africa reflects the complex social, cultural, economic, and political history of the region in a changing global world marked by increasing risks to human security and development. National and international service including local, informal, and community-based service continues to remain prominent and is an appropriate response to the intractable development issues facing these societies. New initiatives to address the marginalization of Africa from the new information economy and society will need to keep human development on the agenda. Civic service can make a significant contribution to mobilizing local and international efforts in partnership with governments and civil society. Future research and policy should address the institutional impediments to service, develop research capacity to strengthen a scholarship of civic engagement, and conceive of service as part of a broader social development strategy.

Keywords: *civic engagement; national community service; community-based services; social development; volunteerism; civil society*

The idea of giving of oneself for the benefit of others has its origins in early African associational life, which had a strong normative and moral basis. Service was expressed in the form of mutual aid and self-help efforts and was intrinsically valued. However, the content and form of service changed during the colonial era when these traditions were threatened and undervalued and gradually gave way to formalizing social provision through missionary activities, philanthropy, and public welfare that was fashioned on colonial modalities.

Given the sociopolitical developments in Sub-Saharan Africa during the struggle for independence, civic service focused on both political engagement and social development. In the years following independence, national energies began to be channeled into the reconstruction of societies, national devel-

opment, nation building, and character building of youth. It was in this context that national youth service programs mushroomed across Sub-Saharan Africa. Youth service was government led and compulsory and survived for three to four decades because the service vision and mission was a powerful one. Service was also popularly endorsed and delivered reciprocal and tangible benefits for both servers and beneficiaries. However, national service was later tarnished by allegations of nepotism, corruption, mismanagement, and gender bias and for being elitist because it only targeted university graduates. Public funding for service began to decline in the 1980s following the oil crisis and structural adjustment programs that gave inadequate attention to social development. All these factors constrained the development of civic service and more particularly, national youth service in Sub-Saharan Africa in the postindependence years.

The idea of civic service continues to be relevant in the poorest and least developed region in the world as it attempts to renew its economies and societies to build peace and security, democratic governance, and improved human development in a more integrated and fragmented global world. Although globalization is considered to offer great opportunities for human advancement, grave concerns remain about its threats to human security and widening disparities between rich and poor within countries and between countries and regions. Systems of social provision across the Sub-Saharan region are under severe pressure to cope with the twin challenge of addressing past disparities and in meeting new needs and demands in the present global era.

This article is part of a larger research study to assess the status of civic service globally (McBride, Benitez, & Sherraden, 2003). Forty-four civic service programs were identified and analyzed in 16 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The study found that national youth service programs still remain prominent in spite of significant political, social, economic, and institutional constraints. The majority of service initiatives studied are, however, of a voluntary nature. Slightly more than a third of the programs were international in their focus and were geared to cultural exchange and social solidarity. A smaller number of programs were local, informal community-based organizations involved with service delivery and care and support for people and families living with HIV/AIDS. These programs are not well documented but are estimated to number hundreds of thousands of people's organizations operating at local and village levels and could play a significant role in social development and in the democratization of society.

These findings demonstrate that civic service initiatives are relevant and appropriate in addressing the risks to human security in a local and global context. In light of these findings, it is recommended that future research on civic service attempt to deepen knowledge and understanding of the role of civic service in the ongoing economic, social, political, and technological transition in Sub-Saharan Africa. Further efforts could also focus on building

research capacity to expand knowledge of civic engagement in a region that is increasingly being marginalized in the global economy and society.

Part 1 of the article provides an overview of civic service in precolonial, colonial, and postindependence societies when formal community service programs were initiated. The challenges presented by globalization and regionalism are also discussed with reference to their implications for democracy and social development. Part 2 presents the findings of the study of the civic service programs in Sub-Saharan Africa. The development of an African research agenda is discussed in Part 3, concluding with comments about the implications of the study for service policy, practice, and institutional developments in a globalizing world.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIC SERVICE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

A tradition of self-help, individual and collective responsibility for the well being of families and kinship groups, predates the colonial era. Communities organized themselves to meet their needs along the lines of self-help programs giving rise later to voluntary groups and a rich tradition of indigenous self-help initiatives. The word *service* in Kiswahili is *kujitolea*, which means the giving of oneself for the benefit of others (Menon, Moore, & Sherraden, 2002). A similar concept, *Ubuntu*, derived from Bantu culture, is often cited to illustrate the historical origins of mutual care and support (Department of Welfare and Population Development, 1997). Ubuntu means that each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others, an idea that was fundamental to the cohesion of precolonial societies.

Youth community service can be traced to precolonial times when youth were organized into age sets that were mobilized for the defense of the community as well as in the construction of infrastructure such as roads and bridges. This was cited as a practice among the Igbos of Nigeria (Enemuo, 1990, 2001; Isichei, 1977). Similar practices occurred in Kenya where an age-set system was the foundation of group formation and for the allocation and distribution of responsibilities. Initiation programs prepared the youth with education, development, and socialization programs that fostered a sense of belonging and responsibility to the community. Many of these customs and conventions embodying the fundamental values of service and community were later undermined by colonialism, and few countries incorporated indigenous youth service activities into youth programs of the colonial or independent governments (Khasiani, 2001, p. 17).

Welfare policies and programs in Sub-Saharan Africa were derived from European imperial domination between the 15th and mid-20th centuries. Colonial conquests led to the creation of new colonial states that were arbitrarily constructed following the boundaries of conquests. These new states

were alien to the majority of its constituencies, leading to the formation of new ethnic identities that were redefined by the colonial powers to mirror the colonial state. Ethnicity became an agent of accumulation of wealth and power, leading to conflict, which increasingly took on an ethnic form (Castells, 2000). Ethnic-related conflict persisted into the postcolonial era and underlies much of the conflict in present Sub-Saharan Africa. In view of this history, many of the service programs in the postindependence era were focused on cultural integration.

As traditional societies changed, they were forced to modernize, leading to the breakdown of subsistence economies, urbanization, and increasing impoverishment of indigenous peoples coupled with a neglect of popular welfare by the colonial governments. Because the colonies were required to be self-sufficient, colonial administrations advocated the view that welfare problems were best left to the Church and philanthropy. These interventions were later institutionalized through public policy that emerged in the latter part of colonial rule as social problems escalated and civil unrest fueled the expansion of public provision (Midgley, 1995).

By the mid-20th century, nationalist independence movements successfully challenged foreign domination culminating in national independence in many Sub-Saharan African countries. In some countries, independence was achieved through gradual and constitutional devolution of power such as Tanzania, Uganda, and Botswana, and in others, it followed armed struggles as in the case of Kenya and Southern Africa. New nation states had to be created from deeply divided societies. In many countries, especially Nigeria, historical tensions led to civil wars fought between different regions lasting many decades.

The struggle for independence in many African countries provided a context for citizen activism and a high level of participation of grassroots organizations involved with social development and political action. Through social and political engagement, democratic values and bonds of solidarity across race and ethnic lines were fostered in many countries.

In South Africa, the struggle against colonialism and apartheid provided the basis for civic and political engagement through fostering values of nonracialism, nonsexism, social justice, and democratic participation, which laid the foundation for an active citizenship in a new democratic society.

Civic service in Sub-Saharan Africa was also facilitated by voluntary organizations that have contributed significantly to African development and nation building in the postcolonial period (Fowler, 1995, 1998). The nature and scope of the voluntary sector in promoting national social development varied between African countries depending on their tradition and approach to public policy. For instance, in Tanzania and Kenya, independent governments built on the African self-help and voluntary tradition, although mass organizations were brought under the control of the party in Tanzania after independence. Although this positive view of voluntary organizations in devel-

opment is broadly acknowledged, Hyden (1995) argued that with some exceptions, African governments generally turned against the voluntary sector after independence.

The result was that the role of civil society in national development was considerably weakened as governments faced increasing pressure from their peoples to meet their needs. Deeply fragmented multiethnic societies, clientelist politics, and economies that continued to serve the needs of the metropoles, coupled with weak institutions and rising popular expectations erupted in conflict. Civil wars in some countries lasted several decades, causing destruction to the fabric of society. Single party democracies spread over much of Africa after independence. Instead of promoting national unity, they entrenched patronage, escalated corruption, and compromised economic and social development, good governance, and accountability. In addition to these developments, postcolonial states continued to be shaped by the social, cultural, political, and economic institutions of imperialism (Midgley, 1998). Social attitudes and power relations of the past continued to shape social policies and practices in many countries.

CIVIC SERVICE IN A GLOBAL ERA

Unlike globalization in the colonial period, globalization emerging in the late 20th century is a process of economic, technological, and cultural integration affecting people throughout the world. It has brought into question existing governance systems and the role of nation states in determining their own destiny. New markets, technological innovations such as the Internet, and new actors and networks have given rise to opportunities for addressing poverty and fostering global solidarity, the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and shared commitment to achieve human development.

Opportunities for participation to promote social and democratic development have also expanded in the era of globalization with the proliferation and growth of civil society groups, informal institutions, and volunteerism. There has been an exponential growth in international and transnational NGOs in the 1990s, and developing countries have seen a growth in local NGOs and nonprofits. The flow of resources through international and transnational NGOs has also increased (Anheier & Salamon, 1999; Fisher, 1998; Fowler, 1995; Swilling & Russell, 2002; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2002).

However, there are grave fears that these opportunities and benefits will bypass the African continent, effectively pushing poor people, countries, and regions to the margins. Liberalization and privatization are shaping access to new markets. Industrial trade rules are feared to be working against the economic interests of poor countries and have failed to restrain economic protectionism in the developed world. The pressures of global competition could undermine care and support systems and threaten income and job security due to the volatility in financial markets (UNDP, 1999).

In the present era of global integration, human development in Sub-Saharan Africa has deteriorated (UNDP, 2002). With the exception of South Africa and Botswana, the world's poorest and least-developed countries are in this region. Many are not likely to achieve the United Nations Millennium development goals and targets by 2015. Less than half of the 44 countries in the region are poorer now than they were in 1990, with the number of people living in extreme poverty increasing by 58 million during the same period. Child immunization rates fell below 50% in 2000 and progress toward universal primary education is lagging behind other countries in the world. Almost 75% of the world's population infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS live in this part of the world, reversing life expectancy gains made in previous decades.

In the past two decades, democracy has increased in Africa with 29 countries becoming democratic. However, democratic governance so essential to the achievement of human development has been on the decline or arrested in many of the countries in the region. Power elites have dominated political and economic decision making and institutions that protect human rights and advance human development have failed the majority of the peoples of Sub-Saharan Africa. Although many conflict-ridden societies have taken bold steps to democratize, many have fallen into authoritarianism, such as Zimbabwe, and the escalation of conflict in countries such as in Sierra Leone, Sudan, and others. National armies have intervened in the political affairs in one in four of the region's countries (UNDP, 2002). War-torn countries such as the Congo, Rwanda, and Angola are currently engaged in peace-building efforts. Civilians and especially children have been the main casualties of civil conflict, highlighting the fragility of democracies.

In summary, the region has been historically impoverished by the legacy of colonialism, the cold war, and international economic systems favoring rich and powerful nations in relation to trade and access to markets. Inadequate policies, limited implementation capacity, and a lack of skills coupled with the brain drain, dysfunctional economies, poor quality leadership, corruption, and poor governance have been cited as some of the reasons for the slow pace of change in the postindependent period in Africa. Low economic growth rates have been inadequate to rebuild the societies leading to a vicious circle of economic decline, indebtedness, and marginalization and exclusion of the region from the new global information economy (Castells, 2000; The New Partnership for Africa's Development [NEPAD], 2001; UNDP, 1999).

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has been formed by African countries with the support of the industrial nations to reverse these trends and to promote democracy, peace building, good governance, economic development, and poverty eradication. A strategy and program of action has been outlined in key sectors including regional development, economic integration, trade, and investment and to lobby for aid and debt relief (NEPAD, 2001).

However, these efforts will have a limited effect if social and human development goals do not remain on the agenda of African countries to protect the

poor and vulnerable and to ensure a just and equitable share of the benefits of global developments. A plurality of local and international efforts that include international agencies, governments, philanthropy, private sector support, and individual and community efforts need to be harnessed to promote social development and social justice.

STATUS OF CIVIC SERVICE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Information on civic service programs was obtained through a study of secondary sources of data including Internet searches, and a total of 44 programs was identified in 16 Sub-Saharan African countries. Only programs that provided substantial opportunities for civic engagement at local, national, and international levels and that society considered valuable and involved minimal compensation were included in the study.

The older national youth service programs appear to be fairly well documented, whereas this was not the case for the newer initiatives and for local, more informal programs. In view of the paucity of literature on civic service in the region, limited information, and uneven documentation of the programs, the findings, analysis, and interpretations in this article are therefore preliminary.

The majority of civic service programs were found to be in Southern Africa (57%), followed by Central and East Africa (18%), and West Africa (16%). Nine percent of the programs were provided by international organizations. The large number of programs identified in Southern Africa may be due to the fact that the researchers were more knowledgeable about this subregion and the Anglophone countries. Information on programs in French-speaking West and Central African countries were especially limited.

FORMS OF CIVIC SERVICE

The 44 programs identified were classified into national, international, and local community-based forms (see Table 1).

National Civic Service

Half of the programs were national, of which close to three quarters were government-led programs targeting youth as servers. The remaining programs were either conducted under the auspices of nongovernmental organizations with a sole mandate to focus on youth service or combined with other development programs. Examples are the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students established in the 1960s to unite youth. Some of the other national programs are affiliates of international nongovernmental organizations such as the Boy Scouts.

**Table 1.   Geographic Distribution of Civic Service Programs
in Sub-Saharan Africa (*N* = 44)**

Region	Number of Programs Documented
Central and East Africa	8
Island nations	0
Southern Africa	25
West Africa	7
International	4
Total	44

National government-led youth service schemes were born out of a need to address the challenges posed by fragmented postcolonial societies. During the 1960s and 1970s in Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Gambia, Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, national youth service programs were established (Enemuo, 2001; Ikein, 1990; Khasiani, 2001; Mutambara, 1997; Stroud, 2000). Many of these societies had strong ethnic affiliations and the early national service programs had as a primary goal the integration of different cultures and the rebuilding of the society around a common nationalist ideology.

In societies where civil wars have persisted, national youth service programs are absent except in the case of Nigeria, which has one of the older national service schemes. The Nigerian National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), established in 1973, survived nine mostly undemocratic changes in government. Future research should explore the question as to why and how the NYSC survived war and conflict in the society.

In the 1990s, national youth service programs were initiated in Mali to promote cultural understanding and good citizenship. In Liberia, the government launched a national volunteer program to promote reconciliation and partnership at the community level between and among ex-combatants, residents in communities, and the returnees and displaced persons in the aftermath of the war.

To address the scarcity of appropriately trained health care professionals to meet the needs of the new democratic South Africa and to reach out to underserved rural areas, compulsory community service for medical graduates was introduced in 1998 as a prerequisite for registration for medical doctors. Later, community service was extended to dentists. As of January 2003, other health care disciplines such as dietetics, clinical psychology, environmental health, occupational and physiotherapy, radiography, and speech and audiology will be required to do community service. Professional nurses will be required to perform community service as of 2006. A year of service is also considered to be a form of repayment to society for education provided.

Two alternative sentencing community service programs were identified in South Africa and Zimbabwe. However, Penal Reform International reported that similar programs were established in Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, and Burkina Faso. More detailed information on these schemes was not avail-

able and they were therefore not included in the study. Community service is made as an order of the court whereby the offender is offered the opportunity of compensating society by performing work for the benefit of the community instead of going to prison. Persons working under a community service order are sent to public institutions such as schools and clinics to carry out voluntary work for a specified number of hours. A program of work is drawn up with the offender who is supervised, and regular reports are submitted to monitor the work. If the offender is unemployed, the work will substitute for an 8-hour work day; if the offender is employed, work is performed in the person's free time.

International Programs

International nongovernmental organizations play a significant role in supporting African development through donor aid and in the initiation and support of a wide range of civic service programs such as volunteering, community development, and community service programs. About 36% of the total number of programs in the region were provided by international organizations or were offered by local organizations that have international linkages in countries such as Ghana, Tanzania, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The organizations included Foundations, faith-based and secular nongovernmental organizations supporting development, peace, social justice, and the promotion of opportunities for international exchange. The majority of the programs were targeted at youth, although the international volunteer exchange programs had no age restriction. It appears that some countries are more receptive to cooperating with international partners as is the case in Ghana, which had five programs supported by different international bodies.

Eight countries had voluntary Work Camp Associations that were affiliates of regional work camp coordinating bodies. The regional structures were in turn members of the Coordinating Body for International Voluntary Service. Most of the programs were in Southern Africa, although some projects were also operating in West and East Africa.

The international programs in the sample offered work camp opportunities mainly to international volunteers. Work camps offer volunteers an opportunity to work on a community-related project, including construction and renovation of community facilities, conservation of the natural environment, cultural heritage, and organizing holiday activities for disadvantaged groups. Work camps were established in Europe, Asia, and Africa after World War I as an alternative to military service. Work camps were used to help with the reconstruction of war-torn Europe and to diffuse war hostilities. In the developing countries, the emphasis continues to be on community development, education, and agriculture. Servers are both local and foreign citizens. The large number of international programs may be attributed to the growth of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) worldwide, most of which have

been formed during the past two decades. This trend has been accompanied by an increase in international volunteering as people search for new ways of participation in areas such as humanitarian assistance, cultural exchange, social justice, and environmental advocacy (Sherraden et al., 2002).

Local Programs

Seven local programs were identified that were involved mainly with HIV/AIDS care and support. Home-based care programs have been included as an exemplar of local service initiatives because of their structured nature, substantive service roles, and functions performed by members of the communities and sustained involvement during a long period of time. An AIDS care program in Uganda operated by The AIDS Support Organisation (TASO) has a network of volunteers providing service to 330 villages, with each village having between 100 and 200 households each (Halkett, 1999).

The backbone of community care programs for people with AIDS are volunteers who have been recruited and trained and who are being supervised by an organization for which they work on an agreed basis. Home-based care volunteers identify and visit needy families, providing basic medical care, emotional support, and some material relief (Foster & Makufa, 1998; UNAIDS, 2000).

The small number of home-based care programs documented in this search is misleading. In 2001, approximately 263 home-based care projects were identified in South Africa (Save the Children, 2001). A further 47 Zambian home-based care programs were identified by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 1998) in 1994. Information on the number of home-based care programs in other African countries was not readily available. However, it is widely believed that people's organizations or community-based organizations supporting people with AIDS are extensive and that they do well precisely because they are addressing needs in ways that are not possible for governments (Fowler, 1995; WHO/UNICEF, 1994).

COMPULSORY/VOLUNTARY NATURE OF SERVICE

Eight of the programs were compulsory, with penalties for servers who declined to serve. All these programs were government-led and targeted at youth with the exception of two community service schemes. The remaining 81% of the programs were voluntary.

The goals of the programs were analyzed, and the most significant focus was to increase the social and technical skills of the servers. Effecting improvements at a community level in health and well-being and upgrading public facilities were rated highly, followed by promoting cultural understanding and achieving personal development objectives. The majority of programs were less explicit about increasing the employment rate, which is probably realistic given the extent of the need (see Table 2).

Table 2. Goals of Service Programs (*N* = 44)

Goals	Number
Increase server's skills acquisition	30
Improve well-being and health	26
Create/improve public facilities	24
Promote cultural understanding	23
Increase server's motivation to volunteer	16
Increase server's confidence and self-esteem	16
Influence and expand server's career choices	11
Promote sustainable land use	11
Increase employment rate	10

Note: The number of times that a program cited any of the above goals was tallied.

Table 3. Areas of Service (*N* = 44)

Areas of Service	Number
Community/infrastructure development	28
Cultural integration	28
Personal development	23
Environmental protection	22
Education	20
Employment/economic development	19
Human and social services	8
Health services	3
Peace/human rights	2
Emergency response	0
Cultural heritage	0

Areas of services most frequently cited were community and infrastructure development (28), cultural integration (28), personal development (23), environmental protection (22), education (20), employment and economic development (19), and human and social services (see Table 3). All these service initiatives are critical to the achievement of social development.

National service programs were primarily concerned with employment and economic development, cultural integration, and community development. Their focus was on meeting development needs of communities through harnessing the potential of the server. In contrast, international service programs tended to be concerned with developing the potential of the individual server through exposure to different cultures and community development activities. Local service programs tended to focus on meeting the health and social welfare needs of beneficiaries, with little emphasis placed on the personal development of the server.

SERVER GROUPS

The majority of servers were young people between the ages of 15 and 30 years. Age, therefore, is a key determinant of access to programs. Education levels and finances were two other factors restricting access to participating in service programs. Most government-led national youth service programs required servers to have at least a basic schooling, with graduates being given the most opportunities. The majority of international programs required volunteers to pay for the experience; costs ranged from $150 to $3,000. Some programs had different costs for nationals, regional volunteers, and international volunteers. With the exception of South Africa, none of the programs required the inclusion of specific groups such as women or the disabled. South Africa's national service pilot projects had these requirements as well as a clear focus on historically disadvantaged people.

Servers involved with home-based care had a different profile. Here, the vast majority of servers were older women (40 years and older). Home-based care programs tended to prefer older women, given the stressful and demanding nature of the service.

LENGTH OF SERVICE

National government-led youth service programs required between 1 and 3 years of service. In most instances, there was no financial incentive, although the opportunity to increase the server's chances of becoming self-employed or being employed in the public, private, or informal sectors was a significant incentive.

International programs were largely structured around work camps that took place during international summer and winter holidays. Longer volunteering opportunities (up to 1 year) are also arranged.

Local programs, specifically HIV/AIDS care and support programs, required volunteers to work between 15 and 40 hours a week. A long-term commitment was required. In one project (Child Welfare Nomplio Project, South Africa), volunteers had been working for 4 years with no financial compensation (Halkett, 1999). Many local programs pay servers a stipend.

NUMBER OF SERVERS

Information on numbers of servers involved in civic service programs was not uniformly available. From the information available, it is clear that government-led national programs have a far greater reach than NGO programs. This can be attributed to the compulsory nature of some of the programs as well as the availability of funding and resources. The NYSC, a compulsory program, had the highest number with 85,000 intakes in 1998/1999, and more than 700,000 Nigerians have participated in the scheme since its inception in 1973. Two of Kenya's voluntary youth service programs had com-

bined annual intakes of 7,000 servers (Khasiani, 2001). The Ugandan Rakai orphan care program had a network of 1,500 volunteers.

It has been estimated that in 1999, nearly 1.5 million volunteers contributed their time and effort to nonprofit organizations in South Africa, worth R5.1 billion in unpaid labor and making a major contribution to social and economic capital (Dangor, 1997; Development Resources Centre, 1993; Swilling & Russell, 2002).

BENEFICIARY GROUPS

Local communities, especially poor and rural communities, were most frequently cited as beneficiaries, followed by youth and children. Elders were not cited at all and teenage mothers were identified as a population with special needs.

TOWARD AN AFRICAN RESEARCH AGENDA

Literature and research on civic service and its effect in Sub-Saharan Africa is limited. The size and scope of civic service is undocumented. This is not unexpected in view of limited resources, research, and institutional capacity informing policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation at social, economic, and political levels.

The lack of research and research capacity is, however, widely acknowledged to be a problem in poor countries that have minimal infrastructure to develop and sustain policy and program-related research to inform decision making. The Human Development Report could not comment on progress in 99 of the world's poorest countries due to inadequate data (UNDP, 2002). The lack of information, communications, and technology (ICT) infrastructure has hampered the African continent from realizing the benefits of ICT in the information age in research and development to support democratization, improve livelihoods, increase service penetration, and build on its rich cultural diversity.

Program evaluation research has been undertaken in Nigeria and Kenya, but the findings of these studies are not in the public domain. Although program evaluations have been conducted at the Kenya National Youth Service, no baseline studies were undertaken prior to the evaluation. It was therefore difficult to assess the effect of the program on servers and beneficiaries. Youth service programs in Kenya are still believed to experience the same problems identified in the 1960s and 1970s (Khasiani, 2001).

There is also a lack of appreciation of the need for evaluation research to guide planning and ongoing program development and monitoring. A lack of capacity to conduct the research was noted, including a lack of resources to conduct internal or external monitoring and evaluation studies. Where pro-

grams have been evaluated, findings are rarely published, which makes sharing of information difficult (Perold, 2001).

In South Africa, research informed the establishment of the national youth service pilot programs (Perold, 2001) and the Working for Water program, which is an employment program for youth. According to the research outcomes, Working for Water is making a positive change through skills development and facilitating economic empowerment for its workers, especially women (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, 2002). Research has also been conducted to determine the size and scope of the sector. Other African countries have not conducted research of this nature.

No information on public surveys was found. Penal Reform International undertook a very limited qualitative study on Zimbabwe's community service program in the late 1990s; a few members of the public were asked for their opinions as part of the study.

A future research agenda for Sub-Saharan Africa should address the constraints identified above to strengthen a scholarship of civic service. It is imperative that research capacity in civic service and related institutions be strengthened and expanded. The development, maintenance, and improvement of databases on civic service could aid further inquiry. There is scope for longitudinal research, as the earlier programs have been in existence for many decades.

An important area for future in-depth research in Sub-Saharan Africa is a study of the civic service initiatives of community-based nonprofit organizations and their potential role in human development and democracy. Less formal, localized community-based organizations are indigenous formations rooted in the complex traditions and social and political history of African societies. Increasing our knowledge and understanding their contribution to civic engagement and social development is critical.

CONCLUSION

Sub-Saharan Africa is faced with an immense challenge to improve human development, environmental sustainability, and sound institutions to promote good governance, democracy, and equitable social and economic development. African efforts to promote regional and economic development, debt relief, and peace building through NEPAD have been widely supported. These initiatives, however, will fail if it does not adequately address the vast social development needs through effective social policies, strategies, and social programs involving governments, international cooperation, private sector social responsibility, and the mobilization of its citizenry in development efforts.

The social development approach is reemerging as an appropriate response to address local and global threats to human security. With its focus on

pro-poor change, people-centered developed, social, and economic justice and collective action by governments in cooperation with a plurality of partners, social development is best placed to address these challenges. Civic service can make a significant contribution to social development if it is part of an integrated national strategy and a global response. The goals and program areas of civic service in the region demonstrate what role service can place in human capacity building, improving health status, responding appropriately to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and building community assets, among others. The shortcomings identified in service initiatives such as a lack of resources to sustain the programs, ineffectiveness and inefficiencies in program design, implementation, and evaluation of effects will, however, need to be addressed.

International and domestic NGOs have grown at an exponential rate across the world and there is evidence of a significant growth of indigenous NGOs and people's organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa (Fowler, 1995). Civic service in the region is largely voluntary and the growth of the nongovernmental sector is vital to the development of civic service in the future. A unique feature of the African NGO sector is the mix of indigenous and western type NGOs, which is a strength. Future programs, however, need to integrate indigenous approaches to appropriately address local needs. Governments also need to be urged to build on the strengths of the sector and to develop enabling policy and legislation to support voluntarism and civic service efforts. A major challenge for civic service in Africa will be how to create effective complementary partnerships with local, informal community-based organizations engaged in civic service without compromising their efficacy.

Although the study did not identify many programs involved in social justice and public advocacy, this remains a strong tradition in some African countries. Civic service activities have and should continue to contribute to public debate, improve the quality and expansiveness of policies and development efforts, uphold social and human rights, and work to strengthen democratic institutions and governance on the continent. Civil society organizations should continue to fight for the political space to exist in many African countries, to be the voice of those who are marginalized and enable institutional arrangements to support service.

International initiatives are prominent in the region with servers citing personal development objectives for service as well as giving expression to values of cultural diversity, social solidarity, humanitarianism, and global citizenship. The mobility of servers is following a one-way movement of people from North to South. Although this is beneficial in that it addresses a range of needs, there is also a growing popular mistrust about current trends toward global imperialism of the rich and powerful nations and their influence on an African agenda. Nongovernmental civic service programs are funded by foreign donors, which raises issues about the dependence of civic service initiatives on donors who have their own perspectives of what kind of civic service is needed in the African context.

Finally, although civic service could make a significant contribution to social development in the global era in Sub-Saharan Africa, there are substantive local and global constraints that need to be considered in future civic service policy and practice. Research to strengthen knowledge and understanding of service and build research capacity remains a critical priority.

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