COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERING IN KOROGOCHO

2014

IDS Institute of Development Studies

VSO

VSO at a glance

VSO is the world's leading independent international development organisation that works through volunteers to fight poverty in developing countries.

VSO brings people together to share skills, build capabilities and promote international understanding and action. We work with partner organisations at every level of society, from government organisations at a national level to health and education facilities at a local level.

IDS

The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) is a leading global organisation for international development research, teaching and communications. The *Valuing Volunteering* project is being conducted in partnership with the IDS Participation, Power and Social Change Team.

Cover image: volunteers participate in International Volunteer Day celebrations in Korogocho in December 2012

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

APHRC	African Population and Health Research Centre
CBO	Community-based organisation
CHEW	Community Health Extension Worker
CHW	Community Health Worker
CVD	Cardiovascular Disease
FBO	Faith-based Organisation
GBV	Gender-based Violence
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
ILO	International Labour Office
IVD	International Volunteer Day
KRC	Korogocho Residents Committee
Ksh	Kenyan Shillings
KSUP	Korogocho Slum Upgrading Programme
MAKWK	Maendeleo Afya Kwa Wote Korogocho
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OPHI	Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
PSAR	Participatory Systemic Action Research
PSI	Participatory Systemic Inquiry
SILC	Saving and Internal Lending Committee
TAK	Tuungane Amani Kenya
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VIO	Volunteer-involving Organisation
VSO	Voluntary Services Overseas
YIKE	Youth Initiatives Kenya

Contents

Executive Summary

Valuing Volunteering is a two-year global action research project aiming at better understanding how, when, where and why volunteering affects poverty. The project has been taken forward in partnership by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). Following an initial literature review in 2011–12, VSO long-term volunteers were recruited and used to facilitate fieldwork as lead researchers in a number of countries with VSO operations. Fieldwork lasted from 2012 to 2014 and focused on research in four countries: Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal and the Philippines. This report represents one of three in-depth case studies produced by the lead researcher in Kenya.

Korogocho is an informal settlement located in north-east Nairobi and is made up of nine constituent 'villages'. It is characterised by poor living standards and high levels of crime. Over the course of two years, a team of local volunteer researchers were recruited and, following training in participatory methods, empowered to steer the research process. Falling under an overarching participatory systemic action research methodology, local researchers were encouraged to develop their critical thinking around development challenges and devise locally rooted solutions. When collated, the efforts of the research team account for over 1,000 hours of community fieldwork, which included workshops and interviews with over 300 members of the community and local stakeholders.

In-depth findings and implications are discussed in the report under seven interconnected sections which are summarised below alongside key recommendations. Readers are encouraged to look at the implications in each section for more detail on justifications for recommendations.

Community perceptions of volunteering

Within Korogocho, perceptions of volunteerism are affected by a **range of international, national and local interpretations and understandings**. This adds significant **complexity** to the term, which needs to be engaged with by volunteering-for-development organisations in order to navigate the challenges and make the most of opportunities. In the Kenyan context, for example, the widespread use of allowances and stipends has distorted views on volunteering, leading to a substantial grey area or blurred line between volunteering and low-paid work. For many poor people, volunteering has become a survival mechanism in the face of limited alternative options to secure a livelihood, and many unemployed people, particularly Kenya's young graduates, often see volunteering as a 'stepping stone' to formal employment. This contrasts significantly with the definitions of volunteerism commonly used by international development organisations. At the local level, perceptions have a direct impact on the ability of volunteers to build trusting long-term relationships. **Understanding these dynamics is vital to how, when and why volunteering – and particularly different types of volunteers – can be effective.**

> **Recommendation 1**
> Volunteering-for-development organisations need to ensure that their understanding of and approaches to volunteerism **integrate national and local perceptions and contexts**. Working definitions may have to be continually adapted over time as perceptions change, or varied geographically so as to **be relevant to the communities being worked with**.

Trust is a core component to volunteering effectiveness. It is influenced by a complex range of local systemic issues, which in turn are intrinsically related to wider contextual factors such as confusion, or even distortion, at the national level of what it means to volunteer. Volunteers in Korogocho face severe challenges due to **a lack of trust which inhibits their ability to build lasting relationships for change**. However, there **are tactics which can overcome such barriers**. For example, **being persistent and taking a long-term approach** to gradually building relationships was seen by community health workers (CHWs) as an enabling factor in increasing their effectiveness. As the research discovered first-hand, **creating opportunities for dialogue** (and mediation) can help in reducing suspicions and establishing the environment in which trusting relationships can grow.

> **Recommendation 2**
> **Communities that trust volunteers are likely to be more receptive to working with them**, which increases effectiveness. Understanding which types of volunteers are most trusted by communities and the ways in which trust can be increased are therefore important. Organisations should aim to select and support volunteers to **facilitate the building of trusting relationships between volunteers and communities.**

The types and roles of local volunteers in Korogocho

Both formal and informal volunteering have a significant impact in improving the wellbeing of people in Korogocho. Formal volunteering schemes run by both external non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local community-based organisations (CBOs) were seen to plug critical gaps in public service provision, especially in healthcare and education. They also support some of Korogocho's most vulnerable people, such as at-risk women, drug addicts and criminals. Whilst some scepticism surrounds relying on volunteering to fill gaps in services that ideally should be provided by the state, the research found that **volunteerism may provide critical and valuable interim support until the state is able to improve its services**.

Informal volunteering was found to be extensive in Korogocho, yet **little recognised** and even less appreciated. Self-help groups in which 'volunteers' often double as 'beneficiaries' were seen to be **increasing community resilience to development challenges** and positively impacting on the wellbeing of members through improving self-esteem, confidence and support networks. Dedicated support groups were also helping particularly vulnerable groups such as single young mothers and people living with HIV/AIDS. Crucially, opportunities exist to **combine formal and informal volunteering in a complementary fashion**. Findings suggest that formal volunteers and development organisations can facilitate the establishment and functioning of more informal support and self-help groups. A critical component of such an approach is ensuring that **members feel ownership of the groups** and gain strength and a sense of solidarity from fellow members.

The youth represent a significant target population in terms of promoting their engagement in volunteering initiatives – in 2009, 35.4% of the population were 15–34 years of age and 42.5% were under 15 (Government of Kenya, 2013). However, the nature of volunteering and people's relationship with it is forever changing, and is not the same as it has been for previous generations. The practice of *harambee*, for example, is not the effective tool of voluntary community development that it was in post-independence era Kenya. Engaging Kenya's youth is likely to necessitate the design and marketing of interventions that **understand modern-day realities surrounding interpretations of volunteerism** and make appeals to the **wide variety of both personal and communal motivations** for and benefits of volunteering.

Recommendation 3
Opportunities exist to **combine formal and informal volunteering into complementary system-wide interventions**. This involves understanding the local context and offers the potential to integrate the best bits of formal and informal volunteering. Facilitating locally owned self-help groups, for example, can combine the organisation and resources of large NGOs with the dedication and mutual support provided by local groups. Volunteering-for-development organisations should also explore how formal opportunities can be linked to and offer a progression from informal volunteering.

The motivation and wellbeing of volunteers

A range of reasons were revealed for why people volunteer. The most obvious distinction was between **monetary and non-monetary motivations**, with many respondents claiming that those who were primarily not motivated by financial gain were the 'genuine' volunteers who would be dedicated to making a difference for the benefit of others. Whilst there is undoubtedly some truth in this, the realities of life in Korogocho mean that **many people simply cannot afford to volunteer without some form of compensation** to cover food, transport or the opportunity cost of what they could earn whilst volunteering. For volunteering-for-development organisations a challenge exists in providing allowances that cover expenses without veering into the grey area of confusing the activity with paid work, and also in finding suitable and reliable local volunteers to work with. There can be a temptation to offer higher allowances to attract volunteers but the research found little evidence that this succeeded in attracting more skilled, dedicated or reliable local volunteers. In fact the opposite was more likely to be the case as NGOs would have to resort to sifting through large numbers of volunteers using short-term contracts (referred to locally as a 'hire and fire' approach) in order to find good volunteers.

Importantly, **financial incentives are not the only way to attract committed volunteers**. The research found that recruiting volunteers who had previously worked for free was effective, as the volunteers' motivations had essentially already been proven. Offering training opportunities instead of, or alongside, a reduced basic allowance was also viewed as a potential way of disincentivising some of the most monetarily motivated applicants.

When financial gain was not the primary motivating factor, volunteers mentioned being driven by wanting to **make a difference and 'being the change'** they wanted to see. Critically, volunteers said they were most motivated to continue to volunteer when they could **see or experience the positive impacts of their work**. This implies that better involving volunteers in the review, monitoring and evaluation of interventions may also be a complementary way of sustaining volunteer efforts. Volunteers noted how gaining personal and professional skills were motivating factors and, for some, an unexpected benefit. Issues that lowered volunteer motivations were feelings of being exploited, undervalued and not respected. Having people take credit for their activities was also a frustration.

Recommendation 4
Genuine volunteers are motivated by wanting to make a difference and by **witnessing the impact of their efforts**. As such, volunteering-for-development organisations should explore possibilities for **involving local volunteers in monitoring and evaluation processes** or, at the least, ensure that they are included in the dissemination of findings on the impact of interventions.

The interaction between top-down programming and bottom-up community need

The degree of community consultation and engagement as part of volunteering interventions was a recurring theme throughout the research. Repeatedly, volunteers and local residents noted how external NGOs would often only consult a select number of key stakeholders, which usually meant the chief and village elders. The **voices of ordinary poor and marginalised people were rarely heard** in the design or implementation of volunteering interventions in Korogocho. This situation is **even worse for women**, who are less included in local decision-making processes. Security concerns also mean that public consultation is either short and 'shallow' or that participants are ferried out of Korogocho to consultation venues elsewhere in Nairobi. This practice **creates significant resentment amongst local participants** who feel the money could be better spent on initiatives within the community. Importantly, there is a **significant role that volunteers can play in facilitating local engagement** either by directly conducting consultations or by acting as entry points to residents and indigenous organisations. As such they can **act as the bridge** between top-down programming and bottom-up needs.

Recommendation 5
Volunteering-for-development organisations should fundamentally re-examine any of their community consultation processes that entail **taking representatives away from their communities to external venues**. Wherever possible, **consultation and engagement should take place in the community**. If security concerns are used as justification for using external venues, then the organisation needs to seriously reconsider whether it should be working in the community at all.

Dependency and sustainability

Dependency, and particularly **financial dependency**, is a hugely significant issue in Korogocho. Critically, the research found that the allowances and stipends offered by large external NGOs act to **disincentivise people from volunteering with local groups and CBOs** that cannot afford to provide the same or sometimes any form of reimbursement.

A cycle of financial dependency exists in Korogocho which has turned some people's poverty into its own form of livelihood – one that relies on handouts and donations from predominantly external development organisations. For these people, who often lack the skills, qualifications and resources to make another form of living, there is little motivation to volunteer to help others (unless it is to receive a small stipend which acts as a survival mechanism) and little desire to be helped by volunteers. **Breaking down negative cycles of financial dependency** is something that volunteering-for-development organisations need to pursue in order to **reach the poorest and most marginalised**.

Korogocho's dependency is also affected by a **lack of local ownership** – both of development interventions and the physical space that constitutes the community – which translates into weak commitment to the area. Additionally, **insecurity and inter-ethnic fragmentation act to undermine local trust**, causing both formal and informal volunteering to become tribally insular activities and hampering their impact in addressing segregation and marginalisation.

Recommendation 6
Stipends and allowances have a major impact on volunteering in communities such as Korogocho and can create financial dependency that erodes local capacity to work with volunteers. Volunteering-for-development organisations need to thoroughly **assess the likely and unintended impacts** of offering allowances and tailor their approaches accordingly, bearing in mind that sometimes offering no allowance or compensation may negatively impact on the wellbeing of volunteers. **Balancing allowances with non-monetary incentives** such as training opportunities should be explored as a way of moving away from an allowances culture.

The gendered dimensions to volunteering and poverty in Korogocho

Volunteering-for-development organisations face a challenge with regard to how they can successfully implement volunteer interventions whilst also contributing to **creating more equitable gender relations**. There is a possibility that the community will resist initiatives where volunteers are not used in expected gender roles, but at the same time not challenging such dynamics risks further entrenching gender relations that negatively impact women. Whilst short-term implementation may be required, organisations should also take **a longer-term view and integrate dedicated gender goals** to bring about sustained behavioural change.

For many, gender relations at the **family or household level are particularly influential**. For both men and women there is an expectation that supporting the family, whether by monetary or non-monetary means, is a priority. Unfortunately for volunteerism, responses from participants suggest that **volunteering can potentially come into conflict with that priority** in some cases.

> **Recommendation 7**
> **Dedicated gender goals** need to be **integrated and mainstreamed** into volunteering interventions in order to establish more equitable gender relations. Such goals also need to form part of **longer-term programmes and strategies to bring about behavioural change**.

Volunteers are sometimes placed at risk whilst volunteering, and these **risks are often greater for women**. CHWs, for example, have to deal with specific risks associated with helping people in public spaces and the private spaces of people's homes. Volunteering-for-development organisations also do not necessarily give enough consideration to the safety of volunteers **when interventions may challenge vested interests** within the community. As the ambassadors of projects on the ground, **volunteers are often in the front line** if there is resistance to change. It may be that volunteering practices need to be altered – including where, when and how volunteer services are provided – in order to ensure the safety of volunteers.

The impacts of volunteering on volunteer wellbeing are **not gender-neutral** and have the real potential to exacerbate gender inequality if those impacts are negative. Women in Korogocho earn on average 10% less than men, and in an already poor community this means women are likely to be even poorer than men. If a volunteering intervention is poorly designed or implemented and leads to negative impacts on the wellbeing of volunteers, there is a **severe risk that women volunteers will therefore be worse affected**.

> **Recommendation 8**
> Volunteering-for-development organisations need to give more consideration to the **security of volunteers**, particularly local volunteers, and the increased risks faced by women. This also needs to encompass **the risk to the wellbeing** of local female volunteers in poor communities who face being pushed further into poverty if interventions negatively impact volunteers.

Partners

In terms of development partners **the most important is the community** – something that is often lost in the world of implementing partners, coordinating partners and donors. There are many pitfalls that face external volunteering-for-development organisations looking to implement interventions in communities such as Korogocho. Without knowing the local context it may be difficult to know whom to trust and there are significant risks, such as unwittingly selecting a local partner that consciously or unconsciously gives preferential treatment to a particular ethnicity. Ultimately, **taking the time to understand the local context** and **build trusting long-term relationships** with local partners were key components of success. Things tended not to go to plan when organisations failed to adequately screen local partners and/or did not invest sufficiently in conducting follow-ups and thorough monitoring and evaluation.

> **Recommendation 9**
> Volunteering-for-development organisations should adopt a **long-term approach** and take the time to **build trusting relationships with local partners**. They should also ensure that robust and ongoing mechanisms and processes are in place for **selecting and continually assessing the performance of partners**. Above all, decisions need to be taken that prioritise the needs of the most important partners – communities and the poorest and marginalised within them.

Conclusions

The *Valuing Volunteering* research has revealed intricate dynamics regarding volunteering in Korogocho. **Volunteering is having a positive impact** in Korogocho by providing basic services, helping vulnerable and marginalised groups and building resilience to development challenges. However, there are also **numerous challenges emanating from the national to the local scale** that threaten to and do undermine the effectiveness of volunteering. There are even cases where the actions of development organisations make things worse.

Importantly, for volunteering-for-development organisations looking to understand and develop theories of change around how their interventions may work, the Korogocho research approach reveals that at least **part of that development logic lies hidden in the community. Only through sustained engagement and participation that gives poor and marginalised people a say in how development happens is it likely that such local knowledge will be able to positively influence development interventions**. The *Valuing Volunteering* research in Korogocho has modelled an approach and way of working that both empowers local people to better understand the challenges they face and acquires valuable learning that can be used by volunteering-for-development organisations to design better initiatives that have an increased likelihood of reducing poverty. Consequently, it is hoped that the research acts as an example to others wishing to facilitate development in a similar fashion.

> **Recommendation 10**
> Volunteering-for-development organisations should explore volunteering approaches, such as that used by *Valuing Volunteering Kenya* in Korogocho, that both **empower local communities to develop local solutions** and provide **valuable organisational learning** to help improve volunteerism's impact in reducing poverty. **Crucially, such approaches should be seen as an opportunity to involve volunteers in project design, community engagement and developing localised context-specific theories of change** rather than just during the implementation phase of interventions.
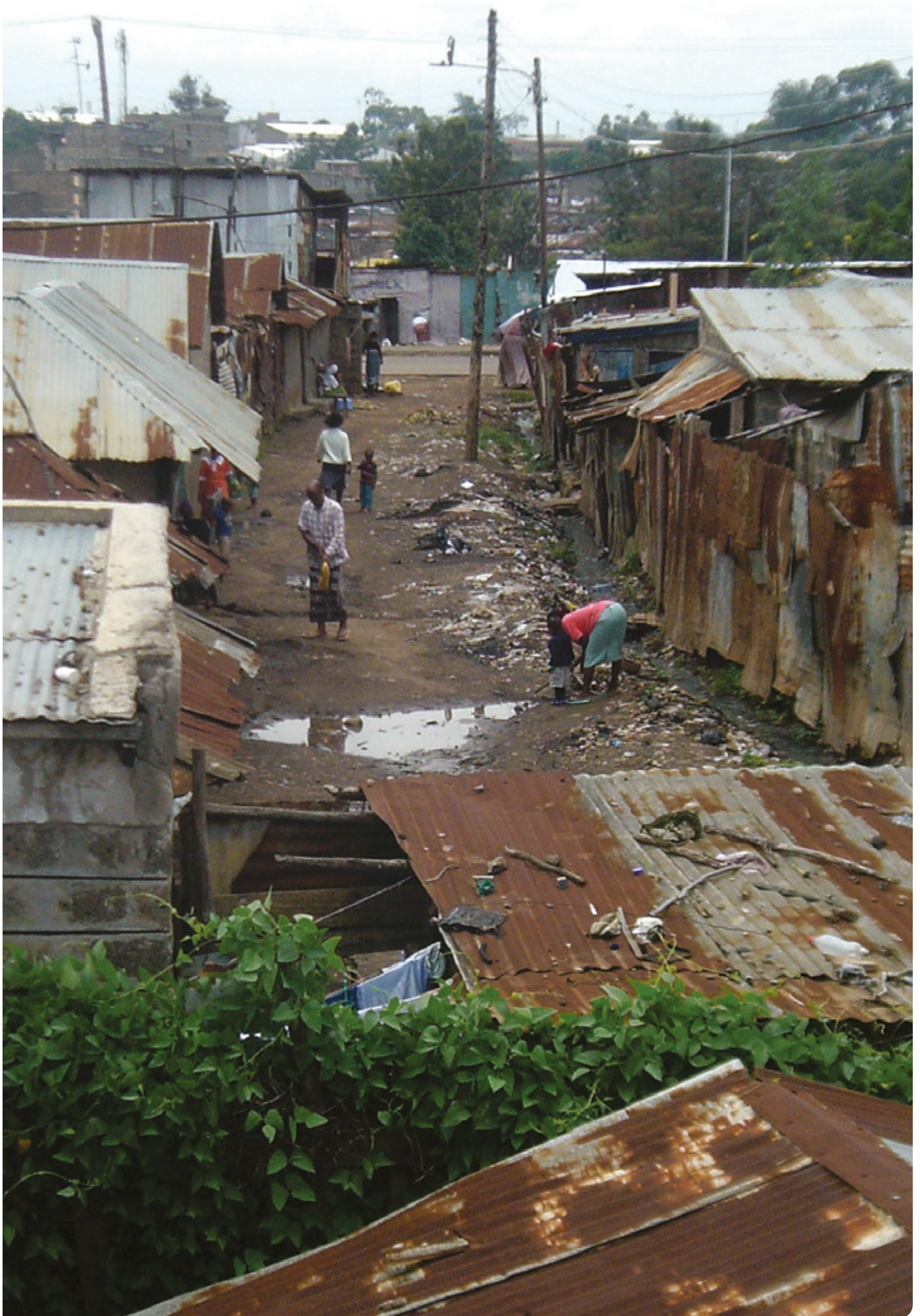
1. Introduction

Valuing Volunteering is a two-year global action research project aiming to build better understanding of where, when and how volunteering affects poverty.

Importantly the research does not assume that all volunteering has a positive impact. As such, the project attempts to make sense of the complex circumstances and combinations of factors that lead to positive change and those that have unintended, as well as potentially negative, impacts. Led by long-term VSO volunteers in five countries around the world, *Valuing Volunteering* work in Kenya consisted of a number of in-depth case studies involving significant participation of local communities.

A key innovation of the Korogocho case study is its research approach. Whereas most studies or evaluations start with a particular intervention and then seek to establish its impact (or contribution to impact), this investigation first focused on the community and allowed the picture of volunteering to emerge from it. The central aim of exploring the impact of volunteering on poverty remained the same, but rather than start with the volunteering initiative and look down to find the impact, research started by exploring community needs and looked up to see what volunteering was occurring to address them and whether it was being successful. By doing so, the research aimed to model a way of working for volunteering-for-development organisations that prioritises the importance of understanding local contexts and the needs of marginalised and vulnerable communities, rather than meeting predefined targets or finding appropriate partners for volunteers.

The community, or rather communities, of Korogocho, an informal settlement in north-east Nairobi, was selected as the case study site for a number of reasons. Firstly, the lead researcher's long-term VSO volunteer placement entailed living in the neighbourhood and working with a local CBO, Progressive Volunteers, which runs volunteer-led projects in the area. The placement gave the lead researcher unprecedented access and insight into the dynamics of Korogocho. Secondly, Korogocho is an interesting case. Early conversations with local colleagues and stakeholders told a story of an informal settlement which differed from other larger and more well-known Kenyan informal settlements such as Kibera, Mathare or Mukuru. Korogocho, people said, was a place dominated by violent crime where NGOs feared to go and, in contrast to other informal settlements where residents were perceived as more entrepreneurial, was seen as a 'closed community' with little business acumen. Connected to this, the third reason for choosing Korogocho was an

underlying research aim to explore to what degree volunteering helped the most marginalised and poorest members of society. In terms of reducing poverty, it is often those just below the poverty line (whichever line one decides to use) that are easiest to help. However, those living with the most extreme deprivation are often hardest to reach. With Korogocho scoring low on multiple indicators of poverty –as confirmed in initial community consultations – it presented itself as both an appropriate and convenient case study for analysing how, when and if volunteering was making a positive difference.

Whilst the research adopted an emergent approach, it also had structure. A local research team was recruited and trained in systemic action research, after which initial fieldwork took the form of informal conversations with residents in the community. Sample questions sought their views on volunteering and whether they had ever volunteered, the positive and negative aspects of living in Korogocho, where they thought volunteering might be able to help and any examples they could provide of local collective community activities. From this a number of emerging themes formed the framework for further research on specific aspects of volunteerism. These included:

- What motivates and demotivates people to volunteer?
- What types of volunteering are occurring in Korogocho?
- How well is volunteering understood?
- Are there differences in how various groups of people volunteer? For example, do men and women volunteer in different ways and how is this affected by gendered perspectives of the roles of men and women in Korogocho? Importantly, how does this relate to volunteering's impact on poverty?
- Is there competition for volunteer opportunities?
- Does the community trust volunteers and how important is trust in improving the effectiveness of volunteering?
- How can volunteering help the community help itself?
- What impact is volunteering having in Korogocho?

These questions helped to frame research discussions but findings often crossed questions, partly reflecting the complex dynamics of volunteering in Korogocho. As a result, the findings are presented here in a way that enables connections to be drawn between the various issues.

Figure 1: The Korogocho case study research in numbers

300	**15**	**50**	**1,000**
Over 300 people involved in participatory sessions	15 local volunteers comprising the research team	Over 50 community-based organisations and self-help groups involved in networking and focus group discussions	Over 1,000 hours of community fieldwork

2. The Korogocho context

The community of Korogocho, often locally shortened to Koch, is an informal settlement situated in north-east Nairobi. As with many informal settlements, accurate information is in short supply when it comes to socio-economic characteristics, but there are a few recent studies that shed some light on the local context.

Korogocho is estimated to be Nairobi's fourth biggest slum after Kibera, Mathare Valley and Mukuru. However, population estimates vary greatly. The 2009 National Census put the official population at 41,000, yet projections based on the 1999 Census put the figure at anywhere up to 180,000.[1] Both figures are contestable, with the lower official population likely suffering from significant under-counting due to the challenges of accurately measuring populations in informal settlements, and the upper projection potentially exaggerating the degree of overcrowding. A scan of available literature reveals significant discrepancies in estimates, which are generally in the range 100–200,000, with very little evidence as to how such figures were reached. The Korogocho Slum Upgrading Programme (KSUP) settles on an estimate of 100–120,000, which is likely to be more realistic than some of the higher claims. However, caution should be exercised in taking any population estimates at face value, as the very process of settling on a figure has become highly politicised. In Nairobi's biggest slum, Kibera, for example, deliberate inflation of population estimates has been observed to be a tactic to encourage greater funding and NGO attention. Many claims have put its population at between 1 and 2 million, yet the 2009 Census found just 170,000 residents, and the locally led Map Kibera Project estimated a similarly low figure of 220–250,000 inhabitants (Karanja, 2010; Robbins, 2012;).

Utilising a multidimensional approach to measuring poverty, the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative's (OPHI) Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) puts the incidence of poverty in Nairobi at just 3.9% – by far the lowest of Kenya's eight regions and a fraction of the national average of 47.8%.[2] To be classified as poor in this index, a person has to be identified as deprived in at least a third of ten key indicators which are broken down according to education (years of schooling, school attendance), health (nutrition, child mortality) and living standards (cooking fuel, sanitation, water, electricity, floor, assets). Those categorised as deprived in 20–33% of indicators are identified as 'vulnerable to poverty' and those deprived in over 50% are identified as being in 'severe poverty'. Amongst the poor in Nairobi, people are deprived, on average, in just over 40% of indicators, and 0.7% of the total Nairobi population live in severe poverty. In addition to the 3.9% categorised as poor, 14.7% of people in Nairobi are vulnerable to poverty. However, the disaggregation to Kenya's regions only hints at the severe inequalities that exist within and between Nairobi's constituent communities (OPHI, 2013).

Korogocho, for example, has been found to have "high levels of poverty and low levels of infrastructure development compared to other urban informal settlements" (MacAuslan and Schofield, 2011:13). It has also been documented that the urban poor can spend up to three-quarters of their income on food and, as a result, they make up an estimated 43% of Kenya's 'food-poor' (i.e. those who cannot meet their basic food needs) (Oxfam GB, 2009; MacAuslan and Schofield, 2011). This particular dynamic of urban poverty in Kenya reveals that although many of those living in settlements may not be classified as 'income-poor', using measurements such as the $1.25 or $2.00 a day line for example, they are 'food-poor' as a result of the higher costs of feeding themselves.

Korogocho's 1.5 square kilometres is divided into nine 'villages' (neighbourhoods) that vary significantly in terms of ethnic composition and socio-economic characteristics and challenges. As a Concern Worldwide report states, "each village has a somewhat distinct tribal makeup, with distinctions exacerbated by the violence after the election [national election in 2007], which was ferocious in Korogocho" (MacAuslan and Schofield, 2011:13). Korogocho is bordered by the industrial and formal/informal neighbourhoods of Kariobangi, Babadogo and Lucky Summer as well as the infamous Dandora dumpsite, the largest of its kind in Kenya. Korogocho's nine villages are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Korogocho's nine villages (aerial photo taken from Gathuthi et al, 2010; inset taken from Google Maps, 2014)

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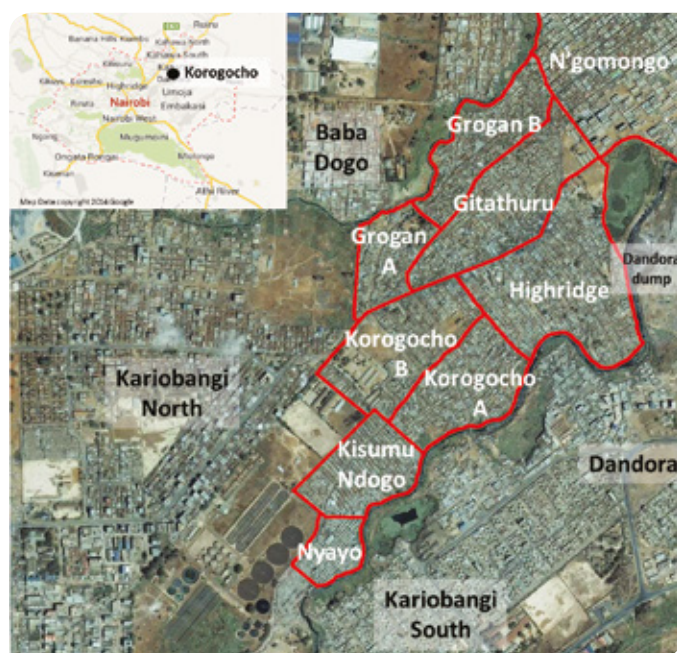
1. In contrast, the 2009 Census puts the official population of Kibera, Nairobi's largest slum, at 170,070, Mukuru at 130,402 and Mathare at 87,097.
2. Nationally the MPI of 47.8% can be compared to other measures of poverty. Results from 2005 show the percentage of income-poor living on less than $1.25 a day as 43.4%, the percentage of income-poor living on less than $2.00 a day as 67.2% and the percentage of poor according to a national poverty line as 45.9% (OPHI, 2013).

Korogocho's historical development, characterised by successive waves of in-migration, has led to many of its 'villages' taking the names of the communities from which their inhabitants relocated. For example, the first settlers of Grogan A were evicted from an area around Grogan Road in Nairobi because the government of the time did not want slums near the city centre; Highridge, established in the 1970s, borrowed its name from a suburb in the Mathaiga neighbourhood; Kisumu Ndogo has a high number of Luo residents many of whom migrated from the city of Kisumu on Lake Victoria; residents of Korogocho A and B were forcefully evicted from land in the River Road area of the city and it is said that the village and community name was derived from an old man who used to collect scrap metal (Korogocho means scrap metal in the Kikuyu language) (Gathuthi et al, 2010).

Surveys of Korogocho's villages reveal there are five main tribal groupings. The Kikuyu people account for 51% of residents, the Luo people 19%, the Luhya 10%, the Kamba 9% and the Borana 4%. However, their distribution across the villages is uneven. For example, Kikuyu people are more concentrated in Grogan B (76%) and less numerous in Highridge (31%), Nyayo (30%) and Kisumu Ndogo (17%). The Luo people make up a particularly high percentage of the population in Kisumu Ndogo (66%), and whilst the Kamba are spread across the villages, there are twice as many living in Korogocho B as in the other villages (Gathuthi et al, 2010). This ethnic mix led to Korogocho being a flashpoint for post-election violence in 2007–8, particularly between the Luo and Kikuyu ethnic groups, although the impacts were felt across the whole community.

In terms of religion, the 2010 Korogocho Socio-economic Survey reveals that 54% of the population is Protestant, 31% is Catholic and 11% is Muslim. As with ethnic affiliation, there are village variations, with a lower proportion of Catholics (18%) and higher concentration of Muslims (31%) in Highridge village. Muslims also account for 20% of the population in Gitathuru, whilst Protestants are by far the largest religious grouping in Kisumu Ndogo (66%) and Nyayo (70%).

Household income and expenditure are a useful tool for analysing the differences across Korogocho's villages and identifying the particular dynamics surrounding urban poverty in the community.[3] Table 1, taken from the 2010 Korogocho Socio-economic Survey which conducted 541 questionnaires across the community, provides an account of average household income and the main sources of expenditure.

Across five of the eight villages, mean household income per month varies relatively little from the overall average of 7,389 Kenyan Shillings (Ksh). However, Grogan B is notably lower at just Ksh3,827, whilst Kisumu Ndogo records the highest average income of Ksh10,666. For international comparison, Grogan B's mean income of Ksh3,827 is equivalent to USD 43.61 and Kisumu Ndogo's Ksh 10,666 equates to USD121.55. The overall village average is equal to USD84.21. It should also be noted that the average household size in Korogocho is estimated to be 4.4 individuals (adults and children). When applied to the village average this translates to an average income per person per month of Ksh1,679 or USD19.13.

Table 1. Total mean income and expenditure per household per month (Gathuthi et al, 2010:141)

	Total	Korogocho A	Korogocho B	Grogan A	Grogan B	Gitathuru	Kisumu Ndogo	Highridge	Nyayo	Male	Female
Base: Total sample	541	79	65	79	86	69	58	51	54	161	380
Mean	7388.5	7594.7	5939.5	7745.6	3826.9	7477.3	10666	7657	9914	7922	7159.6
Total household MEAN EXPENDITURE by village and gender											
Mean (housing)	1091.1	1400	942.7	1073.7	678.4	1165.7	1054.5	1619	916	855.9	1189.6
Mean (food)	3453	3508.2	3061.9	3874.7	2175.3	3370.1	4321.9	4162	3709	3645	3373.3
Mean (health)	665.2	493.1	693.5	705.2	379.5	885.5	1095.7	566.9	572	743.9	638.3
Mean (clothing)	741.2	743.8	547.4	758.1	485.7	970.6	1035.7	458.3	824	809.6	712.6
Mean (education)	1023.3	790.6	1168.5	955.2	493.4	778.3	1565.7	825	1438	1458	873.8
Mean (transport)	1052.6	1297	1134.5	995	427.3	735.3	1193.8	961.1	1121	1043	1058.2
Mean (Leisure)	896.6	1175	775	900	750	766.7	800	1125	1163	1000	803.2
Total	8923	9407.7	8323.5	9261.9	5389.6	8672.2	11067	9717	9743	9555	8649

3. This information is based on the 2010 Korogocho Socio-economic Survey which only included eight of Korogocho's nine villages – Ngomongo adjoining Grogan B and Gitathuru to the north-east being the village not included.

By far the largest item of household expenditure is food (Ksh3,453), which highlights the issue of food poverty in Korogocho. Additional statistics from the Korogocho Socio-economic Survey reveal that 64% of respondents reported having not enough to eat, with women being more likely than men to miss a meal. After food expenditure, housing (Ksh1,090), transport (Ksh1,053) and education (Ksh1,023) account for the largest proportion of outgoings, though even combined they do not exceed spending on food. Of note is the fact that expenditure exceeds reported income in every village except for Nyayo and that men have a mean income approximately 10% higher than women. Some evidence suggests that the discrepancy between income and expenditure may either mean that families are borrowing money to survive or that some are in fact making extra income from other, most likely illegal, sources which they are reticent to reveal in surveys (Gathuthi et al, 2010).

One aspect that is omitted from the survey of household income is the money made from illegal activities, which can be significant in Korogocho. Community members report being able to make up to Ksh30,000 per month from the sale of *chang'aa* (illegal alcoholic brew) and Ksh15,000 from muggings and robberies (Gathuthi et al, 2010). The implication of this is that there are likely to be much larger sums of money in the local economy than are recorded in surveys of household income.

Korogocho suffers from a number of socio-economic challenges. The most commonly cited is insecurity, which ranges from petty theft to rape, murder and inter-ethnic violence. Only 17% of Korogocho residents report feeling safe whilst living in their villages, with women often feeling less safe than men. Other commonly reported problems are poor health facilities, unemployment, inadequate supply of and access to clean water, and poor infrastructure. On education, residents reported having good access to public schools but nearly two-thirds felt the service they provided was inadequate.

The majority of residents (68%) are tenants, with 26% saying they own their own structure. Some confusion exists over land ownership. Korogocho occupies government-owned land, but attempts to transfer ownership to local people have led to conflict between the government and the vested interests of local landlords and structure owners (Pamoja Trust, 2001). The mixed understanding of land ownership is reflected in the 2010 socio-economic survey, with 13% saying they own the land, 46% reporting central government owns it, and 38% identifying their landlord as the owner.

Regarding the housing and structures present in Korogocho, mud is the most commonly used building material for the walls (46%) and floor (55%). Corrugated iron sheets are used for 38% of structure walls and 97% of roofs, whilst natural stone is used in only 8% of buildings. Due to the nature of the building materials used, structures are rarely more than two storeys high, and only 10% of residents consider their dwelling to be good or excellent. Overcrowding is a severe problem, with 61% of households occupying only one room, which is shared by 3.1 persons on average – the standard room sizes in Korogocho are 10ft by 10ft and 12ft by 10ft. Overcrowding has a gender dimension, with male-headed households reporting fewer people per room at 2.8 compared to female-headed households which are home to 3.3 per room (Gathuthi et al, 2010).

In terms of development projects in Korogocho, most are perceived to be initiated by either NGOs or CBOs, with the government seen to be responsible for some projects. Importantly there is a strong perception amongst residents that there is little local involvement in such projects. Active national and international organisations in Korogocho identified during field research and in other surveys include the Korogocho Slum Upgrading Programme (KSUP), Concern Worldwide, Provide International, the African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNICEF, UN Habitat, Italian Development Cooperation, World Vision, Action Aid, Goal Kenya, Tuungane Amani Kenya (TAK) Foundation, Red Cross, Feed the Children, International Blue Cross and Youth Initiatives Kenya (YIKE).

The volunteering landscape is complex and little understood by both local residents and the organisations working in Korogocho. Due to security concerns, there are very few international volunteers, and their activities are limited to brief visits rather than being based in the community. By far the most common forms of volunteering are activities associated with CBOs, youth groups and self-help groups, and the informal helping of other community members. Community health workers (CHWs) are one of the most visible groups of local volunteers, along with those undertaking activities associated with religious institutions and organisations. However, volunteerism is often misunderstood in Korogocho, with many activities not classified as volunteering despite meeting all the criteria to be labelled as such. This complex landscape of volunteerism will be returned to in greater detail in the findings section.

3. Methodology

The *Valuing Volunteering* project used two research approaches to collect and analyse insights about volunteering: Participatory Systemic Inquiries (PSI) and Participatory Systemic Action Research (PSAR). Both approaches enable us to get under the surface of how communities operate and how change happens.

Participatory Systemic Inquiries (PSI) allow a system of actors, actions and contexts to be mapped as a baseline against which change can be assessed (Burns, 2012). When identifying the starting points (our baseline) for a project, we might typically record those factors that have an obvious direct relation to our intervention. For example, if our aim is to increase girls' access to education, a 'traditional' baseline might record factors such as school enrolment, attendance and participation. PSI allows us to go deeper and reflect on how people, processes and the environment in which they are situated influence one another and the path to change. Doing this involves asking both broad and detailed questions which take us beyond the school walls and into the complexities of social systems such as, 'Are girls supported by their family and the wider community to attend school?' 'What are the power dynamics within the community and how might these influence girls' attendance in school?'

This data is then used to determine how different factors affect one another, with the aim of learning about why change is or is not happening. While causal links between each part of a system can be identified, they are frequently not linear relationships. By allowing us to observe volunteer practices as part of a wider system rather than in isolation, PSI challenges our assumption that if we do x it will automatically lead to y and forces us to consider each intervention within the context in which it takes place. For example, strengthening our understanding of the factors that impact on people's perceptions of volunteering was important in some inquiries to make sense of volunteers' effectiveness. A PSI mapping and analysis might take place over a 2- to 12-week period and can involve working with many different individuals and groups. In the *Valuing Volunteering* project we ran many different PSIs at the community, organisational and national levels. Where actors were motivated to respond to emergent findings, PSI formed the beginning of an action research process.

Participatory Systemic Action Research (PSAR) is an action research methodology which embeds reflection, planning, action and evaluation into a single process. The core principle behind action research is that we learn at least as much from action as we do from analysis. It incorporates iterative cycles of action and analysis, allowing us to reflect at intervals on a particular action or approach and adapt it according to what we've learnt. The action research used by *Valuing Volunteering* was participatory because it was led by individuals directly affected by or involved in volunteering-for-development initiatives, and they defined the action research process and questions. It was systemic because we assessed the impact of these actions by considering the knock-on effects for the actors, actions and contexts comprising the wider social system. PSAR typically takes place over a period of 18 months to three years.

The Korogocho research

The Korogocho case study entailed over two years of research utilising a PSAR methodology. Throughout the process the research was steered, and relied heavily on the commitment of a dedicated team of local volunteer researchers, many of whom lived either in Korogocho or the surrounding neighbourhoods. When collated, the efforts of the research team account for over 1,000 hours of community fieldwork, which included workshops and interviews with over 300 members of the community and local stakeholders. Figure 3 illustrates the main stages in the research process.

The Korogocho research team

Central to the empowering and participative principles underlying the research was the goal that the work should be both locally owned and provide opportunities for local people to develop their skills through taking part. The first stage was recruiting volunteer members to the team. Fortunately an opportunity existed through the fact that a colleague of the lead researcher at local CBO Progressive Volunteers also worked for an organisation conducting demographic research in Korogocho. This colleague had in-depth knowledge of Korogocho and knew how to navigate the delicate

Figure 3: Timeline of key events and processes in the Korogocho *Valuing Volunteering* research
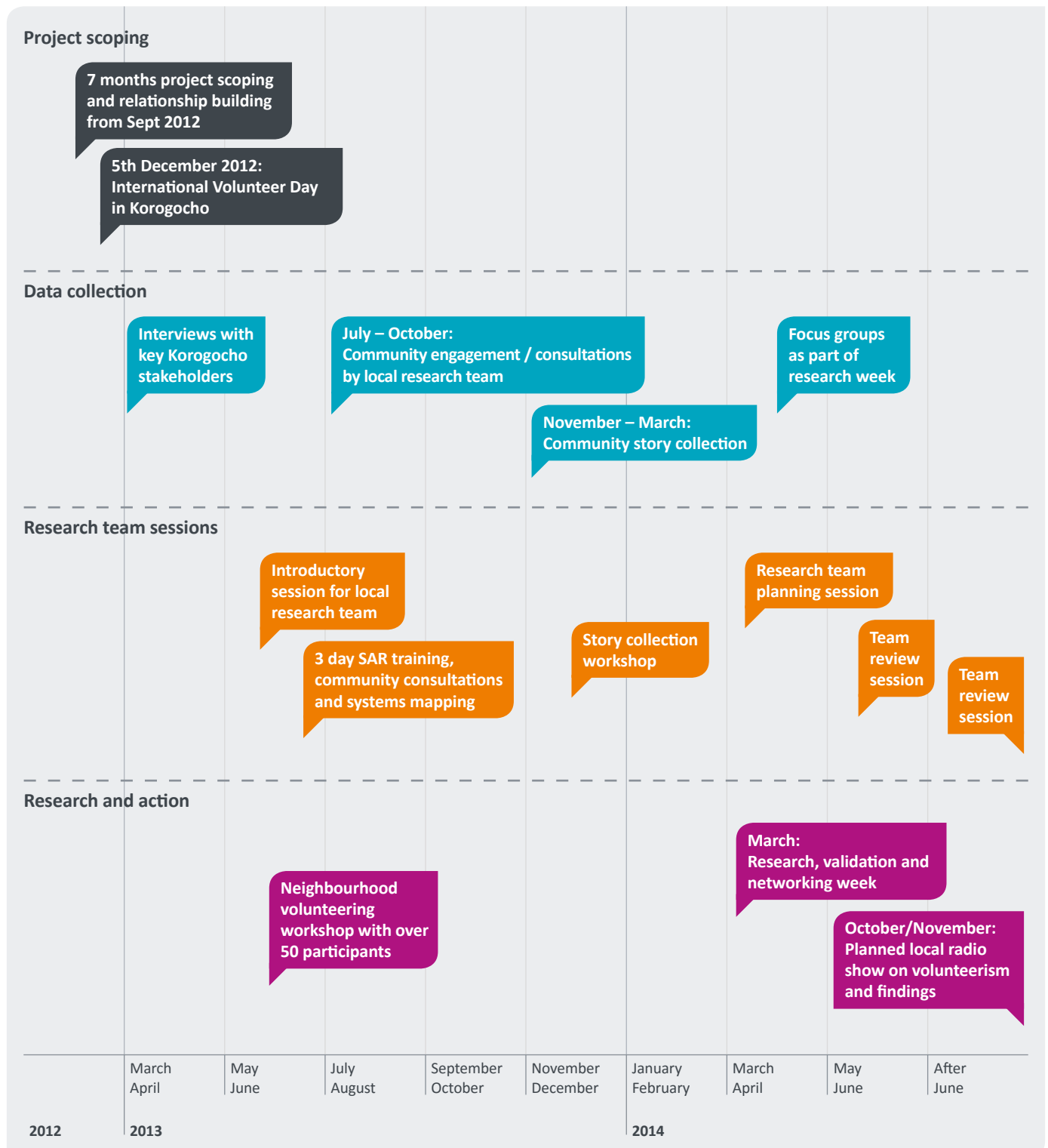
issue of finding the kind of volunteers who genuinely wanted to be involved. This was necessary as initial learning revealed that many consultations and research exercises by NGOs risked being 'hijacked' by attendees more interested in receiving a 'sitting allowance' than genuinely participating. An added challenge was to avoid 'briefcase NGOs' which exist only on paper in the hope of receiving funding. In terms of learning for future research investigations, the importance of having this colleague as an entry point into the community cannot be overestimated.

The opportunity to be involved in the research team was spread by word of mouth to potential participants, after which an introductory session outlining the process, aims and expectations took place in May 2013. Members who came forward all had previous volunteering experience and either currently worked or volunteered with CBOs and NGOs operating in Korogocho.

Following the introductory session, 15 members received three days' training in PSAR (members of the research team are shown in Figure 4). Training locations were split between Progressive Volunteers' office a short distance from Korogocho, the Provide International premises within Korogocho and the nearby chief's camp. Research training included participatory sessions on understanding complexity, defining volunteering, interview technique, community fieldwork, systems and causation mapping and exploring theories of change.

Over the course of the research the majority of the team remained members, though varying demands on their time meant that some were more active at certain times than others. Additional members also joined at later stages of the research. To help in coordinating and mobilising the team, a coordinator was recruited from amongst the members to act as a key point of liaison. Although a volunteer position, the coordinator did receive a small allowance to cover communications and travel expenses and provide a little reimbursement for the extra time commitment. The research team also received an allowance to cover travel and food costs when taking part in research activities.

Research methods

Throughout the research a number of specific research methods were utilised within the overall framework of systemic action research. Appendix A provides a synthesis of the methods and the ways in which they were used. A wide range of techniques was employed including semi-structured interviews and informal discussions, systems mapping, focus group discussions, neighbourhood mapping, network mapping, participatory statistics and Global Giving's storytelling tool.

Figure 4: Members of the Korogocho research team

From left to right: Meshack Odede (Progressive Volunteers); Evelyne Odhiambo 'No Means No Worldwide); Joyce Mwchala (Youth Initiative Kenya – YIKE); Lucy Wjeri (Provide International); Miriam Enane (Provide International); Ruth Njoroge (Provide International); James Mbuto (Koch FM); Kevin Maina (Blue Cross International); Keziah Kenga (Community Health Worker).

4. Findings

Understanding the complexity of the dynamics surrounding volunteering and development in Korogocho was a central aim of the research, based on the view that issues could not be investigated in isolation.

To structure analysis, findings are split into seven interconnected sections: community perceptions of volunteering and volunteers; the types and roles of local volunteers in Korogocho including formal and informal volunteering; the motivation and wellbeing of volunteers; the interaction between top-down programming and bottom-up community needs; dependency and sustainability; the gendered dimension to volunteering and poverty in Korogocho; and partners.

Throughout the analysis, attempts are made to draw links between research findings, as there are numerous overlaps and relationships. There are a number of findings specific to gender, for example, but gender is also an issue in other areas such as community perceptions, formal and informal volunteering, and the motivations and wellbeing of volunteers. Similarly, there are very strong links between community perceptions of volunteering, the motivation and wellbeing of volunteers, top-down programming and community dependency. These links will be identified and referred to throughout the research findings.

1. Community perceptions of volunteers and volunteering

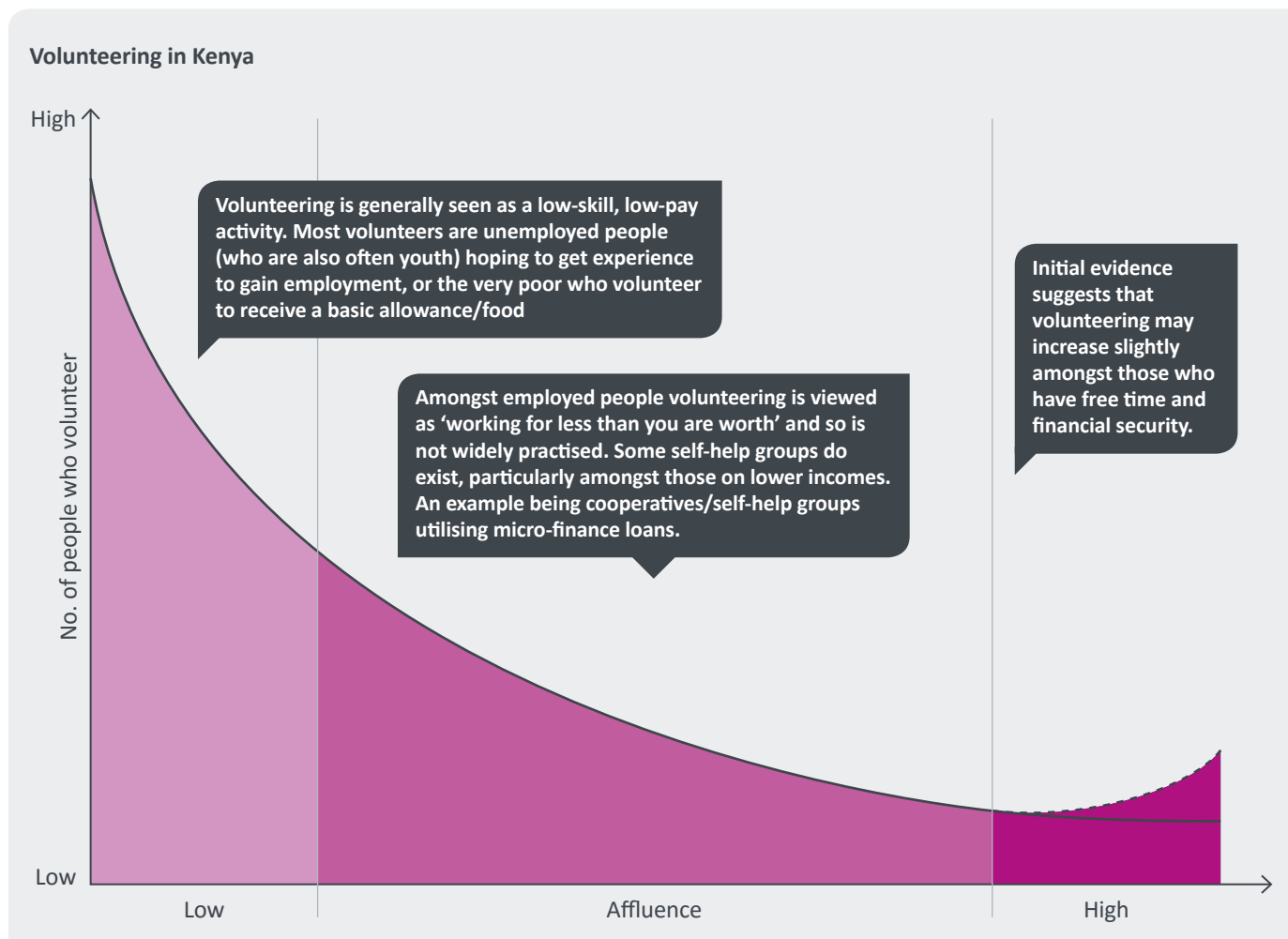#### 1.1. The impact of national perceptions of volunteering

A recurring theme across the *Valuing Volunteering Kenya* research has been the complexity and confusion surrounding the term volunteerism and the act of volunteering. This has a direct impact on community perceptions of what it means to volunteer and, consequently, the effectiveness of volunteering in addressing poverty, marginalisation and inequality. Defining volunteering is challenging, with a number of international organisations and reports seeking to identify core characteristics in an attempt to provide broad framing definitions. The International Labour Office (ILO) defines volunteerism as "unpaid non-compulsory work; that is, time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organisation or directly for others outside their own household" (ILO, 2011:13). The 2011 UNV State of the World's Volunteerism Report covers similar ground emphasising three principles; firstly, the action should be carried out according to an individual's own free will, although it can be influenced by social norms and peer pressure; secondly, the action should not be undertaken primarily for financial gain, although some form of compensation or stipend is acceptable; and thirdly, the action should benefit those outside of the volunteer's family, although it is recognised that in volunteering for a cause there may be benefits that return to the volunteer as well (UNV, 2011).

The reality in the Kenyan context and in communities such as Korogocho is that even these overriding principles of volunteerism have become more fluid and complex. Research participants spoke of volunteerism being 'distorted' or 'corrupted' and the 'capitalisation' of volunteering. The confusion and misunderstandings have a direct impact on the motivations and wellbeing of volunteers, the functioning of local organisations (or partners), and communities' sense of being able to lead their own development. Taken together, such factors increase the complexity surrounding systemic issues that influence and determine where, when and how volunteering has an impact.

The perception of volunteering in Korogocho is an extreme embodiment of a more general view of volunteering held throughout Kenya. Across the country, volunteering has connotations of 'working for less than you are worth', of being a low-status activity, and/or a 'stepping stone' to gaining formal employment. One of the most visible acts of volunteering in Kenya is street cleaning or 'clean-ups' and it is easy to see how the perception of volunteering as low-status has partly come from its association with such activities. As part of the national *Valuing Volunteering Kenya* research, an attempt was made to model how rates of volunteering relate to the level of affluence of volunteers. The conceptual model in Figure 5, which has been tested and validated with a range of national and local stakeholders across the country, represents a commonly held perception of who volunteers and why.

Interviews and focus group discussions with community groups as well as representatives of leading volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs) revealed that volunteering is widely perceived as the penchant of poor and/or unemployed people. In these situations, volunteering either acts as a survival mechanism – the small allowances or stipends replacing paid work – or is seen as a way of gaining experience en route to formal paid employment. In Graham et al's 2013 report on *Volunteering in Africa*, they acknowledge "that in the context of high unemployment, volunteers may view volunteering as a stepping stone to employment" (Graham et al, 2013:34). The term 'stepping stone' was frequently used by research participants, and one interviewee went as far as to label it a potential 'ladder out of poverty'. With 78.3% of the population under 35 years of age, the demographics of Kenya invariably mean that volunteerism has an age dimension which serves to accentuate the perception of volunteering being an opportunity for young graduates to gain unpaid experience in the job market (Government of Kenya, 2013). High rates of unemployment resulting from a lack of jobs to meet the increasing 'demographic dividend' of a large working-age population also contribute to volunteering being seen as low-paid alternative to formal employment.

Figure 5: A conceptual model mapping rates of volunteering according to level of affluence (the figure represents a conceptual sense-making model, so actual values for level of affluence or number of people who volunteer are deliberately not included)

Volunteering in Kenya

Volunteering is generally seen as a low-skill, low-pay activity. Most volunteers are unemployed people (who are also often youth) hoping to get experience to gain employment, or the very poor who volunteer to receive a basic allowance/food

Amongst employed people volunteering is viewed as 'working for less than you are worth' and so is not widely practised. Some self-help groups do exist, particularly amongst those on lower incomes. An example being cooperatives/self-help groups utilising micro-finance loans.

Initial evidence suggests that volunteering may increase slightly amongst those who have free time and financial security.

Once people have gained employment, they generally volunteer less, as professional pressures limit the time they have available to volunteer. For some of those who have previously used volunteering as a 'stepping stone' to employment, there is also a sense that returning to volunteering is a backward step and 'working for less than you are worth'. Despite this reduction with increasing affluence, there are still people who continue to volunteer throughout their lives and who typically refer to it being 'a calling' or something that 'comes from within'.

Interviews with organisations working with professional volunteers suggest that there may be an emerging trend for highly skilled people to volunteer. For example, Junior Achievement, an NGO working to increase the entrepreneurial skills of young people, has noted successful business-people coming forward to voluntarily pass on their skills to young people and particularly in the schools they attended when younger. For some, this is once they have retired, but evidence also suggests that it is professionals who have gone through the challenge of establishing themselves in their given profession and later have more time and financial security to avail themselves to volunteer.

This national perception of volunteering is particularly pervasive in Korogocho, where the majority of community-based volunteering is directed towards either self-help or acquiring the small amounts of money offered by stipends and allowances. One of the clearest and most commonly referred to research findings was the sense of confusion and misunderstanding around what volunteering is. As one CHW commented, "even volunteers themselves don't understand the whole concept of volunteering, whether they are doing it for money". Other respondents echoed this view:

"most of the people don't understand volunteering"
CHW

"people don't believe that you can do something without pay"
Member of local self-help group

"here in Nairobi, not many people will understand how you can go out to volunteer and also feed yourself"
Member of women's support group

"the community cannot differentiate between those who are paid by NGOs and those that are volunteers"
CHW

"people who are idle, they call volunteer... it tarnishes the reputation of volunteers"
Local religious leader

With such high levels of unemployment, and low wages amongst those that do work (which is mainly in the informal sector in Korogocho), there is general scepticism as to how someone can give their time for free and without immediate benefit to themselves or their families. This leads community residents to suspect that volunteers are either secretly being paid or are benefiting in some other way, usually through corrupt practices. Volunteerism also suffers from being associated with 'idle' unemployed young people who seek out volunteering opportunities purely for the small stipends they offer. Such 'volunteer opportunities' often include attending community meetings organised by external NGOs that pay 'sitting fees' to attendees – a small sum of money offered either as an incentive or reimbursement for participants, although receipts are rarely requested. A tactic observed during the research in Korogocho was the establishment of often male-dominated youth groups purely as a means of gaining attendance at community meetings rather than carrying out local development projects. The implication for volunteering effectiveness is that, in such cases, volunteering is not being pursued as a means to address the poverty or marginalisation of others in the community, but as a way of mobilising to only benefit 'volunteer' members of certain groups, many of which are far from representative of the wider Korogocho populace, particularly in terms of gender.

Some of these more negative perceptions of volunteering are neatly summarised by Fred Sadia, the volunteer coordinator of the Korogocho research team:

> **"For many the word volunteer refers to any person who is giving cheap labour; people who have no job and stick their neck outs strategically to grab the next available opportunity at a firm or organisation; or a jobless lad who is in other words an idler who lacks any other thing to do but becomes a busy-body out searching for undue favour. Some say a volunteer is a person paid by 'some people' and only masquerades to defraud and/or exploit others in the name of volunteering. These are some of the common and easy definitions and explanations you'll come across in Kenya."**

Despite the confusion or 'distortion' surrounding volunteering in Korogocho, there are those individuals and groups that are driven by a genuine passion to make a positive difference in the community. The research engaged over 50 local CBOs and self-help groups and, whilst some relied on external donors for allowances and others attended the research sessions in the hope of receiving a payment, it was also apparent that many functioned with very little funding and provided much-needed support to members within their groups. The problem posed by misunderstandings of volunteerism, however, means that such groups face extra challenges in convincing people of their intentions. CHWs, in particular, stressed how they had to deal first-hand with the confusion surrounding volunteering in trying to build trusting relationships with the households they are allocated to support.

That volunteerism is a complex term is not altogether surprising, but in the context of communities such as Korogocho, it is important to understand how different understandings impact upon where, when and why volunteering is effective. With regard to increasing the impact of volunteering, the research found that levels of trust and the receptiveness to volunteers were vital components of community perceptions. The following subsections look at the importance of community trust and proceed to identify some ways in which trust and receptiveness to working with volunteers can be increased.

1.2. The critical importance of community trust in volunteers

Suspicion of the motivations and intentions of volunteers places strain on the relationship between volunteers and the wider community. The lack of trust in volunteers not only impacts upon the ability of volunteers to carry out their activities but also acts as a disincentive to volunteer in the first place. As one respondent said,

> **"when you volunteer, it is poorly understood and it is not trusted as well because people will say you are trying to get attention of other, like the government or organisations like NGOs..."**
> Member of local support group

Real distrust of volunteers exists in Korogocho, with many feeling that volunteers find ways to personally profit by keeping resources intended for the wider community. As one local CHW explained,

> **"people are really suspicious as to how someone can volunteer when they need to feed their families... [the suspicion is that] they feel like someone, somewhere is giving you something..."**

Focus group discussions with CHWs revealed the challenges that accompanied these perceptions and limited the effectiveness of their volunteer efforts. CHWs reported bringing their own materials and resources to the sick, often to be met with the view that "they do not believe the CHW has gone the extra mile". In the first stage of a participatory statistics exercise, a group of 16 CHWs identified the most pressing challenges they faced. Of the 11 initial challenges identified, three of them related directly to a lack of community trust in CHWs. These included thinking CHWs had ulterior motives or were being paid, a lack of community cooperation in dealing with issues, and people not appreciating the work of CHWs as a voluntary effort.

An additional layer of complexity results from the many government and NGO demographic surveys that have been conducted in Korogocho. With field researchers collecting the personal details of residents, some respondents assume they will receive funding and, when it does not materialise, suspect the researchers of keeping the resources. This is despite the fact that many surveys are purely for research purposes, such as the Census, with no prospect of associated funding. As one CHW observed,

> **"People also have trust issues when it comes to volunteers. They tend to think we [volunteers] are using them for our own selfish reasons. When we ask HIV+ individuals for their cc numbers [the numbers they use at the hospitals to collect drugs], they refuse or are reluctant to give them to us because they think we are using them for our personal gain."**
> Korogocho CHW

The use of both paid staff and volunteers by government agencies and NGOs in conducting surveys has further complicated the distinction between the two in the minds of community members. There is a knock-on effect on other volunteering activities, particularly those seen to be more closely associated with the government and research organisations undertaking the surveys. CHWs, with their officially recognised status, often bear the brunt of such suspicions. As one CHW stated, there is a perception that CHWs "are using your details to build a bridge out of poverty and disappear". To prevent such confusion, this issue needed to be sensitively approached during the *Valuing Volunteering* research in Korogocho, for example by ensuring the nature and purpose of the research were explained in detail to participants.

To deconstruct the distrust of volunteers in Korogocho requires an understanding of wider systemic issues in the community such as insecurity, inter-ethnic tension, the poor practices of unscrupulous NGOs and CBOs, and a society shifting from collective solidarity to individualism. As the 2010 Korogocho Socio-economic Survey reveals, insecurity is one of the issues residents see as most serious and, for many, it is a part of daily life, whether it be avoiding the risks or making a living from it. Memories of the 2007–8 post-election violence, which was intense in Korogocho, are fresh in the minds of many residents. During initial field visits in 2012–13, local people were quick to point out the still visible damage done to property. Nationally the inter-ethnic violence saw significant conflict between the Kikuyu and Luo tribes (and Kalenjin), the two largest ethnic groups in Korogocho. Despite the relatively peaceful elections held in 2013, tensions still exist and are particularly acute with regard to access to power, decision-making and the allocation of resources.

Numerous conversations in the community referred to development promises made but broken by NGOs, CBOs and individuals, which had created a sense of 'betrayal'. Longer-serving residents also reflected on how things had changed in the community from a situation where people used to come together, to one where people were more inclined to look after themselves:

> "In the early days, if you were building a house, you [would] invite friends who help and you will cook for them. Now people are doings things more on their own, which makes it more difficult to volunteer."
> Korogocho village elder

Such reflections often associate volunteering with the ethos of *harambee*, a Swahili term meaning 'let us pull together', that was used profusely by the post-independence government to promote national solidarity in the 1960s. However, many consider the 'spirit of *harambee*' to have weakened over time – particularly amongst younger generations with no direct experience of the post-independence era – and this has also transferred to often intertwined views on volunteering. The changing nature of *harambee* and volunteering is discussed further in the next section.

In Korogocho there is undeniably a community feeling that people are less likely to do something for free or for someone else than they used to be. Community suspicions run high and this discourages acts of volunteering as people worry about how their acts of volunteering will be perceived. One community member stated how people see "your children are going to school, you are living well and yet you are volunteering so someone must be paying you something". For those considered to be secretly earning an allowance whilst volunteering, intercepting funds intended for the community, or making a profit from community donations, a commonly used label is 'betrayer'. Village elders stressed how they were often viewed as betrayers due to their close working relationship with the authorities, particularly the police. An interesting reflection from this is that, for volunteers in some cases, the nearer they are to 'officialdom' or the authorities, the less trusted they are.

In one interesting episode in a focus group discussion with local CBOs and self-help groups, one representative said they had heard of another attendee being a 'betrayer'. However, after they had shared their respective volunteering stories there was a realisation that both the accuser and the accused were very similar and the acts of volunteering that had led to the label 'betrayer' being used had been misunderstood. The session finished with both parties agreeing to look at how they could potentially work together. The case serves as an example of how engaging people in dialogue can help to reduce suspicions and lay the foundations for more trusting relationships; relationships that can enable volunteers to be more effective in their efforts.

In an interview with the local administration, it was stressed how a key challenge for Korogocho was a lack of accurate information in relation to local news, development projects and issues such as HIV/AIDS. All too often rumours and hearsay became accepted as fact or escalated into accusations of corruption and malpractice. A lack of transparency, fuelled by a scarcity of accurate information, allows suspicion of volunteers to manifest in the community psyche and acts as a barrier to volunteer effectiveness. The effects are both connected to and worsened by the general confusion and misunderstanding surrounding the nature of volunteering within the community. This is why, following the fieldwork, the Korogocho research team chose to run a number of shows on local radio stations in order to provide more accurate information on volunteering and counter negative perceptions.

1.3. Increasing community trust and receptiveness to working with volunteers

The community's distrust of volunteers directly affects the receptiveness of local people to working with them. Local CHWs reported numerous community fears including doubts surrounding the confidentiality of personal information, the aforementioned suspicion that CHWs will use their details for monetary gain and perceived risks of letting health workers into their dwellings. One male CHW stated how "I will not be invited in as they see me as a thief" whilst for women there is the risk of being seen as 'husband snatchers'. A female CHW observed how "we are likened to harlots or prostitutes as we go door-to-door introducing themselves". With confusion around the meaning of volunteering, a challenge exists in increasing community trust in local volunteers and raising receptiveness to working with them. Over the course of the research, five recurring areas emerged as key to increasing trust and receptiveness.

Persistence and a long-term approach

Building trust takes time. Conversely it can also be quickly lost or damaged. Local volunteers in Korogocho noted how being able to take a long-term approach combined with the persistence to overcome individual and community fears was critical to building trust and developing positive lasting relationships. This was especially apparent amongst CHWs. On the whole, CHWs came up against substantial resistance when going about their duties but they noted signs that their persistence did pay off. With commitment over time, CHWs reported seeing significant impacts as a result of their work. These impacts included reduced maternal deaths, cultural practices shifting from the use of traditional birth attendants to going to hospital, fewer people blaming illness on being bewitched, improved family planning, people seeking medical attention sooner than they used to, and better HIV/AIDS and TB education.

More engagement with 'genuine' volunteers

Findings suggest that the more engagement community members have with 'genuine' volunteers the more likely they are to appreciate their contribution and view them in a positive light, thereby building trust and receptiveness. As one member of an HIV/AIDS support group remarked, "the people who understand volunteering better are those that attend support groups or who benefit from acts of volunteering". Discussions with CHWs reveal similar views, as community attitudes change once they know a volunteer health worker can be trusted and their actions make a difference. It is not a quick fix solution, but building long-term relationships and demonstrating the positive impact of volunteering activities is likely to be a particularly sustainable and fruitful approach. In other words, it can help to create a virtuous circle. The only problem remains that, whilst there are those volunteers building trust and receptiveness to their work, there are those engaging in volunteering with exploitative intentions that undermine community trust.

Accurate information and clear processes

Inaccurate information and a lack of understanding surrounding the roles of volunteers are significant barriers to building trust and receptiveness. As one participant observed, "sometimes people don't trust because they don't understand the process". With so many local CBOs and self-help groups, NGOs and donor organisations it is perhaps inevitable that different processes lead to confusion. However, greater transparency and accountability and a degree of standardisation would go some way to improving the community's understanding of how volunteer recruitment, training and reimbursement processes work and how this may differ from local self-help groups and more informal forms of volunteering (the following section will discuss formal and informal forms of volunteering in more detail). Furthermore, the provision of accurate information (about volunteering and other topics) needs to occur in formats that are accessible and rooted in the community – in Korogocho, this took the form of informal discussions and local radio broadcasts. The research found that the education/awareness-raising campaigns of some NGOs had had little impact due to their preference for using print media. Not only did illiteracy, which is higher in the poorest target populations that interventions seek to reach, limit effectiveness but printed media faced challenges in infiltrating the ways in which people naturally communicate. The upside of this for volunteerism is that it is often local volunteers that are particularly well placed on the ground to facilitate dialogue and the kind of informal discussions that can really connect with people. Volunteers can thus play a pivotal role in engaging with and educating target communities from within.

Stipends and allowances

The impact of stipends and allowances, offered primarily by NGOs and donor organisations not based in Korogocho, has significantly muddied the volunteering waters. Varying levels of stipends have led to volunteering being more associated with low-paid work than with the notion of giving one's time freely for the benefit of others. As one representative of a local CBO stated, "people view it as a low paid job but that is the truth about it... the truth is it is a low paid job". The solution is not necessarily to not pay allowances, but more attention needs to be paid to the realities of volunteering in the context of a community such as Korogocho. Organisations need to appreciate that, when they do not work together or jointly standardise their approaches, they are potentially making things harder for themselves and may be doing more harm than good. This issue will be returned to in Section 3 on volunteer motivations and wellbeing.

Trusted local networks and relationships

In Korogocho there are examples of self-help groups that operate on the basis of local trust and relationships that are proving to be successful. However, in many of these cases this is occurring without any outside support or assistance. Focus group discussions reported multiple reference to such groups including 'merry-go-rounds' whereby members pay regular subscriptions to a fund that is allocated on a revolving basis, 'table banking' and Savings and Internal Lending Committees (SILCs). A member of a table banking SILC group said how "it has all been done through volunteering and it is raising the economic standards of all those participating... and it is all done from within". Such groups are an indication that, even with Korogocho's many challenges, trust and the receptiveness to working together still exist in social networks and relationships (something which also points toward the presence of social capital). And there is additional evidence that suggests the most productive way forward may be to build upon Korogocho's internal capacity. Whilst distrust between local volunteers and the community may complicate understandings of volunteerism and lessen the impact of voluntary activities, many community members still reported trusting local volunteers more than those from outside the community whom they did not know, with international volunteers being a significant exception. As one respondent noted, "people will trust volunteers coming from within the villages but it will decrease a lot for those coming from outside" (outside of the villages but from within Kenya).

Trust is a core component to volunteering effectiveness. It is influenced by a complex range of local systemic issues, which in turn are intrinsically related to wider contextual factors. Volunteers in Korogocho face severe challenges due to a lack of trust which inhibits their ability to build lasting relationships for change. However, there are tactics which can overcome such barriers. For example, being persistent and taking a long-term approach to gradually building relationships was seen by CHWs as an enabling factor in increasing their effectiveness. As the research discovered first-hand, creating opportunities for dialogue (and mediation) can help to reduce suspicions and to establish the environment in which trusting relationships can grow. And lastly, the proliferation of negative rumours and community suspicion of volunteers can be countered by increasing transparency and access to accurate information.

Key messages

Lack of trust and a resultant low receptiveness to volunteers are major challenges to volunteerism in Korogocho. Ultimately this is caused by confusion about, or even distortion of, what it means to volunteer. However, whilst there are efforts that can be made to address this issue – such as providing accurate information, increasing transparency, accountability and standardisation of processes and allowances – it is also vital to appreciate the local bottom-up realities of volunteering in Korogocho. Volunteerism does not have to be redefined per se but contextualised to the particular circumstances of life in Korogocho. As a recent report on volunteering in Africa states,

> "for some community volunteers, stipends are an important source of livelihood and survival and in these situations can be a motivation for volunteering. Stipends are in most cases well below market related wages and are often viewed negatively, they are sometimes considered exploitative, as volunteers do not have recourse to better sources of income."
> Graham et al, 2013:28

For all partners and volunteers, the relationship between community perceptions and volunteering needs to be understood if it is to be used as an effective tool for development.

Implications

- At the local level, perceptions have a direct impact on the ability of volunteers to build trusting long-term relationships. **Understanding these dynamics is vital to how, when and why volunteering – and particularly different types of volunteers – can be effective.** For volunteering-for-development organisations, there may also be a need to work with **flexible definitions of volunteering** which can be tailored to local circumstances.

- **Building trusting relationships is vital** to volunteer effectiveness. Five areas have emerged as playing potentially important roles in building trust and community receptiveness.

- **Persistence and a long-term approach:** building trust takes time but it can also be lost quickly. Local volunteers noted increased success when they were able to build long-term relationships. However, this also required persistence on the part of the volunteer as they had to overcome individual and community fear and suspicions and essentially prove themselves trustworthy.

- **More engagement with 'genuine' volunteers:** people are more likely to trust volunteers and be receptive to working with them when they have had previous positive experiences. Essentially a 'virtuous circle' can be created when volunteers are genuine and make a difference. The risk to this is the damage that can be done by volunteers with more exploitative intentions.

- **Accurate information and clear processes:** Volunteering interventions would therefore benefit from much clearer processes (and importantly, more clearly communicated processes) and potentially standardised practices across NGOs working in the same communities. The means of dissemination of information requires careful consideration so as to properly engage with target communities and ensure the poorest are not left out. Crucially, local volunteers can play a vital role in engaging communities from within.

- **Stipends and allowances:** the varying levels of stipends and allowances have muddied the volunteering waters and led to many local people viewing volunteering as low-paid work rather than freely giving one's time. A lack of consistency in allowances has also created competition for the better-paid volunteering opportunities (as subsequent sections will discuss further). Volunteering-for-development organisations may unwittingly be making things worse through such practices.

- **Trusted local networks and relationships:** despite the challenges faced by people living in Korogocho, there are also substantial local volunteering efforts, particularly in the form of self-help groups, that are helping to build resilience. The trust within these local networks and relationships is a potentially powerful tool for change. For volunteering-for-development organisations, it also highlights the importance of local trust and how trusted local volunteers may be preferable in some circumstances to 'national' volunteers from other communities.

2. The types and roles of local volunteers in Korogocho: formal and informal volunteering

The *Valuing Volunteering Kenya* research spent considerable time in Korogocho building a detailed picture of the types of volunteering taking place and how this influences the roles and impact of volunteers. Findings reveal that a specific distinction can be drawn between formal and informal volunteering, with both types involving different dynamics between volunteer and 'beneficiary' and addressing distinct needs in the community. To clarify definitions, formal volunteering is taken here to refer to structured volunteer initiatives usually including membership of a group or organisation in which participants are clearly identified as volunteers. In contrast, informal volunteering refers to unstructured activities that are more ad hoc in nature and may include activities often not identified as volunteering, and what can be termed micro-volunteering such as individual acts of kindness (Brown et al, 2013).

An interesting example is posed by self-help groups, which have characteristics of both formal and formal volunteering. They are dealt with here as more a form of informal volunteering as the research found their looser self-generated structures and the mutual support they offer to be different from more official dedicated voluntary organisations that use volunteers to address specific development challenges. Many self-help groups were also less likely to identify their members as volunteers.

This section will analyse the roles and impact of formal and informal volunteering in turn. A final section will specifically look at the youth's relationship with volunteering in Korogocho, as Kenya's demographics suggest that engaging young people in volunteering can potentially have a substantial impact.

Formal volunteering

Korogocho has a number of formal volunteering initiatives, some organised and facilitated by external NGOs and others that have emerged from localised efforts and generally operate through CBOs. Some are also dedicated volunteer initiatives such as CHWs, whereas others market themselves as predominantly development organisations that either occasionally or frequently use local volunteers to implement their interventions. In terms of impact, one characteristic that is generally shared across formal volunteering in Korogocho is that it addresses either gaps in basic service provision or the needs of particularly vulnerable members of the community.

An excellent example is the activities of CHWs, who are some of the most visible and well-known volunteers in the community. In 2010 the government recruited and trained 50 CHWs in each of Korogocho's nine villages, creating a cadre of 450 volunteers who are coordinated by government-employed Community Health Extension Workers (CHEWs). The Ministry of Health's Community Health Strategy (Kenya Ministry of Health, 2006) intends for every 50 CHWs to be supported by 2 CHEWs in serving a population of approximately 5,000. Each CHW is expected to serve 20 households or 100 people, although findings from the research in Korogocho reveal that the large number of CHW dropouts has led to the remaining CHWs having to cover far more households than was initially planned. CHWs reported that the number of households served varied across Korogocho's villages from a low of 33 per CHW to over 100 in others.

Despite the logistical challenges posed to CHWs in Korogocho, they provide vital and extensive front-line services to the community. Their efforts are all the more valuable because they operate in an environment which is under-served by government health facilities. A new state-run centre was recently constructed at the chief's camp, which has given some hope that the situation is improving, but there is still inadequate coverage to the general population. The contribution of CHWs to the wellbeing of the community is substantial, and inadequately summarised under the catch-all term of healthcare services. A workshop with local CHWs attempted to map out all the services they provide and issues they address as part of their volunteer activities. Figure 6 illustrates the results of that exercise.
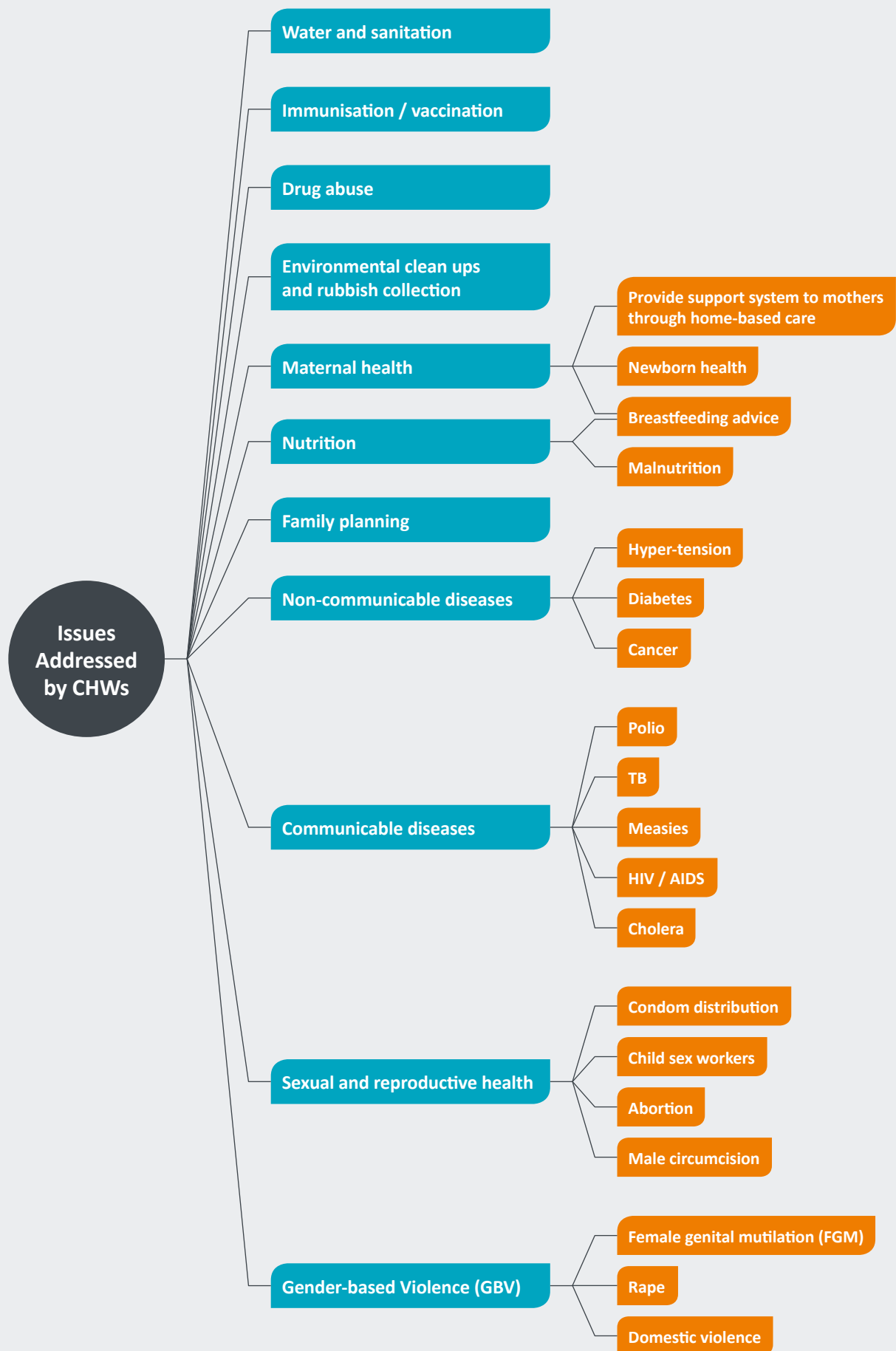
The use of CHWs as a volunteer intervention is successful because it provides basic services that are not being provided elsewhere. Furthermore, these are healthcare services that the majority of the population identify as being important; in other words the design of the intervention meets the needs of the community. In addition, the fact that CHWs are local people, known and usually trusted in the community, has enabled them to bring about more long-term change on behavioural issues and cultural beliefs that some people resisted. Maternal health is a particular area where CHWs reported fewer deaths associated with childbirth because women were increasingly changing their behaviour and attending proper health facilities to give birth. They were also gradually reducing the stigmatisation of people with HIV/AIDS, encouraging the use of official facilities for procedures such as male circumcision and promoting more healthy lifestyles by increasing awareness of non-communicable diseases such as hyper-tension, obesity and diabetes. By being trusted and building relationships with people in the community, CHWs not only provide basic healthcare services but can also contribute to tackling more deep-rooted development challenges.

Filling gaps in basic service provision is not confined to the volunteer interventions of external NGOs or government schemes such as CHWs. The research found that local CBOs have also emerged to deliver similar services. Again healthcare is a key area for action. One story collected from a local community worker described the impact of one local group:

> **"Maendeleo Afya Kwa Wote Korogocho (MAKWK) is a community based organisation whose priority objective is to improve and promote health service provision to community members in Korogocho and its environs. It is situated at the chief's camp in Korogocho. This organisation was founded by a group of organised women who came together at a time [when] there were no clinics within Korogocho. We deal with most tropical diseases, HIV and AIDS, and in partnerships with other organisations, we deal with terminal sicknesses like cardiovascular diseases. Basically we do both curative and preventative health management. However, we do many referrals for cases we are not able to handle. The organisation also supports youth through vocational training and also works closely with commercial sex workers on a range of issues touching on reproductive health. So far, at least 1000 youth have benefited from the vocational training."**

The example illustrates that indigenous volunteer efforts are having an impact in reducing poverty and improving the wellbeing of people in the community, particularly where they provide a much-needed and easily identifiable service.

Figure 6: Issues addressed by community health workers

Issues Addressed by CHWs

- Water and sanitation
- Immunisation / vaccination
- Drug abuse
- Environmental clean ups and rubbish collection
- Maternal health
  - Provide support system to mothers through home-based care
  - Newborn health
- Nutrition
  - Breastfeeding advice
  - Malnutrition
- Family planning
- Non-communicable diseases
  - Hyper-tension
  - Diabetes
  - Cancer
- Communicable diseases
  - Polio
  - TB
  - Measies
  - HIV / AIDS
  - Cholera
- Sexual and reproductive health
  - Condom distribution
  - Child sex workers
  - Abortion
  - Male circumcision
- Gender-based Violence (GBV)
  - Female genital mutilation (FGM)
  - Rape
  - Domestic violence

A number of locally orchestrated and externally supported interventions are also helping to alleviate the challenges faced by particularly vulnerable members of society. For example, Blue Cross Kenya, a faith-based NGO which is part of the International Federation of Blue Cross working to tackle drug addiction, provides a much needed service in Korogocho where alcoholism and substance abuse are particularly pertinent issues. The value of such an intervention was recorded in the views of one local resident:

> "The Blue Cross worked in Korogocho to change the addiction of drugs. This was done after a research was done showing that people in slums are so much addicted to drugs compared to the rest – those living in estates. They reformed the drunkards and the youths who were involving in risky behaviour like robbery and those who were engaging in unprotected sex at an early age. They gave basic needs like food and clothing to the addicts and taught them how to control the use of such drugs."

Some local organisations have succeeded in securing external funding to expand their volunteer interventions both within and occasionally outside of Korogocho. One such organisation is Miss Koch Kenya which began as a CBO in 2001 focusing on the emancipation and empowerment of women and girls. With the help of support from partners and donors it became an NGO in 2010 and now runs four programmes devoted to sexual and reproductive health, education and mentorship, human rights and governance, and talent and entrepreneurship, as well as a local resource centre. The organisation relies on the efforts of local volunteers to implement its programmes and has retained its base close to the community, something which many organisations transition from when they succeed in securing donor support. The value of organisations such as Miss Koch lies in the services they provide to the poorest and most marginalised. Women and girls face particular challenges in Korogocho, such as early-school dropouts, sexual health risks, a high prevalence of girls engaging in prostitution and low participation in socio-economic and political development processes. The impact of one Miss Koch intervention was remembered in the story of one local resident:

> "The Miss Koch initiative helped girls by giving them the sanitary towels. This was a good idea because most of the girls did not attend their lessons during such periods... They helped the girls and they could then attend to the lessons throughout the year unless [they were] sent home for school fees. This led to the population of girls increasing in schools."

Insecurity and crime is a major problem in Korogocho and something which external development organisations can often do little to address because responsibility ultimately rests with the state administration. However, formal groups and schemes have emerged to provide local solutions such as routes out for those involved in crime. One local resident told the following story of a group that had had particular success.

> "Here in Korogocho, it is a usual thing for very young children to get involved in crime. This can go as low as 5 years, where children are used as conduits to carry stolen goods and even firearms to recipients of such. This trend becomes worse when young boys and girls get to teenage [years]. In early stages this trend seems cool and OK until the law enforcers come calling and killing young gangsters indiscriminately. About 20 young men and women joined together to form an organisation known as Shoka Shiki. These young men and women are former drug addicts and mostly hardcore criminals. So far, the group has transformed an uncountable number of young people. They are actively involved in programmes on reproductive health, working with commercial sex workers to change; they operate a car-wash business. They also promote peaceful coexistence amongst the various ethnic groups in Korogocho. The group also offers community policing services to the community as well as garbage collection."

Key messages

Formal volunteering initiatives in Korogocho are having an impact where they fill essential gaps in service provision and address the particular needs of vulnerable members of society such as women and girls, drug addicts and those involved in crime (or at risk of becoming involved). There are also signs that volunteers are contributing to longer-term attitudinal changes that are changing the community for the better, such as in the case of CHWs. Crucially, whether the coordinating organisations are external NGOs, indigenous CBOs or the government, it is the efforts of local volunteers that implement interventions. Formal volunteering, however, is not without its challenges. The structured activities for well-known organisations mean that there is often an expectation of receiving an allowance – something that does not accompany informal volunteering activities and membership of self-help groups. As one member of the Korogocho research group reflected, "with reimbursements, formal volunteering is easily misunderstood as an alternative to employment when there are limited opportunities". The potentially negative impacts of stipends and allowances will be discussed in the next section, but it is worth noting that even with such challenges, formal volunteering interventions can and do have a significant positive impact on the wellbeing of people in Korogocho.

Informal volunteering

A major difference between formal and informal volunteering in Korogocho is that whereas the former generally uses local volunteers to deliver services to 'beneficiaries', with informal volunteering the 'beneficiaries' are just as likely to be the volunteers themselves, or alternatively people who are well known to the volunteer. Significantly, the contributions of such volunteer efforts often go unrecognised, under-acknowledged and, from what this research could find, are relatively poorly understood. Kanyinga et al (2004) estimated that 6% of the Kenyan population volunteers through formal programmes, but no attempt was made to measure the informal percentage. However, *Valuing Volunteering Kenya* has found that informal modes of volunteering through membership of self-help groups and individual efforts are pervasive and likely outweigh the better-recognised contributions of formal initiatives. As Graham et al, in their report on volunteering in Africa, state,

> **"most volunteering happens through community-based networks of support and reciprocity. This form of volunteering is often unaccounted for and unrecognised. However, it plays a very important role in building the resilience of communities."** 2013:6

The research has found that informal volunteering can indeed play a vital role in increasing community resilience to development challenges, improving the self-esteem and wellbeing of volunteers and building solidarity amongst vulnerable groups such as people living with HIV/AIDS. Here it is useful to distinguish between self-help groups and more individualised acts, conducted either on a regular basis or a more ad hoc basis.

Some self-help groups start to border on more formal types of volunteering, not surprisingly as many organisations were observed to have started as self-help groups and then progressed on to becoming registered as CBOs and, in some cases, NGOs. However, they are included here as examples of informal volunteering because many have very loose structures and see their purpose more as providing mutual support to their members than volunteering to help non-members.

The research encountered multiple examples of self-help groups in the form of 'merry-go-rounds', table banking, and SILCs, which all essentially serve the same purpose of promoting savings and collectively investing amongst their members. The following extract from a workshop with local community members highlights a typical case:

> **"The Maisha Poa group comes together every week on a Friday and every member contributes 50 Shillings [UK£0.35, US$0.60] to a common kitty. The group has 40 members and each of them gets a turn to be given money as a loan to grow their businesses and then later give back the money so that another person also benefits. The money is used to enhance the livelihoods amongst members."**

The strength of such groups comes from the shared commitment of their members. Whilst there are undoubtedly personal motivations for participating, there is also enough trust to ensure that members accept the cyclical nature of contributing and receiving payments from the group. Crucially, findings suggest that these groups emerge organically where enough trust exists between loose groups of people who are confident in the ability and honest intention of fellow members to both donate and repay. Where the groups are effective, positive impacts often include improved income from growing their businesses and increased resilience to deal with challenges such as changes in commodity prices and robberies.

Just as in the case of formal volunteering interventions, many self-help groups focus on addressing the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. In one example, a focus group discussion with members of a self-help group for women living with HIV/AIDS revealed just how important such groups can be for helping people overcome stigmatisation, dealing with the fear after being diagnosed, and increasing their confidence and self-esteem. As one participant described,

> **"When I was tested positive, I was so afraid, but when my friend here moved in to be my neighbour, she encouraged me that all would be well. She took me to Provide and I was sensitised on how to live a positive life. Now I am so happy and strong I can do anything."**

Interestingly, this group had been actively established and facilitated by Provide International with support from their volunteers (one of whom was a member of the research team). Members of the self-help group were immeasurably grateful to Provide International for its efforts but it was also clear that they felt that they owned their own group and they gained their strength and sense of solidarity from fellow members. The example highlights how formal and informal volunteering can be blended into complementary interventions that help vulnerable people and promote local ownership.

Other self-help groups were found to originate from local responses to community problems that were perceived to be going unaddressed, either by the authorities or other development organisations. A good example in Korogocho is the issue of crime and insecurity which is ranked by the community as the area's worst problem (Gathuthi et al, 2010). Here is an extract from the story of a local resident's journey from a life of crime to being a mentor for young people as a result of the assistance of a self-help group.

> **"I grew up in Korogocho and faced all the good and the bad that the informal settlement had to offer. During my teenage years, we would do all sorts of things. I got involved in criminal activities and used drugs. I almost became a drug addict. In 2004, [the] effects of drugs were too much on me. A friend invited me to join a rehab group known as Umoja Youth Group. This group was working with drug addicts and those who had left crime. I gradually changed to be a good person and I am currently engaged in a lot of community work. I have been [an] activist with Amnesty International. In 2010, together with other youth groups, we led a rebellion against some trigger-happy police officers who were killing suspected criminals at will in Korogocho. They were transferred, one was sent to jail. I also do a lot of mentorship for girls and boys with an organisation [called] Miss Koch."**

Informal self-help groups, such as the one mentioned above, play a vital role in reaching out and providing support to some of the most vulnerable and marginalised in society. Although they may not always be able to deal with some of the underlying systemic causes of problems such as poverty and crime, for the people that self-help groups involve, they can mean the difference between life and death.

The example above also highlights a potentially significant relationship between informal and formal types of volunteering. Interestingly the respondent never mentions the word volunteering – community work, being an 'activist' and mentorship are all used instead – but their journey shows a clear progression from informal to more formal volunteering as part of the programmes of well-known international and local NGOs. This suggests that appreciating and better understanding the links between informal and formal volunteering, in terms of volunteer journeys, may have useful implications for volunteer recruitment and how volunteer opportunities can be designed to make best use of particular volunteer motivations.

Informal volunteering also encompasses the unstructured activities of people helping others. These typically include personal 'acts of kindness' which can occur either on a regular basis or constitute individual acts, the latter of which is referred to by some commentators as 'micro-volunteering' (Brown et al, 2013). However, they can also include impromptu group activities. Respondents in Korogocho, for example, reported times when people would come together to deal with emergencies such as fires or inter-ethnic violence.

Many acts of informal volunteering take place within social networks with people providing 'voluntary' help or services to friends, neighbours or people they know. Cleaning the outdoor spaces shared with other neighbours is one such example. Providing voluntary assistance to complete strangers is much rarer. What this reveals is that individual informal volunteering is greatly influenced by a person's social connections and relationships. Respect and trust are intermingled into such social relationships. In many ways, informal volunteering is closely associated with ideas on 'social capital', which refers to the presence and strength of relations and networks between individuals, families, groups and communities (Puttnam, 1995; Graham et al, 2013).

Although 'social capital' is a known phenomenon, its often informal and fluid nature makes it difficult to measure. The applies to informal volunteering. As a member of the Korogocho research team reflected, "there are individuals who engage informally from personal propulsion and do not belong to any organised group", and therein lies part of the problem. Not being in a group means there are no membership numbers to gauge how many people participate and individuals are very unlikely to keep records of their activities or achievements. Conducting surveys can help but, as the research in Korogocho found, this can be complicated by the fact that many local people do not think of informal volunteering as volunteering at all. Instead it is all part of the social expectations of being a 'good' neighbour or friend.

One approach to assessing the impact of informal volunteers that was successful was recording people's personal stories of individual voluntary acts that had made a difference – either by them, for them or by others in the community. One such story is shown below, which the female respondent decided to call 'The unsung heroes':

"**Some years back, people lived together, shared victory and sorrows together. I vividly remember, while we lived here in Korogocho, neighbours were living [in] harmony, people valued family and family ties. I had an aunt who touched and changed my life and that of my family. She was of great help when my father re-married another wife and sent my mother away. She worked hard and ensured my mother got a job with Telkom Kenya as an office cleaner. This enabled my siblings to get [a] proper education. Today, people are so personalised that very less do concern themselves with the affairs of others. However, I stand to share the voice of the very few people who still do great work to support those who are [in] need. Here in Korogocho, I see several incidences of kindness where some people share the little they have to support others. And so, a story like this should not be restricted to a few organisations found within our community but should focus [on] our unsung heroes of our neighbourhood.**"

A negative side-effect of the diffuse nature of informal volunteering is that it frequently goes unrecognised and under-appreciated. However, whilst people in Korogocho are generally poor, there are still those who give what they can to help others when they are in need. As the respondent above makes clear, there are 'unsung heroes' in Korogocho making a difference to the lives of others. Such efforts should not be underestimated in terms of their impact on community resilience and their role as a basic safety net against development challenges.

As will be discussed in further detail in the section on gender, the research has found interesting gender dynamics, particularly in relation to informal volunteering. Firstly, specific women-only support and self-help groups do exist in Korogocho that build the confidence, skills and resilience of their members. The research held dedicated focus group discussions with two such groups – a support group for young mothers and another for women living with HIV/AIDS – and it was clear that the impacts upon their members were profound; helping them to overcome stigmatisation, dealing with the challenges of being a lone parent, and providing the support of a new and understanding friendship network.

Secondly, the nature of informal volunteering varies according to gender. Research participants noted that men were more likely to play lead roles in responding to emergencies such as putting out fires in the community or coming together to provide security when violence erupted. However, women in general were more likely to engage in individual forms of informal volunteering, especially around the home. As normative gender roles meant women spent more time in the immediate vicinity of their homes, they were also more likely to volunteer in that context by cleaning shared spaces and helping neighbours. Such activities were often seen as being a 'good neighbour' – one woman referred to it being part of her life as an African woman – rather than recognised acts of volunteering.

Key messages

Informal volunteering goes unaccounted for in Korogocho and other communities partly because its unstructured nature makes it difficult to measure and partly because those responsible for it do not see it as volunteering. Debates around volunteerism frequently touch upon the idea that the term 'volunteering' may not be the most suitable or relevant to capture the voluntary activities taking place. In communities such as Korogocho, volunteering through formal initiatives and organisations certainly does encounter challenges as it becomes confused with low-paid employment and 'volunteers' have high expectations of receiving a stipend or allowance. Informal volunteering, in contrast, takes place relatively under the radar and thereby avoids many of the assumptions and distorting expectations associated with formal volunteering. Whilst attempting to re-label or categorise informal volunteering may help in gauging the true extent of its contributions, it also risks formalising something that is best left ambiguous and fluid. Many formal volunteers in Korogocho are very aware of the monetary value of their time. As a result, 'branding' informal volunteering in an attempt to officially measure it risks undermining its organic nature and non-monetary motivations.

Youth volunteering and the changing nature of volunteering

The demographics of Kenya's population inevitably mean that youth volunteering receives significant attention and is widely seen by volunteering-for-development organisations and the government as a growth area. Census data from 2009 reveals that 35.4% of the population is between 15 and 34 years of age and an even bigger section of the population (42.9%) is aged under 15. As that population matures, there is immense potential for the country and communities to benefit from an increased working-age population that is capable of volunteering.

A significant challenge for youth volunteering in communities such as Korogocho is dealing with the changing nature of volunteerism and, consequently, developing forms of volunteering that appeal to the motivations of young modern Kenyans. As Graham et al state,

"volunteering [in Africa] today is a fusion of many different traditions of volunteering based on cultural and religious beliefs, charity and philanthropy, nation building in the post-independence period coupled with contemporary notions of volunteering for Africa's development, civic engagement, service and as an expression of global citizenship."
Graham et al, 2013:34

In Korogocho, the research set out to investigate the dynamics of modern interpretations of volunteering and how this may affect volunteerism in the future. A well-documented historical root of volunteerism is *harambee* which was used to encourage community development in post-independence Kenya. As Fred Sadia, volunteer coordinator of the Korogocho research group, explains:

"In Kenya for example, [volunteering] has been synonymous to the clarion call *harambee* by the founding father of the nation, the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. *Harambee* is loosely translated to mean 'pulling together'. People were urged to work together to build roads, pathways, water points, schools, hospitals, cattle dips and places of worship. This came about soon after independence in 1963. My ageing dad usually told me that even before independence, people used to come together to support one another during social ceremonies and events like marriages, the birth of a child and initiation ceremonies without expecting anything in return."

In fieldwork with community members, people were asked what *harambee* meant to them today. Interestingly it was rarely mentioned unless a specific question was asked in relation to it. Responses indicated that *harambee* was something that was more relevant to older generations and rural communities, and had lost its value amongst the youth (which applies to those aged 18–35 years in Kenya). *Harambee* had also evolved to revolve less around mobilising local people for communal development work to become more of a local fundraising tool. People said someone would call a *harambee* if they needed to raise funds for a family funeral or pay school fees.

People's relationship with *harambee* has also been tarnished by the same factors that have contributed to disillusionment with the Kenyan political process, as *harambee* has become marred by corruption and the purchasing of patronage. As Waithima states,

"From voluntary contributions, *harambee* contributions effectively became mandatory mainly enforced by the provincial administration, where public servants such as chiefs would decline rendering a service to a common citizen until they made a contribution towards a *harambee*. The *harambee* contributions were not just enforced on the citizens but they almost became a prerequisite for businessmen getting government contracts especially if the *harambee* was presided over by politicians... Without proper accountability of the funds raised in *harambees*, those charged with the responsibility of overseeing the utilisation of the funds began to misappropriate the funds and as a consequence, many Kenyans came to view *harambee* as a source of bribery and extortion."
2012:6

Across Kenya, and particularly in cities such as Nairobi, the declining relevance of *harambee* has been accompanied by the erosion of communal cultures and the growth of more individualistic and capitalist mindsets. The rapid growth of cities has helped to fuel such change as people migrate to urban centres in search of employment and wealth. Community allegiances often remain stronger to homes in rural areas, which can decrease communal feelings in urban areas.

These changing dynamics have significant implications for volunteering and particularly the relationship of the youth to volunteering. A number of respondents referred to how volunteerism had become corrupted or distorted because people increasingly only participated out of self-centred motives, something which was exacerbated by the blurred line between formal volunteering and low-paid work. One government respondent even went as far as to say that the trend represented the 'capitalisation of volunteering'. As Fred Sadia reflected, "I belong to the thinking that there is a time in Kenya when communal volunteering lost its value and a lot of individualism crept in."

Findings from Korogocho reflect these trends, with many youth not motivated to volunteer. A significant number of youth groups that do exist act as tools for gaining access to the stipends offered by external development organisations as part of formal volunteering initiatives or incentives to attend community meetings. Such motivations are predominantly individualistic and monetary in nature. They also point towards substantial financial dependency amongst the youth on external funding, donations, allowances and handouts. As one CHW observed,

> **"Here in Korogocho, there are so many job opportunities. The youths however do not think beyond the box. They could do activities like garbage collection and get a little something for themselves. However they just sit and wait for outside help".**

The view of the youth as not being motivated by communal benefits and largely dependent on external support was prevalent. As one local woman stated, "the youths are more dependent on outside help than any other person". Some genuine youth groups do exist and it is worth making the point that most members of the *Valuing Volunteering* volunteer research group fell into the official category of youth. However, it is also clear that a large segment of the youth population see little point in volunteering, particularly for benefits that will not be felt by themselves.

Key messages

Whilst Kenya has a youthful population and will continue to have for, at least, the short- to medium-term future, if they are to be engaged in volunteering, interventions need to adapt to modern-day realities and the emerging motivations for and interpretations of volunteering. There must also be a recognition that it may not be possible to go backwards. Attempts to instil the communal values of old and bring back the times when *harambee* was an effective tool for development may be admirable but may ultimately prove pointless. This is not to suggest that volunteering needs to become an exercise in personal gain, as volunteering at its heart is about helping others. However, advertising the wide variety of personal and communal benefits of volunteering may be more effective in reaching out to young people who may not have previously considered volunteering. There is also the chance that people who initially participate for less altruistic reasons come to increasingly value the positive impacts their efforts have on others.

Implications

- Formal volunteering initiatives and schemes are having a **real impact in addressing gaps in basic service provision** and reaching out to vulnerable groups such as women, drug addicts and those involved in crime. Externally supported, locally owned and government-backed interventions (such as CHWs) are all having an impact through the effective use of local volunteers. The ability of local volunteers to **build trusting relationships with the community** is also contributing to longer-term behavioural change such as in the case of attitudes towards people with HIV/AIDS, healthy lifestyles and the value of using modern healthcare facilities for medical procedures.

- Plugging gaps in basic services may require long-term investment but ultimately should not be seen as a sustainable substitute for state provision of such services. However, **volunteerism may provide critical and valuable interim support until the state is able to improve its services**. The case of a new government healthcare facility in Korogocho suggests this may be possible.

- **Informal volunteering plays a vital role** in improving community resilience and helping vulnerable groups by increasing their confidence, self-esteem, sense of solidarity and the strength of their social networks. Importantly, self-help groups are unique in that their volunteers are usually also the 'beneficiaries', as members benefit both mutually and individually. This characteristic **justifies a volunteer-centric approach** with regard to self-help groups. The success of such groups is often based upon the trust between members and the support they offer each other.

- **Interventions can combine formal and informal volunteering in a complementary fashion**. Findings suggest that formal volunteers and development organisations can facilitate the establishment and functioning of more informal support and self-help groups. A critical component of such an approach is ensuring that **members feel ownership of the groups** and gain strength and a sense of solidarity from fellow members.

- Cases of volunteer journeys in Korogocho suggest that there is a potentially significant relationship between and **progression from informal to formal volunteering**. This has implications for improving volunteer recruitment and how interventions can be designed to make the most of particular volunteer motivations.

- Individual informal volunteering is greatly influenced by **a person's social connections and relationships**. Informal 'voluntary' help and services are generally provided to friends, neighbours and people known to the volunteer. Providing voluntary assistance to complete strangers is much rarer. Consequently, informal volunteering can be seen as an expression of – or at least being closely associated with – ideas around **'social capital'**.

- Informal volunteering exhibits a number of **important gender dynamics**. Women-specific self-help groups provide much-needed support to vulnerable women by building confidence, skills and the resilience of members. **Normative gender roles also affect the nature of informal volunteering.** Men tend to respond to emergencies such as fires in the community and incidents of violence. Women's perceived role in the household leads to them volunteering more often in the immediate vicinity of the home by, for example, cleaning shared spaces and helping neighbours.

- **Informal volunteering**'s diffuse nature, along with the fact that it is often not identified as being volunteering, makes it **difficult to measure**. This leads to it **being widely under-acknowledged and unappreciated**. Whilst re-labelling or 'branding' informal volunteering may help to officially measure its contribution, it also **risks formalising and undermining its organic nature** which may lead to its being less willingly practised without financial compensation.

- **The youth represent a significant target population** in terms of promoting their engagement in volunteering initiatives. However, the nature of volunteering and people's relationship with it is forever changing, and is not the same as it has been for previous generations. Engaging Kenya's youth is likely to necessitate the design and marketing of interventions that **understand modern-day realities surrounding interpretations of volunteerism** and make appeals to the **wide variety of both personal and communal motivations** for and benefits of volunteering.

3. The motivations and wellbeing of volunteers: motivations, competition and exploitation

The motivations and wellbeing of volunteers in Korogocho covers a broad range of topics including the impact of stipends and allowances on motivations, competition for volunteer opportunities and amongst NGOs for the best volunteers, and how volunteers feel demotivated and exploited under certain conditions. The interrelationship of these factors is complex and closely linked to other sections in this report, most notably the preceding account of community perceptions, trust and receptiveness to volunteering. This makes it challenging to present the analysis in a linear fashion and so efforts will be made to demonstrate interconnections where possible. This section will be broken down into five subsections: The first three look at non-monetary volunteer motivations, monetary motivations including the impact of stipends/allowances, and the realities and balance between motivating factors. The fourth looks at the competition for and amongst volunteers and the fifth provides an analysis of volunteer exploitation and demotivating factors.

3.1. Non-monetary volunteer motivations

Community respondents noted a range of motivations for volunteering but by far the most referenced was the impact of stipends and allowances on whether someone chose to volunteer. It was clear that respondents considered there to be two camps: those volunteers who were primarily motivated by money and those who did it from a sense of wanting to help others. In multiple validation sessions it was stressed that the latter were considered to be more 'genuine' volunteers and truer to the spirit of volunteerism. As one community participant summarised,

> "for some people the motivation is money and for others it is from the heart... they volunteer differently, those from the heart always give their all..."

The implication of this is that, if all other characteristics are the same, a volunteer who undertakes an activity primarily for reasons other than monetary gain is more likely to try harder and have an increased development impact.

A variety of reasons were given for why people volunteer when money is not the primary motivating factor. Many talked of volunteering to bring about change with an emphasis on taking charge of their own and the community's development; some referred to the increased sense of wellbeing they gained from seeing their efforts make a positive impact; others spoke of feeling a religious 'calling' whilst some noted the increase in confidence and self-esteem they gained from volunteering. These issues are covered in greater detail in the following subsections. It is also worth noting that, although they were officially recognised as motivating factors, many also double as impacts of volunteering, raising interesting implications for the design of volunteering monitoring and evaluation processes.

Being active agents of change: improvements in wellbeing and empowerment

A significant number of participants stressed how volunteering made them feel more in control of local development. In other words, it enabled them to be active agents of change in bringing about change in their communities. A desire to make a difference was a strong motivating factor as the following research responses demonstrate:

> [paraphrasing Mahatma Ghandi] "if you want to do something, be the change"
> CHW

> "People volunteer to see the community well, [they] volunteer to see the change"
> Member of local CBO

> "You can do work that others will not do. Like digging a trench, you will do it out of love and compassion for the community"
> Local religious leader

> "the change you want to bring is the motivation..."
> Village elder

It is clear that for some volunteers, the act of volunteering is an impact in itself. Through volunteering locally in Korogocho some people feel a sense of empowerment that increases their sense of personal wellbeing. Although a lack of basic services and infrastructure has perpetuated a feeling of community isolation and being marginalised from official decision-making processes and resource allocation, volunteering in some cases has served to fill a local development void and reduced marginalisation on at least a localised scale. This is a significant impact and one that is, at least partly, dependent on the degree to which volunteers feel empowered and able to lead the activities they undertake. Fred Sadia, the volunteer coordinator of the Korogocho *Valuing Volunteering* research, offers some interesting reflections on this point:

> "volunteering has made crucial gains (perhaps shy of impacts) in enhancing development and reducing poverty. Community based organisations, youth groups, women's groups, philanthropists, individuals, non-governmental organisations, and government bodies in Kenya have in one way or another engaged volunteers either formally and/or informally, to address issues such as HIV, environmental conservation, economic empowerment, civic engagement, human rights and gender issues. It has taken a combination of tact and strategy to realise great gains in addressing these challenges. Of particular importance has been the embracing of participatory approaches which allows volunteering activities to be people driven."

There is thus value in the use of participatory approaches that enable volunteering to be people-driven, increasing empowerment and reducing marginalisation. There are signs that this potential of volunteering is being increasingly recognised, particularly in relation to annual development days on a range of issues. As Fred continues,

> "Commemoration of world events like the World Aids Day, World Water Day, World Environmental Day, regional events like The Day of the African Child, national events like Mashujaa Day (Heroes Day) are also no longer podium functions but have been transformed into major events where people are mobilised to voluntarily do far much more than just listening to lengthy speeches."

A relevant example is the International Volunteer Day (IVD) celebrations in 2012, when Nairobi activities were focused in Korogocho. Following speeches and demonstrations, all attendees were encouraged to take part in a local clean-up whilst also engaging community members to participate as the activity progressed through the estates. The event was undoubtedly a success in engaging volunteers and raising the profile of volunteering amongst the local community. As an aside and linking back to the perceptions of volunteering as a low-status activity, it is perhaps revealing that many of the paid staff of volunteer-involving organisations left before the clean-up took place.

Whilst volunteering can have a positive impact on a person's sense of wellbeing, wider systemic change is required to address issues such as the representativeness of national and county-wide decision-making and resource allocation. This research's engagement with national and international volunteering-for-development organisations and networks represents a small step towards highlighting the challenges faced by local volunteers in communities such as Korogocho in bringing about broader systemic change.

Witnessing impact as a motivating factor

The idea of volunteering to bring about change is directly linked to witnessing the impact and success of volunteer efforts. This is an important learning point in terms of designing volunteer initiatives because, whilst there will be those who are motivated to make a difference unconditionally, motivations are likely to be much higher when the impacts of volunteer effort are visible and recognised. As the following community views illustrate:

> "[I volunteer] to see a good outcome of what I give... I am the boss of myself so it gives me freedom."

> "when you see the result positive, it really motivates you to continue. There is a local [volunteer] nurse and some local people have named their children after her. It really motivates them."

> "[The] change that is coming slowly is motivating people to volunteer."

> "if every time people volunteer there is change, that keeps people coming..."

Participants expressed a great deal of pride when talking of volunteering activities that had made a real difference to the community. Indeed, parents naming their children after local health workers is an excellent example of how volunteering on a personal level is valued and motivates volunteers. A couple of cases were also noted where groups seen to be gaining the respect of the community through their volunteering efforts inspired others to do the same. Community respect can therefore be seen as another motivating factor.

The role of religion and passion in motivating volunteers

Religion plays an important role in Kenyan society and Korogocho is no different, with its impact reflected in the motivations of many volunteers. Reference was often made to having a 'calling' or volunteering being something that 'comes from within' as the comments below demonstrate:

> "some have a 'call' from God"
> Member of local CBO

> "volunteering is more of a 'calling' than a job"
> Member of local self-help group

> "volunteering is out of love, like a calling, you accept salvation and then you give of yourself without expecting too much"
> Local religious leader

> "God will judge for you after you have volunteered"
> Local religious leader

> "it is not even a low paid work, it is paid by God. You will receive something later"
> 'Beneficiary' of volunteer programme

> "it is the spirit inside... volunteering is 'inbuilt'..."
> Village elder

It is perhaps not surprising that some of these views were expressed by local religious leaders but it is noteworthy that similar views were expressed during nearly all the workshops with other stakeholders. Incorporating elements of religious motivations and a personal desire to bring about change, many community respondents stressed the importance of passion as a motivating factor. Indeed, sometimes this was mentioned alongside having a 'calling' and in some circumstances it was unclear whether this was meant to indicate a religious 'calling' or merely the use of religious terminology to describe an individual's passion to make a positive difference. Nevertheless, whether overtly or inadvertently connected with religious motivations, responses indicate that a personal passion is a key factor in why people volunteer:

> "it should be something you have a passion to do. If you do not have that passion then it becomes hard... a volunteer works from his heart rather than his head"
> Member of local CBO

> "you can't volunteer if you are not passionate about it..."
> CHW

In terms of the added value that volunteering may contribute in comparison to paid staff or consultants, community respondents made specific reference to this passion combined with local knowledge. In one workshop the issue was specifically addressed with the observation that volunteering created a sense of 'proactiveness' with the passion of volunteers meaning they would do a 'better job than paid consultants'.

Personal and professional development

Less mentioned but still significant motivations were the opportunities for personal development and learning. One volunteer noted how she had volunteered for over 20 years, working with international NGOs as they came into Korogocho to train CHWs, and had learnt a great many things from this experience which had kept her motivated. Another woman described the impact volunteering had had on her personal development, stating, "when I started volunteering I couldn't talk, now I have the confidence to talk to many". Interestingly, personal development and learning were often not mentioned as the original motivating factors for volunteering but as unexpected side-effects of participating that then further reinforced a volunteer's commitment and motivations.

The complex influence of gender stereotypes

Although the subject of its own section of analysis, it is worth noting and making the connection to the issue of gender in the motivations of volunteers. Many workshops, particularly those with CHWs, commented on the gendered dimension of the varying volunteer roles taken on by men and women. Often the perceptions and social norms of the roles of men and women had become internalised to the point where both men and women appeared to be motivated to volunteer in line with the social expectations of their role in local society. For example, over 95% of the CHWs engaged during the research were women, and both male and female participants emphasised how women were more compassionate, which motivated them to volunteer in more caring and health-orientated roles. Some female CHWs also said how their experience as mothers had given them a sense of perspective and motivation to help others. Women were also frequently noted as being more passionate and less likely to be purely motivated by money. Interestingly, this was a point that was particularly picked up on by male research participants. As one of the few male CHW respondents stated, "a man will not volunteer with all their heart". Indeed, even local advice in establishing the *Valuing Volunteering* research group stressed the need to involve women as they were more likely to genuinely commit to a voluntary activity.

An argument can be made as to whether the prevalence in certain roles of by a particular gender is the result of volunteer motivations or social norms and expectations. What is clear, however, is that the two have become intertwined to the point that local volunteers do not distinguish between them. The implications for volunteering interventions are twofold. Firstly, in the design and implementation of any volunteer activity, it is important to note that the type of activity may attract more volunteers of one gender than another. Secondly, any attempt to remodel gender roles through volunteering will need to actively engage with the social norms and expectations that create normative categorisations of the roles of men and women.

A sense of solidarity in informal networks

Linking to the previous sections, mutual aid and self-help groups can succeed in building a sense of solidarity that acts to bind people together into supportive structures and can strengthen social capital (Graham et al, 2013). The support offered by self-help groups can act as a strong motivating and sustaining factor in voluntary activity particularly for more vulnerable and marginalised groups. As one member of a people living with HIV/AIDS support group stated, "we always stick together as a team... this group has been the best thing about my life, the group has really helped me from the very first time".

Key messages

The findings suggest that motivations, when money is not the primary factor, have a close association with personal and community wellbeing. It is also revealing that many motivations are, in fact, impacts of volunteering. A chief motivation for many volunteers is a sense of taking charge of their own development and being the change they want to see – a motivation that is enhanced when volunteers succeed in making a visible and recognised difference. This is a significant development outcome in its own right and something which is often not well documented in monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Volunteering can provide a sense of spiritual fulfilment and can allow participants the opportunity to undertake something they are passionate about. For some, personal learning and development are powerful unexpected outcomes that further motivate and sustain volunteering activities. Bridging both formal and informal forms of volunteering, self-help and mutual aid groups often provide a sense of solidarity to their members as well as increasing self-esteem and resilience to deal with local challenges. These groups can have a substantial impact particularly, as discussed in the previous section, when they escape being associated with the distorting factor of volunteer allowances.

3.2. Monetary volunteer motivations: the impact of stipends and allowances

The offering of stipends and allowances for volunteers acts as a serious motivating factor for many people in Korogocho. As was stressed in Section 1 on community perceptions, in an environment of extreme poverty, high unemployment and weak distinctions between legal/illegal forms of income, the money offered through volunteering is often viewed simply as a survival mechanism. In an interview with a government representative this was referred to as the 'capitalisation of volunteering' as people increasingly see volunteering in terms of what they can personally gain. The issue has created tensions amongst volunteers, with those who are less motivated by allowances particularly feeling that it is it is undermining the true spirit of volunteerism.

Nevertheless, the issue of stipends/allowances has had a significant impact on the motivations of volunteers in Korogocho. The issue also interconnects strongly with community dependency, which will be analysed in a subsequent section, as people are more likely to seek allowances from 'outside' organisations working in Korogocho such as international NGOs. As one CHW observed,

> **"today if young people sit down to think and do a project, they will not. But if an NGO says it will be in Koch on Friday, then the area will be full of young people".**

In terms of volunteer impact, allowances can be seen as both necessary to attract volunteers but also potentially detrimental if participating volunteers are only interested in monetary gain rather than making a difference in their community.

For indigenous CBOs and external NGOs this dynamic presents a real challenge. Evidence from workshops suggests three interrelated issues. Firstly, in order to undertake an activity or get people to a meeting, it has to be known that something is being offered. As one participant observed, "when it is done for free, no one comes, but when people know there is something at the end of the day, then they come". The reality, therefore, is that if an NGO wants to achieve impacts, they have to provide an allowance to get people involved. Often the prospect of low attendance at project workshops is too much of a risk to warrant not offering an allowance, although it should be said that some NGOs do adopt a strict no-stipend approach (although these organisations were not encountered in Korogocho). A problem with making allowances available is that it immediately moves activities into the grey area between paid employment and volunteering. As the following respondent states, the "difference comes when an NGO comes and they already announce that they will pay at the end. So people go as if to work".

For local CBOs with few resources, the prospect of offering allowances is often out of the question, which leads to them struggling to attract volunteers. For external NGOs and CBOs, the allowance or stipend has to form part of their communications and mobilisation strategy ahead of running activities in order to counter the risk of not achieving an adequate attendance. The problem is that this can lead to people attending purely to receive an allowance rather than to genuinely participate. This phenomenon was experienced first-hand when attending a community meeting as part of the US Agency for International Development (USAID)'s 'Yes Youth Can' initiative to set up local 'youth *bunges*' (youth parliaments) in localities across Nairobi and Kenya. Attendance at the session doubled to over 80 attendees over the course of the meeting as word spread within the community that a USAID-funded event was taking place. Discussion and participation was limited to a small number of attendees, with the majority waiting for the close when it was announced that an allowance would be paid. However, due to the large numbers, only one member from each local organisation was permitted to claim. The practice of attending meetings and events for the allowances has almost become an informal industry in Korogocho and is most often undertaken by what workshop attendees termed 'the youth'.

Secondly, the bigger the name of the NGO or organisation, the higher the expectations are of receiving an allowance or stipend. As one respondent stated, "some people will volunteer with a name [a recognised NGO] because they think something will come after that". The USAID example mentioned in the previous paragraph attracted so many attendees because USAID are perceived as being well resourced. Korogocho over recent years has also been the recipient of multi-million-dollar aid projects under the Korogocho Slum Upgrading Programme (KSUP), a joint initiative between the Kenyan government and development partners such as UN Habitat with funding support through a debt for development swap by the Government of Italy (with support provided through the Italian Development Cooperation). The large budget associated with this initiative has created similar interest in the possibility of associated volunteer allowances and stipends amongst the community. For many it is the perception of 'outside' organisations having money that is a driving factor. As one member of a local self-help group summarised, "whenever there is any sign of an outside organisation coming then they [volunteers] will expect people are getting paid". For well-established and well-known NGOs and organisations, the volunteers' motivation and expectation of an allowance are a financial challenge to undertaking volunteer initiatives.

Thirdly, the varying allowances and stipends have created a hierarchy of organisations, with large well-known NGOs and agencies at the top and small CBOs at the bottom. This, in turn, has led to substantial competition for the most lucrative volunteering opportunities, something that will be analysed in more detail in the subsequent section. A village elder provided an insightful example of the impact of this hierarchy: "Concern [Worldwide] has been working around here. If they call a meeting, it will be packed whereas if APHRC [African Population and Health Research Centre] do the same, the attendance will be low because they pay less". Nationally some organisations have attempted to counter this issue by either capping allowances or adopting a stricter no-allowance approach, even despite the risk of resultant low attendance rates. CHWs in Korogocho, for example, have had their monthly allowance provisionally capped at Ksh2,000 as a result of the local implementation of the government's Community Health Strategy. Unfortunately, it has also been a contributing factor to the high dropout rate of CHWs in Korogocho, with numerous respondents highlighting how being a CHW did not provide an adequate source of livelihood to sustain themselves and their families.

A major challenge is presented by the inconsistency of NGO approaches which leads to wildly varying levels of allowance being offered. An organisation acting in isolation to either cap or remove stipends completely will struggle to attract participants as volunteers shift to those that are still offering more significant sums of money. To bring about systemic change on the issue therefore will most likely require concerted efforts across NGOs working in Korogocho in order to standardise allowances and working procedures. Such collaboration may also help in promoting the dissemination of accurate information in the community, thereby improving transparency, reducing local suspicions of corruption and better managing volunteer expectations.

Standardising, or at least adopting clearer positions on, allowances is likely to be vital in restoring community confidence in development organisations as there are indications that differing allowances/ stipends are potentially damaging to all NGOs. In one workshop it was noted how varying payments create distrust of development organisations. As one participant outlined, "some NGOs will come and pay 1000 [Shillings], so if another comes and pays 500, they know the standard is 1000 so they think they [the NGO] are keeping 500". The assumption of corruption and fraudulent activities is pervasive in Korogocho after decades of misspent funds and perceived unfulfilled political promises. Indeed, this perception of domestic corruption is partly why international NGOs and agencies are often ranked higher in the hierarchy of development organisations. As one workshop participant illustrated,

> "if two locals call for a project and then two *mzungus* [white people] call for a project then people will run to the *mzungus* because when they say they will do or give something they will... but Kenyans will say and not do, even their elected leaders..."
> Local community member

In light of the local context, volunteers are perhaps justified in questioning the allocation of volunteer allowances. Undoubtedly there have been and will continue to be cases of organisations misappropriating volunteer allowances, and this is not necessarily confined to indigenous organisations, though the systems that international NGOs have in place mean it is more likely to occur 'under the radar' at the implementation level and not be known about further up the organisation. However, the larger issue is that varying allowances and stipends, resulting predominantly from the differing budgets rather than corruption, are not only creating undue competition for particular volunteer opportunities but also fuelling suspicion of development organisations themselves. The paradox is that organisations that choose to offer smaller allowances so as to avoid creating confusion with paid work and attract less monetarily motivated volunteers end up being viewed more suspiciously.

One finding to emerge from the systemic mapping exercise was that the culture of offering large allowances emanated from the short-termism and desire for quick results of external NGOs. In an unexpected revelation, community respondents noted how some NGOs – driven by inflexible and overly ambitious timescales and anxious not to work in the community for too long because of security concerns – would come to Korogocho, quickly recruit volunteers by offering substantial allowances, undertake an intervention in the shortest time possible and then leave. However, such projects were largely seen in a negative light and often failed shortly after completion. Two key reasons were perceived to be the cause of this. Firstly, the volunteers recruited quickly through offering large allowances were not the most committed volunteers and were less likely to do a good job. Secondly, the organisations did not take the time to engage with the community to find out what, where and why interventions were needed. Instead, NGOs would come with fixed projects that they would implement almost independently using volunteers that were less motivated to see them make a positive impact. The result was that many projects failed due to poor design and implementation as well as a lack of community ownership.

Key messages

The implications for volunteering's impact on poverty are significant. Firstly, evidence suggests that effectiveness is at least partly dependent on working with the right kind of volunteers – ones for whom monetary gain is not the primary motivating factor and who have a genuine passion to make a difference in their communities. Secondly, external volunteering-for-development organisations need to take a longer-term approach and avoid the pitfalls of short-termism and a quick-results culture. Importantly this involves taking the time to both engage with the community to understand its needs and dynamics, and build relationships with those volunteers who are committed to local development. This is not a quick process and requires persistence and patience. The *Valuing Volunteering* research, for example, took over six months of relationship building and community engagement before it was in a place to work with a suitable group of local researchers in the community. For some development organisations, such timescales may seem excessive and impractical within budget cycles and project objectives. However, this research has found, time and again, that volunteering has a greater impact on poverty when the time is taken to build relationships and work with the right volunteers in a way that actively engages and listens to communities.

3.3. The realities and balance between motivating factors

Within a number of research workshops, particularly the ones with local CBOs and self-help groups, there were evident tensions between those who considered themselves to be more genuine volunteers and those who were more interested in receiving an allowance. The research workshops did pay a stipend, clearly communicated as covering transport and small refreshment costs, but unlike many meetings organised by international NGOs, participants were not told in advance that reimbursement was being offered. It is possible, however, that some attendees still took part on the off-chance that something would be offered.

The perception of a distinction between monetarily and non-monetarily motivated volunteers was highlighted in a number of discussions, with the following quotes being typical:

> "people volunteer to see a [personal] benefit but then others volunteer to see change. Those that volunteer for benefit are not really volunteers"
> Member of well-established local CBO

> "those that do it for money, you can see them in a very large crowd…"
> CHW

In one workshop, one participant even went as far as to accuse other attendees of being there purely in the hope of receiving an allowance/stipend. As the attendee from a well-established local CBO stated,

> "Here in Korogocho, a good number of people will always gather in meetings like this with mixed intentions, with the leading being only any possible allowance to be given at the end of the day and not the very valuable objectives of such meetings."

The observation was both revealing and accurate. In some focus group discussions, even after making allowances for different levels of confidence in communicating, it was often clear who was there to genuinely participate and who was there purely for the allowance or 'sitting fee'.

Whilst the success of volunteering activities in Korogocho is influenced by whether the right volunteers with the right motivations are engaged with, care should also be taken not to create a false dichotomy between monetarily and non-monetarily motivated volunteers. As was argued in the preceding section on community perceptions and receptiveness to volunteering, greater consideration needs to be given to local dynamics and the context of volunteering in communities. The reality of such local circumstances in Korogocho is that practical necessity often dictates that volunteers experience multiple motivations at different points in their volunteer journey – the example of the unexpected benefit of personal development as an ongoing motivation being an example. Indeed for many of the most genuine volunteers, doing so without some form of compensation or acknowledgement would leave them financially worse-off than if they had not volunteered. As such, binary distinctions are not necessarily adequate to summarise the real-life balance of push and pull factors that may motivate or dissuade someone from volunteering.

Judging certain motivations as 'good' and others as 'bad' fails to grasp the complex realities of life in Korogocho. In many cases, volunteers who would label themselves in the non-monetarily motivated category spoke of the need for volunteers to receive something to cover basic costs and expenses, as the following comments illustrate:

> **"a volunteer is someone who gives service, who does not expect a salary, but receives an allowance which allows them to meet their basic needs"**
> Local religious leader

> **"motivating volunteers [through allowances] will keep the spirit of volunteerism rising..."**
> Member of local CBO

For many in Korogocho who do not have employment (or employment that pays them enough to meet their basic needs), volunteering without recompense is an activity they cannot afford to undertake. For people working hard to support themselves and their families, a lack of time also becomes a key factor preventing them from volunteering. One workshop highlighted how there were many Korogocho women who left early in the morning to do laundry in the Eastleigh neighbourhood of Nairobi and returned very late, leaving them no time to volunteer even though they would like to. As one participant stated, "those that are employed will rarely volunteer because of time". Gender dynamics with regard to the social expectations of the roles of men and women in the family household also play a role, with volunteers expressing fear of recriminations if they volunteer without providing for the family. One member of a self-help group commented that "you can volunteer but you can't forget yourself", whilst a CHW reflected that "even when you want to volunteer completely but you know there is nothing at home, then you are unsettled and feel guilty".

The realities of life in Korogocho mean that it is more appropriate to view volunteer motivations on a scale or spectrum rather than through the dichotomy of being monetarily or non-monetarily motivated. Figure 7 conceptualises this approach.
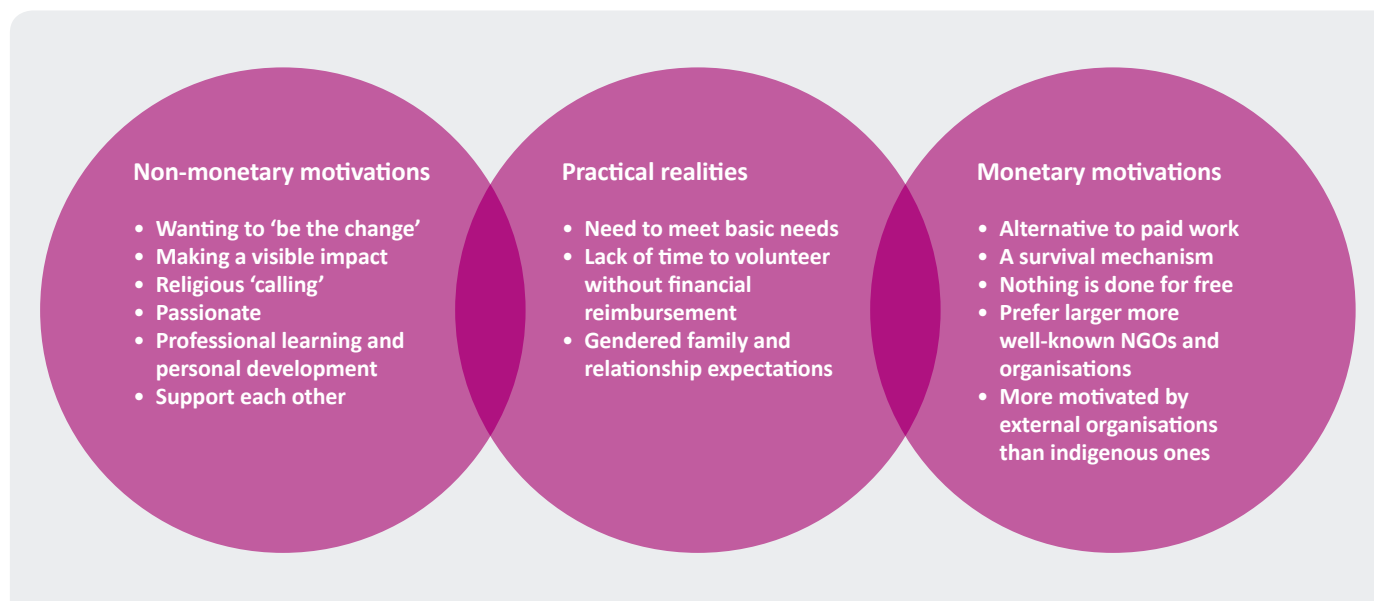
Whilst it may be tempting to view volunteers who are not motivated by money as more 'genuine', and volunteer organisations may consider not paying allowances to attract such volunteers, the reality for many is that volunteering activity is not a viable option without some form of reimbursement. For those without work this equates to having to meet their basic needs, and for those with employment there is the opportunity cost of what they could be earning whilst volunteering.

Key messages

These are the complexities that need to be considered by any organisation working with volunteers in Korogocho. To increase the effectiveness of volunteering, groups and organisations need to devise tactics and strategies for working with volunteers in Korogocho that attract those with the right motivations but are also sensitive to the realities of life in a community where levels of affluence are low. This is not as straightforward as simply not offering a stipend or allowance, but there are approaches which can help. Organisations working with CHWs, for example, will often offer opportunities that have an associated allowance to those that have first been volunteering for free at local health facilities; the rationale being that if the CHWs are first willing to volunteer for nothing then they will continue to be committed when a small stipend is provided. The approach is a sensible one although the fact that people first need to volunteer without any compensation may exclude poorer volunteers who cannot afford to potentially put themselves in greater financial hardship whilst waiting for opportunities with associated allowances.

To echo a previous finding, there is no real substitute for taking the time to build up an understanding of and relationships within the community. Over time, organisations can find out which volunteers are reliable and committed and which are either untrustworthy or motivated more by personal gain than community benefit. The research has found that volunteering is much more likely to have a positive impact on poverty when such an approach is adopted.

Figure 7: A scale of volunteering motivations in Korogocho

Non-monetary motivations
- Wanting to 'be the change'
- Making a visible impact
- Religious 'calling'
- Passionate
- Professional learning and personal development
- Support each other

Practical realities
- Need to meet basic needs
- Lack of time to volunteer without financial reimbursement
- Gendered family and relationship expectations

Monetary motivations
- Alternative to paid work
- A survival mechanism
- Nothing is done for free
- Prefer larger more well-known NGOs and organisations
- More motivated by external organisations than indigenous ones

3.4. Competition between and for volunteers

The combination of attractive allowances and stipends offered predominantly by external NGOs, along with Korogocho's high rate of employment and poorly resourced indigenous CBOs, has created a hierarchy of volunteer opportunities. This in turn has led to substantial competition for what are perceived to be the most lucrative positions – usually those with larger well-known and better-resourced international NGOs and organisations. The issue of competition arose in nearly all the research validation workshops, with the following opinions being typical:

> **"competition is stiffer where there is some pay expected rather than if it is for nothing"**
> Member of local CBO

> **"when there is hope in the possibility of some gain then there is competition for opportunities... when there is nothing there is little competition"**
> Korogocho village elder

> **"people are really competing towards the organisations"**
> CHW

> **"there is a lot of competition because of hope there will be something..."**
> Member of local CBO and radio station

This 'hope' of gaining something is a driving force behind competition for volunteer opportunities. A number of respondents mentioned that this attitude had partly originated from the work of early organisations that had come to Korogocho to undertake development projects such as building latrines. In return for giving up land, the landowners would often be given ownership of the facilities constructed by development organisations after they left. In so doing the facilities ended up in private rather than communal ownership and provided the owners with a way of making money from them, such as charging people to use latrines.

A workshop with local religious leaders revealed that competition also affects faith-based volunteering. As one participant stated, "we are now competing in a crowd". Sentiments were expressed that indigenous locally based religious institutions, particularly churches, were losing out to branches of larger national and international institutions that were increasingly establishing centres in or near to Korogocho. The resources of the incoming larger religious institutions, which also tend to engage in local development projects, acted to pull potential volunteers towards them and away from smaller local places of worship. As one local religious leader stated, "if one church pays a bigger allowance than another, then the people will go to that one".

The competition for lucrative volunteering opportunities has led to people utilising a number of tactics to acquire and retain them. Firstly, findings revealed that to gain a sought-after placement, volunteers first had to gain the attention of the funding organisation or NGO. This was particularly the case with CHWs, who would volunteer for free (without reimbursement) in the Korogocho health facility as a sign of their commitment. This would then put them first in line for paid opportunities when they came available. In such circumstances,

demonstrating one's dedication by first volunteering without an allowance was seen as an accepted method for screening potential volunteers. However, other more unscrupulous cases were also reported where a member of the community would mobilise local volunteers purely as a means of gaining the attention of external NGOs and would then either disappear or desert their initial cause once they either acquired a paid volunteer position or received funding. Such operations were often referred to as 'briefcase NGOs'. Over the course of the research, multiple cases were found where an individual or small group had created multiple CBOs that existed purely on paper and acted as conduits for speculative funding applications to national and international organisations and institutions. If successful, applications would either not be implemented or undertaken on such a tokenistic scale as to ensure the funding remained predominantly in the pockets of the applicants.

Secondly, focus group participants reported how, once a volunteer had secured a desirable opportunity, they would go to great lengths to establish their ownership of it and prevent the hiring of additional volunteers. As one CHW explained, "it happens that if it is PVs [pharmacovigilance referring to the monitoring, researching and evaluating of the adverse effects of medicines], the first CHWs you engage with, they want it to belong to them. They don't want you to hire more". This attitude is partly fuelled by the expansion and contraction of projects in Korogocho. Respondents noted a number of examples where a project had started in a pilot phase, then expanded to implement more widely and later contracted as either budgets ran low or the project came to its conclusion. As a result, volunteers will attempt to cement their position as central to the project in order to avoid being 'hired and fired' – a phrase that was used repeatedly in workshops. In terms of volunteering effectiveness, this reveals the unexpected systemic effect of short-term interventions as volunteers seek to protect themselves against being 'hired and fired'. Adopting longer-term sustainable activities where volunteers are less fearful of losing their positions is likely to help in addressing such protectionism.

Thirdly, where additional lucrative volunteer opportunities become available, some volunteers will try to either restrict them or direct them towards their own social networks – often friends, family or members of their tribe. As one CHW highlighted, "there is a problem with mobilisation: when there is an incentive, people mobilise for friends and family". It is a natural instinct to try to concentrate benefits amongst family members when opportunities are scarce. However, there are serious negative side-effects for development organisations working through volunteers when it comes to implementation. The research found multiple cases of volunteers getting their friends and family into pre-implementation training sessions who subsequently refrained from undertaking the project. One respondent explained how "many go for training but when it comes to doing the groundwork, many drop out – they only attended for the seating allowance at the training". One example was mentioned where the training NGO failed to notice that three attendees were from the same household. This also has a negative effect on the volunteers that remain as they often find themselves having to cover the work of those who have dropped out. This was a particular issue for CHWs in some villages who found that, due to such practices, they had to provide services to a far larger number of households than they were initially allocated.

Some research respondents emphasised how some NGOs created an unequal playing field in terms of competition. One pertinent example was the issue of tribal identity and a perception that certain organisations favoured particular tribes. As one participant stated,

> "some organisations have favouritism and tribalism. So it's only people from that ethnic group who compete for those opportunities. Like in the case with [an international NGO working in Korogocho] who in most cases only recruit CHWs who are [a specific tribe]".

In an interview with a member of a local CBO, who happened to belong to a different tribe from the majority of the organisation's members, they confided that they felt marginalised and explained how the CBO made a conscious effort to only help people from the dominant tribe. Ethnic identity and tribalism is an immensely sensitive issue in Korogocho and Kenya, with levels of complexity embedded in local cultures and practices that make it hard for 'outsiders' to quickly understand. As an international volunteer, the lead researcher was acutely aware that tribalism was an ever-present issue and, although it was revealed in some research sessions, there was always a sense that the issue ran much deeper than people were willing to openly talk about. Instead clues and coded references would often hint at its significance. For example, to overcome tribal discrimination some people decided to not to use their traditional surnames as it indicated their ethnic identity.

The complexities surrounding tribal affiliation were a challenge to uncover even with nearly two years of in-depth fieldwork. For volunteering-for-development organisations looking to work in communities in Korogocho, a remarkable degree of sensitivity and maturity needs to be shown to such issues and acknowledgement given to the fact that there may be dynamics at play that are largely unknown and will take considerable time to understand. Consequently, external organisations need to exercise care in choosing local partners with which to work and when recruiting local volunteers. Poor selection processes may inadvertently align external organisations with particular tribes, thereby further enhancing ethnic segregation rather than tackling it. Again, taking the time to build relationships with trusted volunteers in the community can be an effective method for ensuring volunteering has an impact in promoting equality and community cohesion.

Systems mapping revealed that competition for volunteers is both a cause and effect of issues associated with stipends and allowances. External NGOs working with local volunteers are often caught in a catch-22 situation whereby they need to make allowances available to attract interest but consequently, those volunteers coming forward and competing most vigorously for those opportunities are likely to be more motivated by personal financial gain than community development. As workshop respondents noted, volunteers motivated purely by money do not bring the same passion and dedication to volunteering as those with more mixed motivations. Volunteer organisations are thus caught between wanting to attract volunteers and also trying to find the best ones in amongst those who are more interested in the allowance. One approach, already highlighted with regard to CHWs, is to recruit people who have already been volunteering for free, which usually but not always is an indication that monetary gain is not their only motivating factor.

However, another common approach is to simply sift through large numbers of volunteers using a 'hire and fire' approach, structured around short-term projects and contracts, until an organisation feels it has found the best volunteers. Such an approach makes sense for volunteer-for-development organisations seeking to maximise the impact of their individual interventions but the side-effects are an increase in competition between volunteers, between organisations for the best volunteers and a protectiveness of volunteers once they have acquired positions. Furthermore, once organisations have found suitable volunteers they tend to virtually 'own' them, even in cases such as CHWs where they are technically a community resource and not meant to be limited to working with one particular organisation. As workshop respondents noted, some organisations will only work with the 'five best CHWs', and a number of high-profile international NGOs were referred to as all 'owning' CHWs. Such competition is a complex issue to address well enough to gradually ensure the best and most committed volunteers end up working on local development projects. However, there are also negative side-effects that need to be better managed such as ensuring every new development intervention does not have to go through a lengthy process of 'hiring and firing' volunteers and tackling the practice of volunteers only directing new opportunities to friends and family, which in turn decreases the inclusiveness of volunteering. There is also the fundamental issue that some excellent volunteers will simply not be competitive in nature and so will likely not cross the radar of development organisations using such 'hire and fire' approaches.

An interesting approach is provided by those interventions that offer training opportunities rather than financial payments as incentives to volunteer. There is still the risk that people only motivated by the prospect of gaining skills to further their own careers will be attracted to such opportunities, but the increased investment of personal time required in attending training is likely to be a disincentive to those who would have purely sought financial gain. A good example was provided by CHWs in Korogocho. Two separate programmes run by different organisations offered varying levels of stipend. However, the programme offering the lower amount was favoured by some CHWs because it entailed significant professional training. CHWs also observed that, with a cap placed on their maximum monthly allowance, volunteering hours, conditions and support became crucial factors in determining where they chose to volunteer. Case study 1 provides additional detail on this particular example. Other volunteers referred to cases where they felt exploited because they were asked to do more than their limited allowance provided for. As a result they were more careful in only volunteering with organisations that offered suitable terms and conditions.

Key messages

A key learning point for volunteering-for-development organisations is that financial incentives are not the only way to attract committed volunteers. In fact other approaches such as offering training opportunities and good working conditions may be more effective in attracting the right kinds of volunteer who are more motivated by a desire to make a difference than personal gain.

CASE STUDY 1:
Competition for Community Health Worker opportunities in Korogocho

Repeatedly during research workshops reference was made to two externally funded projects implemented by the African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC) using local CHWs. The first project was called SCALE UP and had the aim of reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD), such as diabetes and obesity, through treatment and encouraging a shift to healthier lifestyles. Although it officially started in 2011, it was essentially a continuation of previous work dating back to 2007/8. CHWs were responsible for screening adults over 35 years of age, conducting CVD risk assessments and referring those at moderate and high risk for treatment.

The second project, called PAMANECH, began on a three-year timescale in July 2012 and focused on maternal, newborn and child health. The intervention aims to strengthen the capacity of private and not-for-profit health facilities by providing training opportunities and supervision in order to improve the quality of healthcare provided to mothers, newborns and young children. CHWs are engaged to identify and refer mothers and children in need of healthcare.

Both projects were observed to have had a significant impact on the health of people in Korogocho. As one participant stated, "volunteers have had a big impact in areas like this". With regard to SCALE UP, one volunteer coordinator emphasised how "immediately after the CHWs did some measurements on people, such as blood pressure, cholesterol, they then knew what was going on with their health and could make changes; their lives have really improved all through the actions of volunteers". CHWs were thus clearly engaged in a way that made a real impact on the lives of people in the community.

However, SCALE UP and PAMANECH were also frequently mentioned in the context of confusion and frustrations resulting from varying allowances. SCALE UP, which came first, deliberately capped its monthly allowance at Ksh2,000, which is the amount the government – through its Community Health Strategy – recommends NGOs should compensate CHWs for their efforts (Lopez et al, 2013:12). In contrast, PAMANECH paid less attention to the cap and offered a standing payment of Ksh3,000 per month with additional opportunities and incentives that could increase the payment further.

CHWs participated in one or both of the programmes and it was clear from comments that the varying allowances had created significant competition, frustration and tension between volunteers. The capped allowance offered by SCALE UP was not perceived to be enough to compensate CHWs for their efforts. However, this was at least partly alleviated by the feeling that SCALE UP did offer good opportunities for training and professional development. Interestingly the value accorded to such opportunities varied amongst participants, reflecting the differing motivations of CHWs.

Both projects had clear aims and strategies for implementation using CHWs as an established platform for volunteering. As such it should be noted that they have had a significant impact. However, the variations in allowances, which may not have been noticed or considered important by funding or implementing partners, do have very real consequences for those front-line volunteers who seek to be suitably compensated for their efforts and will be very aware of inconsistencies.

3.5. Volunteer exploitation and wellbeing

The impact of volunteering and the wellbeing of volunteers can be seen to be severely reduced by a number of factors which are discussed below under six main themes.

Community suspicion and a lack of trust

A major demotivating factor for volunteers is mistrust and suspicion from the community. One CHW described a situation where, on World AIDS Day, the government and NGOs came to Korogocho to provide food to support groups but the recipients felt that CHWs had already helped themselves and were only handing out what was left. As she states,

> "During World AIDS Day, there was food aid given by different organisations for the HIV+ groups. When the food was being distributed by the CHWs, people rained accusations on us claiming that we already stashed food in our homes and so we were only distributing the surplus, when in reality that was not true."

Village elders referred to a similar situation in distributing government food aid: the community were suspicious because the amount being handed out had declined but the reality was that the government had reduced the amount it provided over the years.

Community suspicion, which occasionally results in abuse and accusations, emerged in the majority of workshops as a factor that made volunteers question whether they wanted to keep volunteering. The following comments are symptomatic of views:

> "when people look down on you as a volunteer, it puts you off"

> "you are trying to help but the people say you are the one benefiting from them".

In extreme situations volunteers are referred to as 'betrayers' when they are perceived as either benefiting from their volunteer position or going against vested community interests, the latter of which is most prevalent in roles that involve substantial interaction with state authorities such as in the case of village elders. This is exacerbated by the fact that many Korogocho residents make a living from either the informal economy or illegal activities.

During a focus group with village elders they highlighted how "parents of robbers want to accuse the elders of bringing the police onto their sons" and are labelled as 'betrayers' for helping the victims of robberies. Their cause is not helped when the police tell the offenders that it was the elder that informed them. As one elder stated, "the most hated people are village elders... we are being viewed as corrupt people". Another added that it "feels like there will be no day when people will trust elders". Such perceptions of elders are not helped by historical abuses of power and resources by local leaders and people in political positions.

A lack of adequate compensation: being 'out-of-pocket'

Linked to the section on the realities of volunteering in Korogocho, a lack of stipends/allowances to support basic needs and functioning is a significant obstacle to sustaining volunteer efforts. A CHW provided an example where they "had a very active CHW in High Ridge [but] the work of a CHW was not bringing him anything so he had to leave". CHWs referred to many people leaving their posts because the cap on monthly allowances – set locally in response to the government's Community Health Strategy – did not provide enough for volunteers to support themselves. As one respondent stated, the "government is poorly understanding this volunteering".

In another example, a CHW participant outlined the challenge of balancing volunteer responsibilities with supporting themselves and their family:

> **"On 1 December 2013 during World AIDS Days celebrations, together with some CHWs we went out distributing foodstuffs to our clients who were bedridden. This activity took a whole day. In the end of it all, we were not given a single packet of maize meal flour. We went back to our houses without anything and went to borrow from a nearby grocer shop. He literally denied me, asking how come I was distributing maize meal flour and has none in my home. This set me back."**

For many, the prospect of being out of pocket by volunteering is too much of a disincentive to participate. As a member of a local CBO summarised, "when somebody mobilises you and you cover your own transport and food, it puts you off".

Security risks

Security risks were a deterrent to volunteering that a number of participants highlighted particularly in relation to the gender of the volunteer. As one respondent stated, "volunteering risks people's lives". Insecurity is a general problem in Korogocho and women are especially at risk, none more so than after dark when having to use communal latrines (Amnesty International, 2010). For women CHWs, a specific risk is posed by having to treat patients in their homes – cases had been documented where people had pretended to be sick in order to lure CHWs into their homes in order to abuse them. They also reported having to deal with threats from perpetrators of rape and domestic violence. In a participatory statistics exercise with 16 CHWs, insecurity was ranked as the joint most challenging issue alongside a lack of equipment when undertaking their duties. In total, 6 of the 16 CHWs ranked it first as the most significant issue that was likely to put them off volunteering.

Not having a say and a lack of recognition

Findings reveal that volunteers feel demotivated when they are expected to undertake work without any say in how a project is implemented or involvement in reviewing outcomes. CHWs in particular referred to not being consulted and being cautious of expressing opinions in case they were taken off a project – yet another negative side-effect of competition for volunteer opportunities. As one member of a local CBO stated, "in volunteering we are the soldiers, not the generals, so we don't see the results".

Volunteers feel demotivated when their efforts go unrecognised and under-appreciated. A member of a local CBO recounted how "seven years ago I did a rubbish clean-up and someone comes from the house and dumps their rubbish there. They ask 'who asked you to clean the street?'" For others, the community assumption that volunteers are being paid means they do not appreciate the sacrifice that volunteers are making. One respondent noted how "many people at times forget that you also need to sustain yourself, you cannot volunteer full-time". Informal volunteering, often carried out on an ad hoc basis independently of groups, CBOs and NGOs, appears to be especially under-acknowledged. Such activities include those in the following example:

> **"youth slum drug users tell the mothers 'drop something' for them to take. But she says no and gives them food and talks and counsels them. But this will never be recognised on a podium."**
> Member of local CBO

Recognising the right people

Even when volunteering efforts are recognised, care needs to be taken in ensuring that the right people are appreciated. Respondents noted how people were often happy to let volunteers do the work but were quick to take the praise. As one self-help group member reflected, it is demotivating "when you try so much to be the change you want to be, you are not supported but then other people come in when it is the celebrations, taking the fruits and all the good things you have received". Improving the motivation of volunteering thus requires that the right people are recognised.

For most volunteers, the acknowledgement they sought was not excessive. Celebration events at the completion of successful projects or simply being included in the publicity surrounding interventions were seen as being appropriate and justified. Involving volunteers in the later review of projects was seen as being useful in motivating volunteers by allowing them to see the impact of their work. The provision of certificates of participation or achievement were also greatly valued by volunteers as this allowed them to present a record of their activities to potential employers and future volunteering organisations.

Volunteer exploitation

In some cases the efforts and sacrifices of volunteers go unrecognised to a point that borders on exploitation. In other cases, it is clear that the goodwill of volunteers is more deliberately exploited. Respondents highlighted how there were organisations misusing volunteers – examples included NGOs and CBOs that receive funding for volunteering initiatives and then expect volunteers to work for nothing without passing on any funds in the form of allowances; local CBOs disappearing once they receive funding (these organisations are commonly referred to as 'briefcase NGOs'); and organisations that are quick to point out positive outcomes and impacts but less ready to appreciate or reference the contribution of volunteers in reports and publications.

Research workshops revealed that expectations of volunteers, particularly those more formally recognised in the community such as CHWs and village elders, can place an undue burden on the volunteer. CHW respondents stressed how the demands of the post meant they were never off duty and could not take leave, even during important times of their lives. As one stated,

> "CHWs especially women will not even have a good period to breastfeed and bond with the family. We never go on leave. Say, maternal leave. We are required to leave infants as young as three days old to attend to other people."

Other female CHWs stressed how difficult it was for them to maintain businesses in Korogocho as they were continually called away as part of their volunteer responsibilities. As one participant observed, "our businesses fail because we are never really there to look after the business". Village elders highlighted how they often had to use their own funds to arrange funerals when families refused to come forward, in order to avoid having to cover the costs. Yet the contribution of village elders was rarely acknowledged. Faith-based organisations (FBOs) were also not exempt from accusations of exploitation of their volunteers. As one respondent noted, "they say it is a 'call', working in the name of God, but it is just a way of not paying them as much as professionals".

Key messages

Volunteer wellbeing is compromised by a range of factors that demotivate and exploit. Volunteers report not being trusted by the community, their efforts not being appreciated, facing significant security risks particularly for women volunteers, overly high expectations amongst the community and NGOs, and not being given a say in how projects are run.

However, despite all the factors that demotivate volunteers, and the numerous examples of their goodwill being exploited, it is heartening that even these issues do not quell the passion and commitment to helping others of some volunteers. In response to the question of what demotivates them, one participant simply replied, 'Nothing!'

Implications

- **The offering of monetary incentives is not the most effective way of attracting the best volunteers.** Recruiting people who have already been volunteering without financial compensation is one method of selecting less monetarily motivated volunteers but risks excluding those who cannot afford to volunteer for free. The most effective approach, however, **is taking the time to build an understanding of and relationships with the local community**.

- Emerging evidence suggests that **other incentives such as opportunities for professional development and better working conditions are likely to be powerful attractors. Taking charge of their own development** and being about to **see the impact of their work** are also important motivating factors . This implies **that empowering volunteers and building in mechanisms for visibly assessing impact are likely to lead to increased effectiveness**.

- **Religious institutions play a key role** in volunteering in Korogocho. Even when not volunteering directly with religious organisations, volunteers will often use religious terminology to describe and understand their motivations to volunteer. Engaging religious institutions and being aware of how terms such as 'having a calling' are used will help in **building understanding of the local volunteering context** and enable volunteering interventions to be **positioned in a way that appeals to the motivations of local people**.

- **Personal and professional learning and development** resulting from volunteering can be powerful motivators, particularly for **sustaining volunteer efforts**. Incorporating opportunities for personal and professional development into volunteering interventions will likely **increase the long-term commitment of volunteers and reduce turnover**.

- The **varying allowances** offered by external and internal NGOs/CBOs fuel suspicion of corruption and malpractice amongst local community members, which is **detrimental to all development organisations**. At the same time, the realities of life in Korogocho mean that offering no allowance or reimbursement would place participating volunteers in further financial hardship. **Better coordination of approaches across volunteering-for-development organisations** may help in addressing such issues.

- **Tribalism and ethnic identity** is a hugely significant and sensitive issue in Korogocho and Kenya, yet for 'outsiders' its impacts can appear to be hidden. **Extreme care needs to be exercised in selecting local partners** and ensuring **volunteer recruitment processes are inclusive** and not biased toward particular ethnicities.

- The **security of volunteers** is both a risk and a demotivating factor that lessens the impact of volunteering. The issue is particularly significant for women volunteers such as CHWs who face daily risks of abuse and violence. **Volunteers are demotivated when they are not recognised** or their efforts are ignored in official publications. Acknowledging the roles of volunteers is a simple solution to sustaining their motivations to continue volunteering. Celebration **events, the provision of** certificates of achievement and including volunteers in publicity surrounding interventions are just some examples of how volunteers can be better recognised.

4. The interaction between top-down programming and bottom-up community needs

The debates around top-down and bottom-up development are extensive and no less intense when it comes to volunteering interventions. For research participants in Korogocho one view was virtually unanimous – development organisations rarely actively engage or consult with local volunteers or local people. What engagement does occur is generally seen by the community as tokenistic with the result being failed projects, wasted resources and the creation of a competition culture between volunteers that discourages any expression of views that may vary from the prescribed approach.

Across almost all workshops and interviews, participants continually referred to the lack of meaningful engagement with the community by external NGOs and organisations implementing development projects, as the following comments demonstrate:

> "NGOs are selective in how they engage with the community, there is not active participation"
> Local religious leader

> "they come and they think they know what we know, they know our priorities… they even give some small funding even though it will be phased out after year one… they give no thought to sustainability"
> Member of local self-help group

In measuring the extent of local involvement in development projects, the 2010 Korogocho Socio-economic Survey found that only approximately 10% of respondents felt they were involved 'a lot' or 'a great deal'. The vast majority, 77%, felt they were either 'not involved' or 'not involved at all' (Gathuthi et al, 2010). The results present a concerning picture of the level of engagement with local people by external development organisations. Table 2 shows the exact results from the survey.

Underlying this lack of engagement is a perception that external organisations know what is best for the people of Korogocho. As one respondent commented, "the vision of any NGO when they come to the slum is to transform it and improve the standards". The most high-profile example of this in recent times has been the Korogocho Slum Upgrading Programme (KSUP), a joint initiative

between the Kenyan government and development partners such as UN Habitat with funding support through a debt for development swap by the Government of Italy (with support provided through the Italian Development Cooperation). Although the programme has led to visible changes in Korogocho such as new roads, a footbridge and more recently a health centre, participants highlighted how there had been resistance to the changes and many residents feared the construction of more permanent dwellings because of the likelihood of increased rental charges and the requirement to pay utility bills. KSUP has created a Korogocho Residents Committee (KRC) to act as a mechanism for engaging the community, but findings suggest the committee's functioning has been plagued by accusations of corruption.

A fundamental issue emerges from differing perceptions of what constitutes development. For some volunteering-for-development organisations, an informal settlement in itself is a problem that needs to be addressed, often with projects that they may specialise in, such as sanitation or healthcare. However, this research has found that a community's view of what development is required may vary greatly. For example, for many in Korogocho, the fact that the community is informal is an accepted reality and greater concerns are insecurity and sustainable sources of livelihood. Some even prefer to live in an informal settlement because of the low rents and cheap utilities. What this creates is a mismatch in perceptions of development; a mismatch that can either lead to ineffective volunteering interventions or even externally imposed projects that go against local views of what is needed. Volunteering utilised in such a way is much less likely to have an impact, let alone a long-term sustainable impact.

A major perceived failure of external NGO consultations was how they often only extended to a few people considered to be key stakeholders in the community. As a result, consultations were seen as tokenistic, as the following comments attest:

> "most of the big NGOs, they only identify one person in the community as a contact and it is usually a village elder"
> Member of established local CBO

> "many NGOs identify a place like Koch but they don't engage with people on the ground. They only engage opinion leaders… often the opinion leaders don't know the feeling on the ground"
> CHW

> "some NGOs, even if they engage the community, it is not at all stages. Sometimes it is just at the beginning, in proposal writing, but then not later on and sometimes the proposal changes"
> Village elder

> "most NGOs come, visit the chief's office, who contacts the elders and no one else is allowed any say"
> CHW

> "there are these NGOs that will come, with a fixed project, like digging drainage tunnels. They do phase one, take photos, get the funding and then don't finish the project."
> Village elder

Table 2: Extent of local involvement in initiating development projects (source: Gathuthi et al, 2010:131)[4]

Level of involvement	%
Involved a great deal	1
Involved a lot	9
Involved a little	10
Not involved	33
Not involved at all	44

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4. In the 2010 Korogocho Socio-Economic Survey, participants were first asked to name one major development initiative in their village known to them. They were then asked about their level of involvement in that project. In total 541 questionnaires were completed as part of the survey.

For some external NGOs, security fears are a concern that limits the depth of engagement with the community. With the risks posed to their staff, there is a reluctance to have them spend substantial time in the field and so consultation is sometimes rushed and confined to secure locations such as the chief's camp. Alternatively consultation events are organised at locations outside of Korogocho. Workshops as part of the *Valuing Volunteering* research, for example, were often limited to a number of secure sites in Korogocho, one of which was the chief's camp. However, greater community engagement was successfully facilitated by utilising local volunteers who went out into the community. As such there are potentially valuable lessons for other development organisations in using local volunteers to enable more in-depth community consultations.

A common problem of consultation exercises is the treatment of Korogocho as a homogenous community, with little attention given to the diversity and differences within its nine constituent villages. As one village elder stated,

> **"the level of engagement sometimes varies... some NGOs ask for 20 people but they can be from one village and Koch has nine villages with different needs. So this may not be reflected in the engagement."**
> Village elder

As the context section of this report has highlighted, Korogocho is geographically diverse in terms of development challenges and characteristics such as ethnicity and religion.

For local volunteers in Korogocho who care about their community, the tokenistic engagement of external NGOs is both frustrating and wasteful, particularly when the subsequent projects fail. The practice of taking volunteers out of Korogocho for consultation events was also the subject of substantial criticism in research workshops. As one member of a local CBO commented, "they can take us for workshops and pay for us like 7000 Shillings a day for like seven days and then at the end, they give us 200 bob [Shillings] to get home". The emphasis here was that the money would have been better spent on the community than on the costs of facilitating what are perceived to be overly extravagant consultation events. As another participant added,

> **"big NGOs would prefer to take their participants to hotels but won't listen to your proposal for 10–15,000 [Shillings] [approx. USD110–170]... [they] make you go through so much bureaucracy and meeting protocols..."**
> Member of local CBO

Organising consultation events outside of Korogocho is often motivated by security concerns but it is clear that some community volunteers see it as wasteful and a misuse of valuable funds that could be better used for small-scale local projects.

One consequence of a lack of genuine engagement with the community and differing perceptions of what development is required is the failure of projects. As two participants highlighted:

> **"The community doesn't own it, it is imposed on them by an NGO so there is no ownership... it leads to many projects stalling after the organisation leaves... they see it as an NGO project rather than their own. The budget is big and no one has faith that there will be enough support from within."**
> Member of local self-help group

> **"An NGO wanted to fix it and pilot it but they didn't want to adopt the ideas of the community, they had fixed projects. To this day those pilot areas haven't experienced any improvement."**
> Village elder

Local ownership is clearly an issue that is jeopardised when projects are implemented in a top-down fashion. Community members and volunteers often simply do not see the value in maintaining projects initiated by external NGOs, especially when the projects are only perceived as important by the NGO and not by the local community. The following quote provides a good example:

> **"Way back in 1993, an organisation came into Korogocho, they went straight into constructing drainage trenches. This was done without the involvement of residents. People refused to allow the trenches to pass through spaces they occupied. They were built meandering, making it difficult for running water to flow with ease. This project failed."**
> Local pastor

Unfortunately such approaches have continued since the 1990s with respondents citing more recent examples. As one participant stated:

> **"NGOs come with initiatives like for the CHWs. The initiatives do not even necessarily solve the problems. They do not consult the community. Like even the latrines [a well-known international NGO] once built. The latrines ended up being demolished because they did not consult the community on the drainage and the general upkeep of the toilets. They became hazardous when they were all filled up."**
> Local volunteer

Power dynamics within Korogocho also affect the degree to which active engagement occurs, particularly in relation to volunteers who report not feeling able to express their opinion if it diverges from that of influential local stakeholders or the managers of intervention projects. This issue is compounded by the competition that exists between volunteers for opportunities that pay allowances or stipends – something that was analysed in the previous section. Volunteers fear being taken off projects if they voice any contradictory views, as one CHW explained: "many times they [CHWs] would want to give their opinion on the project, but if it differs from the chief then it may be your last project... so there is much to fear". As another CHW added,

> **"CHWs do not have a say when it comes to our remuneration. The NGOs and other organisations visit the chief and village elders. The chiefs decide on how much we should be paid. We feel we know so much more than the chief because we spend the most time interacting with the people. If at all we give our opinion on anything, we are accused of inciting the rest of the group."**
> CHW

The downside of this is that projects miss out on the immense local knowledge and experience of local volunteers which can make the difference between success and failure. The prospect of losing desirable volunteer positions that often pay stipends is often enough to discourage volunteers from attempting to express their opinions or steer the work. The competition for volunteer opportunities thus serves as a tool for implementing organisations to control volunteers and either consciously or subconsciously prioritise a top-down externally decided development agenda.

Despite the widespread view that external NGOs often fail to actively engage widely with Korogocho volunteers and residents, there were also examples of better practice. As one local CBO member stated, "it is good when they come and you plan the action before it is taken". One such example mentioned by participants was an initiative called Community Conversations which was funded by Concern Worldwide through local partner, the Redeemed Gospel Church. The case study box below provides more details on the nature of the project. Concern Worldwide has shown substantial commitment to sustained working in Korogocho, having also run projects providing cash transfers to those families identified as not being able to meet their nutritional needs (also referred to as being 'food-poor'). However, Community Conversations, which consists of a local forum in each of Korogocho's villages, was highlighted as being particularly valued and effective by volunteers and local residents. As one participant noted of the project,

> "they tell people that the problems our community faces are ours and therefore the solutions are also with us; they encourage us not to rely too much on outside help..."
> Local resident

The key to success in such examples is the establishment of locally owned mechanisms that empower volunteers and the wider community to lead their own development. They also provide a platform for the inclusion of the whole community rather than just the 'key stakeholders' that are commonly the focus of externally led consultation exercises.

Key messages

By not engaging with local volunteers and their communities, volunteering-for-development organisations are failing and missing opportunities on two accounts. Firstly, as highlighted in the quote above, initiatives may meet the projected needs of international development organisations but fail to be relevant to local people. The result is a limited impact on the lives of poor people. Secondly, as the previous section revealed, volunteers are more motivated when they feel empowered and can see the positive change that results from their efforts. By denying volunteers a say in the design of projects, organisations are missing out on both their local expertise and the opportunity to motivate them through empowerment; additionally making use of local knowledge and empowered local volunteers is more likely to lead to success, thus creating a virtuous circle that further motivates volunteers. In light of this, volunteering-for-development organisations need to stop pursuing dictatorial and arrogant 'we know best approaches', introduce more flexibility to their programmes and relinquish some control to trusted local volunteers who may have a better idea of what and why interventions are needed.

The issue of interaction between top-down programming and bottom-up community needs is not limited to volunteering projects in Korogocho. In fact it is applicable to development interventions more generally, with many of the research participants not distinguishing between volunteer-specific and other development projects in their comments regarding community engagement. A lack of active community participation is a challenge for both volunteering and wider development initiatives in Korogocho. Importantly, however, there is a significant role that volunteers can play in facilitating local engagement either by directly conducting consultations or by acting as entry points to residents and indigenous organisations. As such they can act as the bridge between top-down programming and bottom-up needs. The *Valuing Volunteering Kenya* research is a case in point. Only through the use of reliable local volunteers, carefully selected over a number of months with the help of trusted local contacts, was the research able to effectively engage the community.

CASE STUDY 2:
Concern Worldwide's Community Conversations in Korogocho

In various locations across Kenya, Concern Worldwide has been implementing an approach called Community Conversations which helps people to come together and solve problems in their communities. The approach essentially provides a platform for local people to share ideas on how to bring about positive change.

In Korogocho, the initiative is implemented by local partner, the Redeemed Gospel Church. Crucially Korogocho is not treated as one homogeneous community. Instead, forums for the Community Conversations have been established in all Korogocho's nine villages. The approach was also not rushed; initial groups were set up and research conducted in 2007 with learning incorporated before it was rolled out in 2009. In each village, a number of local people volunteer to coordinate the process.

The approach has had significant success in nurturing locally led development that is not reliant on outside help. As one of the Korogocho voluntary coordinators stated, "people are coming together and agreeing that their problems are their own, they

have the solutions and don't need to wait for an NGO". Most importantly, the forums are also having a real impact. As one workshop participant stated, "they have helped the youth through their problems; they've engaged with the drug issue and got young drug takers back into school; it has yielded a lot of good things".

The Community Conversations in Korogocho have not been without their challenges, many of which are similar to those faced by other volunteering initiatives. For example, the prospect of an initiative run by a well-known development NGO at first attracted numerous people looking to secure allowances, but their interest waned once it was clear none were being offered. As one of the voluntary coordinators reflected, "many people signed up and then left after they realised there was nothing in it". Similarly, the number of coordinators has fluctuated as people have either moved on to other activities or moved out of Korogocho. Despite these challenges, the Community Conversations illustrate how a locally led initiative that understands the local context can have a positive impact on local development.

Implications

- The practice of **only engaging perceived key stakeholders in consultations acts to disempower volunteers** and restricts the degree of personal wellbeing they acquire through leading their own development. This reduces volunteer motivation and also **denies projects the valuable insights and expertise of local volunteers**.

- **Volunteers can play a significant role in facilitating engagement with the community.** They can **act as a bridge between top-down programming and bottom-up needs and capacity**. As this research has found, taking the time to build relationships with trusted local volunteers is likely to open up entry points to facilitate in-depth and more inclusive community engagement.

- Many large international **NGOs fall into the trap of perceiving Korogocho to be a homogeneous community** when, in fact, it is more realistically a collection of heterogeneous communities with a complex mix of similar and differing characteristics. Volunteering interventions are more likely to have an impact on the lives of poor people when they **are built around an understanding of local context**. As such, adopting the principle of **subsidiarity, whereby consultation occurs at the lowest practical scale**, will increase the likelihood of projects being based upon more accurate and detailed evidence.

- **Security concerns have a direct impact upon the nature of consultation exercises**, with activities often limited to safe locations or venues outside of the community. However, such consultations face the challenge of really achieving active engagement and getting to the root of issues. **Volunteers are not passive participants in consultation exercises. When external** NGOs take people from Korogocho to attend consultation events (often in high-end hotels and venues) they are also projecting an image of themselves. Genuine local volunteers, however, are likely to **see such exercises as a waste of valuable resources** that could be more effectively used to facilitate consultation or development within the community. **The difference between the success and failure of volunteering interventions can often be traced to whether funding/implementing partners and the local community have a shared or divergent view on development needs.** In many cases projects fail because **external assumptions of development needs do not match the development realities of local people**. This implies that only by being flexible and actively listening to and **engaging communities can volunteering interventions have a positive impact on the lives of poor people**.

- **Competition for volunteer opportunities acts to disincentivise volunteers from providing their input into volunteer programmes** through fear of losing **their positions. Competition thus discourages volunteers from expressing their opinions, decreases their** motivation and subtly supports a culture in which external solutions are given greater status.

- **Local ownership has been observed to greatly enhance local empowerment and aid the formulation of indigenous solutions to development challenges.** Enabling and facilitating communities such as Korogocho to better come together to discuss and solve their own problems can be a powerful approach and potentially be complemented by relevant and timely support from external sources.

5. Dependency and sustainability

There was a strong feeling amongst research participants that development was something that was done to Korogocho by outside organisations. The 2010 Korogocho Socio-economic Survey supports this finding; in a survey question asking who initiated recent development projects, 48% were identified as being initiated by NGOs/CBOs and 28% by the government of Kenya. Local people accounted for just 7%, local leaders 6% and religious organisations 4% of projects. Even though some CBOs might be locally based, the perception of few projects being initiated by local people reflects the sense that development is externally orchestrated.

In conversations with local community members, some suggested that a culture of dependency and reliance on handouts had evolved from political processes. They described how it had become common practice for local leaders and politicians to go into informal settlements and hand out small sums of money in order to boost their profile and buy political allegiance. The problem was that small handouts made leaders popular but did little to empower communities or address deep-rooted issues such as education, health or infrastructure. Although people observed that the practice had receded over the last decade, the perception still pervades and, to an extent, communities have thought of and approached external NGOs in the same way as their politicians, seeking handouts for basic survival. The problem was also considered to be more severe in Korogocho than in other informal settlements such as Kibera or Mathare Valley. For example, Kibera was considered to be much more entrepreneurial and its residents more likely to appreciate the work of NGOs as making a bigger contribution to development in the community than handouts. In contrast, Korogocho was described by one local leader as a 'closed community' where volunteers and residents were trapped in a financially dependent relationship with external donors and development organisations.

In terms of where, when and how volunteering can bring about change, a complex web of interrelated factors governed the impact of community dependency upon volunteering effectiveness. The subsequent analysis will address these issues under four broad headings. The first three will look at challenges involving external NGOs disincentivising local volunteering; the negative impact of a cycle of dependency; and a lack of local ownership, community trust and commitment. The fourth and final section on community pride will assess volunteerism's positive potential to nurture community solidarity in the face of shared challenges and encourage locally owned development.

External NGOs disincentivising local volunteering

It has already been observed how the substantial and differing levels of stipends and allowances offered by external development organisations to volunteers have created a hierarchy of and competition for volunteering opportunities. The consequence is that volunteers prefer and compete for what are seen as more lucrative volunteering posts with external NGOs that pay higher allowances. This has also led to volunteering being perceived as low-paid work.

The problem in terms of dependency is that potential volunteers are disincentivised from volunteering with local CBOs that often lack the resources to pay comparable allowances, if anything at all. In other words, the stipends and allowances of large NGOs have established the normative expectation that volunteering involves payment. As one member of a local CBO stated,

> "an NGO comes and recruits volunteers, gives them 5,000 Shillings for two days and something comes out of that and [they] say now I will not volunteer for free. This makes things very difficult for organisations like Miss Koch [a local NGO] and other local organisations."
> Member of local CBO

This situation erodes the community's local capacity to lead its own development and undermines many indigenous organisations, as volunteers frequently either form or join organisations in the hope of securing external funding rather than to benefit the wider community. This was revealed as part of a network-mapping exercise with over 50 local CBOs that showed a significant disparity between 'active' and 'dormant' members, the latter of which were officially on the books but rarely participated in activities unless the organisation had received funding. As one founding member of an indigenous CBO stated, we "started as 75 members but now there are only 25 active members because there is no hope of outside help". In this example, only a third of the total volunteers appear to have been motivated by a genuine commitment to the CBO and community development. Respondents also noted how it was common for volunteers to be members of multiple groups but they would only volunteer when one of them gained funding which could be used to pay allowances. Volunteering is thus closely connected to the community's financial dependence on external support.

For many local organisations, there is little incentive to remove 'dormant' volunteers from their membership lists as the higher numbers are often useful in portraying the organisation as substantial and legitimate to prospective donors. Such practices have major implications for donor organisations and re-emphasiee the importance of building trusting relationships with local partners. In one case encountered during the research, a well-respected CBO which was a partner of a leading international volunteering-for-development organisation claimed to have over 200 local and national volunteers, 23 international volunteers and over 250 online volunteers. However, the reality was that the organisation only had one international volunteer and 'active' local volunteers numbered little more than a dozen. This organisation may have come into contact with this number of volunteers during its history but the aggrandised figures are at best a gross exaggeration. Examples such as this pose substantial risks to volunteering interventions, as when such local CBOs do receive funding, they are unlikely to have the impact on the ground that their size on paper would suggest.

The negative impact of a cycle of financial dependency

Volunteers are less likely to volunteer with local CBOs that are unable to pay allowances. However, understanding how volunteering is affected by financial dependency requires a deeper appreciation of Korogocho's reliance on external resources. For many lacking the skills, training, capital and employment opportunities to work their way out of poverty, it is poverty itself that is their source of livelihood. As a village elder stated, "many people do not commit themselves to a lot of work because they are waiting for NGOs to come in".

The contradiction of Korogocho's dependency is that NGOs create perverse incentives which make it more beneficial for some people to remain poor. Research participants were quick to point out a variety of examples from their personal experiences:

[NGOs] "bring new shoes for children but people do not want their children to be seen with new shoes because the donors will not come..."
Local CBO member

[there was] "a time when [an NGO] brings new mattresses, then [another NGO] brings mattresses but the man is still not sleeping on a mattress, even though he has two new ones..."
Member of self-help group

"most of the time, NGOs have come and offered food to people with HIV/AIDS. Then from that day they will not go to work, but go to the street and sell the food and spend the money on alcohol."
Village elder

"people want to remain the same so that more funding will come..."
Local CBO member

[There is a] "story of someone who was blind, he got to go places, board a plane. When asked if he would like his sight restored, he said no as it would remove his source of livelihood."
Local religious leader

With poverty being a livelihood in itself, there can be very little incentive for people to volunteer to help others and also little desire from some to be helped. For such people it is important to appear to be in a constant state of need, which poses a significant challenge to volunteering in terms of having an impact. Breaking down negative cycles of financial dependency is, however, something that volunteering and the organisations that promote it as a development intervention need to pursue in order to reach the poorest and most marginalised.

In other cases, the actions of NGOs, despite genuine motives, have been perceived as making community dependency worse. Such cases include NGOs providing money but not the training or skills development to enable recipients to make the most of those resources. In one workshop, participants described two projects involving cash transfers from external NGOs to beneficiaries in the community. In the first, monetary payments were made via a mobile phone money platform called *mpesa* to families identified as not being able to meet their basic nutritional needs. The organisation's own evaluation of that initiative showed that impacts were more sustainable for those families that already had a certain level of assets, as they could invest the payments. However, poorer families found things more difficult and so there was little discernible impact after the payments stopped (MacAuslan and Schofield, 2011). In the

other associated project, loans were provided for people to establish or expand businesses. Opinion amongst research participants as to the impact of the initiative was split. Some saw it as a success "which changed the life of the majority [of participants] and up to this time some of these businesses are still going on" (quote from local community members as part of a local stories exercise). However, others claimed that little skills training was given to loan recipients; loans were provided before Christmas which led to misspending, and many did not repay the loans as they saw it as external money from the *mzungu* (white man). An emerging lesson from such observations is that providing money is not enough to help the poorest and most marginalised. For those with some assets or capital, an injection of funds may be enough to improve their wellbeing, but the most deprived require more support; support that could feasibly be provided through volunteers.

For volunteer-involving organisations, not only is there the issue of people being disincentivised to volunteer, there is also the wider challenge of community resistance to change. For example, whilst there are those who genuinely want to see development in Korogocho, there are also those that are wary of how it might impact upon their lives. For many living in extreme poverty in Korogocho, the prospect of having to pay rent and utility bills in a new permanent housing development would necessitate a move to another informal settlement. As participants observed, "people do not embrace change quickly" and "there is a balance – 50/50 in resistance to change". Linking to the previous section, volunteer programmes need to engage with community members and understand their needs and also their fears. Creating dialogue and consensus around needs and interventions is likely to reduce resistance and thereby increase the impact of volunteerism.

Another severe challenge is posed by people with particular vested interests, who are often willing to take extreme measures to protect them. Participants noted how criminals resisted new security measures such as street lighting, and landlords often resisted schemes that could potentially take away or empower their tenants. As two participants commented, "people who resist change are the tycoons of Korogocho" and "if you want to change it genuinely then you will be the enemy of some people". For volunteering organisations, it is important to understand these local power dynamics and how even well-intentioned volunteering initiatives may come up against challenges. More importantly, whilst external organisations may feel, in some instances, that they need to tackle marginalisation and inequality by restructuring existing power relations, great care and consideration needs to be given to the local volunteers implementing the projects on the ground who may be placed at significant risk if they are seen to be bringing about change that challenges vested interests. And these risks should not be underestimated. In one referenced case, a volunteer was reported to have been killed in Korogocho for being involved in an initiative to bring modern permanent housing to the community.

A lack of local ownership, community trust and commitment to local development

The previous section highlighted how many people in Korogocho perceive their survival to be dependent on the continued provision of external support, predominantly from development organisations and occasionally the government. Against this backdrop, three interconnected causes also undermine local volunteering – a lack of local ownership of development initiatives, low levels of trust between community members and, as a result, a weak commitment to undertaking indigenous development.

It has already been noted how the prevalence of top-down programming and the 'we know best' attitude of some external development organisations has created a sense of marginalisation from decision-making for local people and volunteers. As one participant stated,

> **"many many times Koch would not have been a slum if the NGOs wanted. The reason is when they come, they don't ask the community. They don't engage the community."**
> Member of local CBO

This lack of local ownership has fuelled a dependent relationship with external donors and led to the failure of numerous projects "because the outside will not own the project the way local initiatives will" (local CHW). Local people are less inclined to volunteer if it is not for causes they believe in or initiatives they have any say over; and when they happen to do so they are less motivated and experience less of an impact in terms of increases in wellbeing. Their personal and collective sense of agency to lead their own development is thus undermined.

Importantly, detrimental impacts result not only from a lack of ownership of development projects but also Korogocho's physical environment. Despite not being identified as an issue in initial community interviews, validation workshops and systems mapping revealed that land ownership was a contributing factor to poverty, financial dependency and low community esteem, which partly explained why people were reticent about volunteering their time to facilitate local development. Korogocho is officially government-owned land and, although attempts have been made to transfer ownership to local residents, challenges have been encountered with landlords who fear losing their assets. As a result, the 2010 Korogocho Socio-economic Survey paints a mixed picture in terms of land ownership, with 13% of respondents saying they owned the land, 46% that it was government-owned and 38% saying their landlord owned the land where their structure stood. In terms of home ownership, 68% said they were tenants whilst 26% reported owning their own structure (Gathuthi et al, 2010).

Research participants noted how a lack of information and proper planning in Korogocho meant they feared eviction and anticipated being only temporary residents, even when they had been there for a number of years. As a consequence, residents were less likely to invest time, effort or resources in their local community, thus revealing why some people see little point in volunteering. The Korogocho Socio-economic Survey concluded that

> **"most people concentrate on survival mechanism rather than development activities. They fear initiating development projects since their stay in the area is believed to be temporary. Many of the households do not have allotment letter to have some level of guarantee to the land."**
> Gathuthi et al, 2010:109

A number of respondents, particularly village elders, argued that if more residents had the rights/deeds to their properties, they could then build better dwellings on them and more fully commit to the local area. As one member of a local self-help group reflected, "if people had title deeds maybe people will have had faith and maybe it would be more developed than it is now".

Land ownership was an interesting and unexpected issue to emerge from participatory workshops and systems-mapping exercises. Crucially it reveals how volunteering is part of a much wider system in Korogocho, one that extends to people's relationship with and ownership of the very land on which they live. Statistics show that the average duration of residence in Korogocho is 17.6 years, a very

substantial period of time, and significantly more than another informal settlement, Kibera, where the average was found to be 10 years (Gathuthi et al, 2010). Yet only 30% of people say they live in Korogocho out of choice, implying that the majority live there because they have to, as it represents their best option for surviving on meagre resources. Improving land ownership for poor and marginalised people in Korogocho is likely to be a catalyst for increasing people's sense of investment in and ownership of the community; it may also consequently lead to an increase in commitment to local development projects and volunteering.

A lack of trust between community members was highlighted by some participants as being an issue that had led to people preferring to rely more on outside support than on each other's . General insecurity in Korogocho was a contributing factor to this, along with deep ethnic divides along tribal lines. The inter-ethnic post-election violence of 2007–8 was intense in Korogocho and, though relative peace has returned, tensions and scars still persist. As one respondent commented,

> **"[Ethnicity] is an issue and leads to dependency because people will not trust each other so everyone wants for themselves and their tribe and their friends and family. So they rely on outside help and wait for a rise in their ethnicity which will bring them benefits."**
> Local resident

Despite some changes, it is still perceived to be a common political process for leaders, from the national to the local level, to reward members of their own tribal affiliation. For those tribes without representatives in seats of political power it can often seem that there are structural challenges beyond their ability to influence. They choose to wait until there is political change that sees their tribe come to power. However, the systemic problems remain in that other tribes are then excluded from decision-making and marginalised from resource allocation.

In Korogocho, this ethnic fragmentation amongst people experiencing extreme poverty means distrust, suspicion and rumours of corruption quickly surface if the distribution of even limited resources and/or opportunities is perceived to be unfair. The large amount of misinformation also often helps to fuel such practices. Previous findings in this report have highlighted how this can lead to volunteer groups forming around some tribes and restricting their support to others. Critically, this is rarely explicit: ethnic favouritism forms a surreptitious undercurrent in many local organisations and groups. Informal volunteering is also affected by the structuring of many social networks around tribal affiliation. As stated previously, an implication for volunteering-for-development organisations is the need to be careful and take time to develop trusted relationships with local partners so as to avoid unwittingly fuelling inter-ethnic segregation by partnering with tribally biased CBOs.

An interesting implication is that international volunteers, as 'outsiders', may be better placed to avoid the tensions surrounding ethnic affiliation, their perceived neutrality and detachment from the Kenyan tribal system being valuable assets. Indeed many participants reported trusting international volunteers more because they were generally perceived to be less corrupt and more likely to deliver on promises. This is important for volunteering-for-development organisations but it also needs to be balanced against the need for building a detailed picture of local contexts (and politics) and trusted relationships with local partners; otherwise international volunteers, who often have little local knowledge (initially at least), risk unknowingly supporting certain groups over others.

Community pride and the potential for volunteering

Despite the challenges associated with financial dependency, there are still those with a more optimistic view, who see community solidarity in the face of adversity and a potential for local volunteers to facilitate locally owned development. The passion and sense of community pride was clearly evident amongst a significant number of workshop participants. Interestingly, in some cases, the most vocally supportive were also those who felt external NGOs had done more harm than good for the people of Korogocho. The following views illustrate both the potential for indigenous growth and the frustration directed at some development organisations:

> **"NGOs don't want Koch to change because this is what they use to get funding... NGOs need Koch to get funding but don't want it to change."**
> Village elder

> **"[Regarding the initiative of an international development organisation], if you put together all the small mpesa payments then they could have bought alternative land for people to go to and then this place could be upgraded."**
> Village elder

> **"... donors and big NGOs have made us dependent... we do not depend on outside help or on donors, that is just in the mind... Donors come to Koch and they see the housing and they think we are poor, but we are sending children to secondary school and having fridges... it is just in the mind that we depend on outside help. But we depend on ourselves, on our friends, brothers, sisters, family... even with NGOs here, we are still eating for ourselves. We don't have problems, they have been manufactured by NGOs. We don't say all donors and NGOs are bad, but most of them."**
> Member of local CBO

The latter view sparked some active debate, with other participants claiming that although some problems may be in the mind, they were also real. As one respondent reflected, "living with these problems, does not mean we don't have problems".

There is little doubt that Korogocho has its challenges but these challenges can also be seen as a strength and source of community solidarity. The 2010 Korogocho Socio-economic Survey found that the biggest uniting factor in Korogocho was the 'sharing of common problems' which accounted for 43% of responses ('being residents' was second with 34%). Against this backdrop there is potential to sensitively nurture more locally led development which both enables and makes effective use of volunteers. As one participant proclaimed, "volunteering itself can help the community help itself. Even when the white man goes, we need to help ourselves through community volunteering".

Key messages

Dependency and particularly financial dependency is a hugely significant issue in Korogocho. It is also closely associated with the motivating factors of volunteers, the impact of top-down programming, a lack of community ownership and empowerment, and the ultimately the impact that volunteerism has on addressing poverty, inequality and marginalisation.

It has been observed how the allowances and stipends offered by large external NGOs act to disincentivise people from volunteering with local groups and CBOs that cannot afford to provide the same, or sometimes any, form of reimbursement. A cycle of financial dependency exists in Korogocho which has turned some people's poverty into its own form of livelihood – one that relies on handouts and donations from predominantly external development organisations. For these people, who often lack the skills, qualifications and resources to make another form of living, there is simply little motivation to volunteer to help others (unless it is to receive a small stipend which acts as a survival mechanism) and little desire to be helped by volunteers. This presents a challenge that needs to be addressed if volunteering is to be used to help the poorest and most marginalised.

Korogocho's dependency is also affected by a lack of local ownership – both of development interventions and the physical space that constitutes the community – which translates into weak commitment to the area, despite many being residents for well over a decade. Additionally, insecurity and inter-ethnic fragmentation act to undermine local trust, causing both formal and informal volunteering to become tribally insular activities and hampering its impact in addressing segregation and marginalisation. International volunteers may have a role to play in overcoming such challenges through their perceived neutrality and detachment but this needs to be combined with a strong understanding of local contexts in order to make sure particular groups are not supported over others. Despite the challenge of dependency, there are glimmers of hope and possible solutions. A number of participants displayed great pride in their community and there is a sense of shared solidarity in the challenges they face. As such there is potential to support more locally led development that makes use of the efforts and contributions of volunteers.

Dependency is also a multifaceted term. Whilst Korogocho suffers from financial dependency on external funding, there is some evidence that long-term interventions are successful and certainly more so than short-term ad hoc projects. A number of development organisations working through volunteers have an established presence in Korogocho and have persevered with programmes for a lengthy period of time. Whilst residents may be classed as dependent on the services they provide, it is also fair to say that those services are making a real and tangible impact on the lives of the poor.

Implications

- Dependency is a multifaceted term. **Financial dependency on handouts and donations tends to stifle indigenous development and local volunteering.** However, long-term sustained development interventions that address local community needs create a dependency on services that often should be provided by the state. As every citizen relies on state provision to a certain degree, such dependency is not a negative phenomenon.

- Volunteering is a complex system where particular practices in one part can have unexpected consequences in another. For many volunteering-for-development organisations, **paying allowances** is simply a method of attracting and suitably compensating volunteers for their efforts. However, this can have **unintentional impacts on local volunteering organisations which often struggle to reimburse their volunteers**. It also creates confusion by **blurring the distinction between paid work and volunteering**. Paying substantial allowances can **thus undermine the capacity of local organisations** as some people refuse to volunteer without being paid.

- There are often funding incentives for local voluntary groups and organisations to inflate their membership numbers. In other cases there can be a significant **disparity between 'active' and 'dormant' members in local organisations**, with many belonging to multiple groups in the hope that one of them will secure funding to pay its volunteers. For organisations looking to partner with local voluntary groups this can make the process a treacherous task. As such there is a **need to be thorough in screening and in building trusting relationships with local partners**.

- **Negative cycles of financial dependency can make it harder to help and work with the poorest and most marginalised.** It is these people who are most likely to see their poverty as a source of livelihood through receiving handouts and resist the assistance of volunteers. As studies in Korogocho have shown, just giving them money does not tend to lead to long-term sustainable change. **Intensive and ongoing support**, potentially provided by volunteers, and possibly complemented by financial support, is an approach which may be more effective and worth trialling. **Breaking down cycles of financial dependency is likely to be a challenge that volunteering-for-development organisations need to address if they are to help the poorest and most marginalised.**

- **Local communities are sometimes resistant to change, particularly if they perceive that it may have a negative impact on their wellbeing.** What an external development organisation thinks a community needs is not always what it actually does. It is therefore important to **create spaces for dialogue where community needs and interventions can be mutually agreed** and the fears of local people addressed. Such approaches are likely to decrease local resistance that can limit the impact of volunteering and wider development programmes.

- **Volunteers are often those on the front line implementing projects.** As such **they are the ones most at risk** if a volunteer intervention happens to challenge vested interests in the community. The risks should not be underestimated, with cases of murder even attributed to such situations in Korogocho. **Organisations have a duty of care to their volunteers**, and as such due consideration of the risks needs to be at the forefront of project planning and design.

- **Volunteering does not exist in isolation in local communities and is influenced by wider systemic issues.** One of these is **land ownership**. Volunteering can be seen as an expression of one's commitment to the local community. However, this local investment is likely to be severely reduced when people do not own their land, continuously fear the threat of eviction and feel that they are only ever temporary residents. **With little commitment to the long-term future of their community, the prevalence and therefore impact of volunteering is negatively affected.**

- **Ethnic tensions are pervasive in Korogocho and affect volunteerism as some efforts and activities subtly become tribally specific.** This occurs in relation to both formal volunteering through local groups and informal volunteering through the social networks of residents. There are **significant implications for organisations looking to partner with local groups** because, if appropriate and thorough processes are not followed, they may end up unintentionally supporting one tribe over another. **International volunteers may have a role to play in overcoming engrained issues such as ethnicity, through their perceived neutrality and 'outsider' status.** However, volunteering-for-development organisations need to ensure this is combined with robust context/political analysis so as to prevent the international volunteers from unknowingly supporting particular groups over others.

- Locally led volunteer initiatives have the **potential to tap into community pride and a sense of solidarity** in the face of development challenges. This is not to say that such approaches cannot be supported by external resources, just that it is important to empower local people to set their own agenda and steer their own development.

6. The gendered dimensions to volunteering and poverty in Korogocho

Volunteering and poverty in Korogocho has many gender dimensions, some of which have been highlighted in other sections of the research findings. However, specific attention to a number of issues in which gender is a key factor is warranted. Four areas will be covered in the following analysis: (i) the gender dynamics of volunteering and volunteer roles; (ii) gendered social expectations in Korogocho and their impact on volunteering; (iii) gender and the risks posed to volunteers; and (iv) the gendered dimensions of poverty in Korogocho and how this relates to volunteering.

The gender dynamics of volunteering and volunteer roles

In a number of focus groups, participants were specifically asked to discuss whether men and women volunteer in different roles and whether this was perceived to make a difference to the impact they had. Responses indicate a strong community perception that men and women are better suited to different volunteer roles. In such cases, gender can become an enabling factor for increasing volunteer effectiveness, but where such perceptions pigeon-hole men and women to stereotypical roles it can also be a barrier to encouraging more equitable gender relations.

Responses from a wide range of both male and female participants stressed that women provide a better volunteer service in health and caring roles. Women were also commonly cited as more likely to be dedicated to their roles and volunteer out of a genuine desire to help rather than earn an allowance. Reasons given for this included women being more compassionate, committed and sensitive, partly as a result of their culturally established role in looking after children and the family. The following comments illustrate this view:

> "women will do more caring roles like looking after sick people. Women are more soft-hearted and compassionate."
> Female member of local self-help group

> "women volunteer at a higher level than men because men do not have the heart to deal with really poor people, they shy away..."
> Female CHW

> "women have a very soft heart, so if anything happens they run there to volunteer a lot quicker than men... women are more patient. They can't start something and leave in the middle."
> Male member of a local CBO

> "women tend to volunteer more. Men tend to not follow-up much."
> Female member of support group

> "women are more patient than men..."
> Female CHW

> "there are questions a man will not ask but a women will..."
> Female CHW

An excellent example of the propensity for women to take on health-orientated volunteer roles is the case of CHWs. In 2010, the government recruited and trained 50 CHWs in each of Korogocho's nine villages, which should mean that there are 450 CHWs across the community, although the reality is that a significant number have either left the area, taken up other positions or are not active. CHWs who participated in this research estimated that approximately 90–95% of CHWs in Korogocho were women. This was reflected in workshops where only three of over thirty CHWs were male. The *Valuing Volunteering Kenya* research also experienced such perceptions first-hand in establishing the local research group. Local advice repeatedly stressed the need to recruit women to the group as they were seen as more likely to genuinely participate than attend purely in the hope of receiving a stipend.

Responses also suggested that the efforts of women in health and caring roles were not necessarily taken for granted by men. As one of the male CHWs stated, "men think that volunteering as a CHW is even harder than a manual job". A male member of a local CBO said, "us men are not patient, women will work harder" and another male member added, "men get tired so quickly and do not persevere". Normative gender stereotypes push men towards more physical and protective roles with an expectation that they bring resources to support their families, thereby aligning with the commonly held view of the male as the chief breadwinner. Henceforth, men were reported as more often volunteering for manual tasks such as construction or leading in the response to emergencies such as fires in the community. This also partly explains the higher motivation amongst men to secure better-paid volunteer allowances. One participant provided a clear reflection on the gendered difference in volunteering:

> "Most men would prefer being masons to working as a CHW. Being a CHW doesn't pay much so the men will not take it up easily. But women will do it for no matter how little the allowance is."
> Local community member

So gender stereotypes act to push and pull men and women towards particular volunteering roles; just as men are pushed toward manual and protective roles and seeking substantial allowances (which further indicates volunteerism's perceived overlap with paid work) women are also pulled toward caring roles as befitting their perceived role in rearing children and supporting the family. Additionally, it would seem that the commonly held view of women not being the family breadwinner may explain why allowances are less significant for them.

In terms of increasing the impact of volunteerism on both poverty and gender equality, volunteering-for-development organisations face a complex challenge and potential trade-off. In one sense, organisations may be tempted to work with accepted local gender norms, values and practices as this may make recruitment of volunteers and implementation easier. For example, an organisation running a health-related intervention in Korogocho is likely to find it easier to recruit female CHWs and, similarly, the community is more likely to accept the activities of women in a health-related project. There are also occasions when the sensitivity of an issue will demand volunteers of a particular gender. One participant, for example, stated how "female beneficiaries feel a lot more comfortable opening up to female volunteers". Religious and cultural beliefs may also dictate certain practices. Research respondents noted particular customs whereby men were not allowed to see the hair of a woman and women were not allowed to wash a man.

However, if volunteering-for-development organisations do choose to work with accepted normative gender roles they also run the risk of further entrenching such roles and potentially exacerbating gender inequality. The problem is that challenging such gender stereotypes through the recruitment of volunteers may have an impact on the effectiveness of an intervention; for example, recruiting only male CHWs for a project may represent a small step toward modelling new gender relations, but implementation may be significantly hampered if the community is slow to accept or resists the new roles. A substantial challenge is posed by the differing timescales of change. Whereas many development interventions operate to short-term implementation timescales, bringing about behavioural and societal change can take much longer. As a result, normative gender roles can go unchecked whilst volunteering programmes focus on more manageable and measurable short-term initiatives, which also often align better with the timescales and requirements of donors.

The challenge of not addressing established gender roles is accentuated when problems amongst sections of the population go unaddressed or remain hidden as a result. An interesting example revealed during the research was the issue of men's health in Korogocho. With the majority of CHWs being women, fears were expressed that sensitive issues relating to men's health were going untreated as some men did not feel comfortable interacting with women healthcare providers. As one CHW also stated, "for women it is more difficult to approach men because of social barriers". Henceforth, this example, which would be an interesting subject of further research, shows how the gender stereotypes associated with the roles of male and female volunteers can have negative consequences.

As described in the first section of analysis on community perceptions, wider perceptions of men and women can have an impact on volunteering. For example, with (young) men being the primary perpetrators of crime, they are less likely to be trusted in volunteer roles. As one male CHW reflected, "I will not be invited in as they see me as a thief". Female CHWs noted how the community's perception that women 'gossip' presented a challenge when dealing with the confidential information of patients. Often CHWs had to prove that they were trustworthy, which involved building relationships over time. Another CHW mentioned how "some women see women CHWs as husband snatchers" and so refuse to cooperate.

Key messages

Community perceptions when it comes to gender can present both challenges and opportunities, although there may have to be a trade-off between the two; the key is understanding the local context, raising awareness surrounding the roles of volunteers and their activities within the community, and complementing short-term projects with longer-term initiatives that can bring about systemic change by gradually introducing new more equitable gender roles.

Gendered social expectations in Korogocho and their impact on volunteering

The community perceptions of men and women have already been discussed but it is worth delving a little deeper into how the social expectations associated with gender affect volunteering. For many, the gender relations at the family or household level are particularly influential. For both men and women there is an expectation that supporting the family, whether it be through monetary or non-monetary means, is a priority. Unfortunately for volunteerism, responses from participants suggest that volunteering can potentially come into conflict with that priority in some cases, as these three quotes illustrate:

> "when they [men] go to volunteer, when they come back, the woman will look at the house and if they are out of food, she will look at the man and ask why there is no food… a man's coin means a lot".
> Village elder

> "a man faces challenges because there is an expectation of the community that they provide for their families".
> Member of local self-help group

> "as a woman, you may volunteer all day and come back and the husband will not understand and beat her. This demotivates and puts people off."
> Member of support group

For men there is the social expectation that they earn money to provide for the household whereas for women, there is an expectation that their place is in the home supporting the family through activities such as food preparation and childcare. In both cases, volunteering can be taken as a desertion of those duties that they are socially expected to do and can lead to household tensions and, predominantly for women, abuse. With the Korogocho Socio-economic Survey estimating that 55% of domestic disputes in Korogocho revolve around household finances, volunteering for no or little financial return can put pressure on family and relationship dynamics. In a story which was met with some amusement, a female volunteer recounted how "my husband used to ask if he married the 'Red Cross' because I used to help other people all the time".

Interestingly the gendered nature of social expectations at the household level can also be seen to impact upon the degree and type of volunteering taking place. It was widely acknowledged that "men are breadwinners so they do not have much time to volunteer", which partly explains why one participant went as far as to say that 80% of volunteers in Korogocho are women (although this cannot be confirmed). It is likely that such an observation is based on what are perceived to be 'genuine' volunteers rather than those purely seeking allowances and stipends. As the previous section suggested, the blurred line between volunteerism and paid work in Korogocho contributes to predominantly men seeking 'paid' volunteer opportunities as a means of fulfilling their role as breadwinners for their families.

The social expectation that women support the family means that many spend much more time in immediate vicinity of the home than their male counterparts. The result is that women are also more likely to engage in informal volunteering, particularly in the form of helping neighbours and maintaining shared spaces. As one participant observed, "as an African woman, it is part of my life, I clean the outside area for my neighbours". Such observations suggest that women are engaging in forms of informal volunteering, much of which is likely going unrecognised possibly because it is not even locally identified as volunteering.

Gender and the risks posed to volunteers

Korogocho is not a safe place and volunteers face risks associated with that insecurity. The 2010 Korogocho Socio-economic Survey found that "a large proportion of the residents live below the poverty line and thus engage in illegal activities such as brewing and selling of traditional liquour (*chang'aa*) to mugging and petty crimes as a means of survival" (Gathuthi et al, 2010:64). In the same study over 500 questionnaire responses revealed that 'insecurity' was the main problem at village level, accounting for 46% of answers, far more than the next most numerous issues of inadequate health facilities and the prevalence of disease (both on 7% of responses).

Insecurity in Korogocho encompasses important gender dynamics, with women more likely to be victims of crime. They are also more likely to fear being a victim and feel insecure outside the home. Although 63% of men reported not feeling a sense of personal safety in Korogocho, this figure rises to 75% for women, illustrating how women are more likely to be fearful of crime in going about their daily activities (Gathuthi et al, 2010). The risk of insecurity is also not equal across the community, with the villages of Korogocho A, Grogan A, Grogan B and Githathuru being documented as particularly unsafe (Gathuthi et al, 2010). Neighbourhood mapping exercises with local residents additionally highlighted specific 'hotspots' as places to avoid because of the increased risk of crime. Interestingly for volunteering-for-development organisations, it was eye-opening how local residents immediately knew the areas to avoid and when – some places were safe during the day but not at night whilst others were unsafe at all times of day. Such local knowledge can be crucial for ensuring the safety of volunteers, avoiding certain at-risk areas or, alternatively, focusing volunteer efforts if the intervention aims to address insecurity. On initial visits to Korogocho, the lead researcher found it almost impossible to identify high-risk areas and had to rely on local advice. The case goes to show how external development organisations can quickly build their understanding by heeding and engaging local expertise.

Female volunteers face increased risks in comparison to their male counterparts. One male participant commented, "there is a lot of risk for women", whilst another noted how "there are places where men can go and women cannot". The risks are heightened for CHWs, who often have to care for patients in their homes. Participants described cases of men pretending to be sick in order to lure CHWs into their homes in order to abuse them, whilst others feared intervening in cases of domestic abuse because of the risks of assault and being

accused of encouraging women to disobey their husbands. A number of harrowing stories were recounted in workshops including the case of one CHW who was caring for a wife in the home who later died, causing the husband to 'go wild threatening rape'. In another example one CHW stated,

> **"Women face more challenges. I once had a client who used to touch me in a suggestive manner yet I went all the way to attend to him. He used to lure me into his home, trying to sleep with me. I had to cut off all ties with him."**
> Local CHW

The gendered dimensions to poverty in Korogocho

The dynamics of poverty in Korogocho vary significantly according to gender, with women being likely to earn less than men and more likely to go hungry on a regular basis, live in overcrowded homes, be marginalised from decision-making processes and be the victims of crime.[5] Consequently, if volunteering impacts negatively rather than positively upon the wellbeing of volunteers, these impacts are likely to be more acutely felt by women volunteers.

In terms of income, women in Korogocho earn approximately 10% less than men, with the female average being Ksh7,160 a month compared to Ksh7,922 for men. A similar disparity exists in relation to women and men who operate their own businesses: women business operators earn a monthly average of Ksh6,706 compared to Ksh7,299 for men. Research findings from workshops with female CHWs suggest that volunteering may be a contributing factor to this inequality, particularly for business owners. Female CHWs operating their own businesses noted how their source of livelihood is negatively impacted because they are continually called away on volunteer duties. As one CHW stated, "our businesses fail because we are never really there to look after the business". Another female CHW observed how, "even when we are out there volunteering, we are never really settled on duty because you keep on worrying about providing for your family".

Where volunteering interventions place an emphasis on community engagement and nurturing locally led development, there is also potential to reduce gender inequality by increasing women volunteers' involvement in local decision-making. It has been documented that women are "marginalised... they do not participate

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5. In terms of housing, the 2010 Korogocho Socio-economic Survey found that male-headed households average 2.8 people per room compared to 3.3 for female-headed households. Male-headed households are also more likely to have cemented rather than earth flooring. Regarding nutrition, 64% of survey respondents reported having less than enough to eat. As a result, 45% of people said they frequently or very frequently missed a meal. Crucially in terms of gender, 50% of women reported missing meals frequently or very frequently compared to 33% of men. The main reason why people skipped meals was a lack of income which was the stated reason for 91% of respondents (Gathuthi et al, 2010).

actively, and where they do they are outnumbered by men and therefore their voice and influence is minimal in the greater Korogocho community" (Gathuthi et al, 2010:76). Research findings have revealed that such marginalisation extends to volunteering interventions, particularly amongst the predominantly female CHWs, who referred to multiple examples where they were either discouraged or not given the opportunity to input into the design and implementation of projects. However, there is potential for volunteerism to act as a beacon for gender equality where women volunteers are empowered and given a say in how local development initiatives are run.

Key messages

How volunteering impacts upon the wellbeing of volunteers is not gender-neutral and has the real potential to exacerbate gender inequality if those impacts are negative. Additionally, thoroughly assessing and understanding the varying gender impacts in terms of volunteer wellbeing has the potential to enable volunteering to better reduce, rather than unwittingly accentuate, gender inequality.

Implications

- Normative gender perceptions have a substantial impact on the roles of female and male volunteers in Korogocho. In many cases they act to pigeon-hole men and women to particular volunteer roles and activities. Development organisations working with volunteers may find themselves having to navigate complex gendered social expectations, values and practices in implementing initiatives.

- A sensitive challenge is posed to volunteering-for-development organisations as to whether they work with existing gendered perceptions and volunteer roles or seek to change them. To some degree, a trade-off exists between the two. Making use of the gendered separation of volunteer roles may help to facilitate the quick implementation of projects, as the community is less likely to resist efforts from volunteers adhering to accepted local norms, such as women providing healthcare as CHWs. However, such an approach also risks further cementing existing normative gender perceptions and potentially provides tacit support to them by external organisations.

- Timescales of change vary according to different development issues. For example, having volunteers build a school may be accomplished relatively quickly compared to bringing about behavioural change in a community such as Korogocho. How, where and why volunteering leads to change is thus inherently linked to when. Modelling more equitable gender relations is likely to be a long-term process which necessitates sustained interventions and may need to also be balanced against the need for the short-term implementation of other projects. In addition to understanding the local context and raising awareness of the roles of volunteers in the community, bringing about systemic change with regard to gender equality requires better integration of both long and short-term interventions.

- The existing tendency for men or women to take on particular volunteer roles is potentially masking development issues and preventing treatment from reaching under-served sections of the population. One example from the research suggests that male health may be significantly unaddressed in the community due to the majority of CHWs being women. There are likely to be other examples pertaining to both men and women, and the issue warrants further research.

- Some men and women fear that volunteering will undermine their ability to fulfil their socially expected duties in supporting their families, leading to potential repercussions including general disapproval and even abuse. For men in Korogocho, not receiving a financial reward from volunteering to support their families represents a barrier, whereas women are more likely to view volunteering's time commitment as something that takes them away from their expected supportive role within the household. Such dynamics have significant implications for the design and implementation of volunteering programmes.

- Where allowances are offered, the confusion between volunteering and paid work combines with gender stereotypes to attract more men to 'paid' volunteer opportunities. The community perception of men as the primary family breadwinners means that men are more likely to view the allowances associated with some volunteering opportunities as a source of income to support their families when they cannot secure better-paid employment. The implication for volunteering-for-development organisations is that such volunteers are also more likely to be motivated by a desire to financially support their families than to bring about community development.

- The difference in normative gender roles has an impact on where and what type of volunteering takes place. For example, whereas it is socially expected that men travel in search of work, women are more likely to spend their time around the home. As a result, women were observed to undertake more volunteering activities than men in the immediate vicinity of the home. Additionally, these activities are predominantly unstructured and informal in nature such as cleaning shared spaces or helping neighbours.

- Insecurity affects female volunteers more than their male counterparts. Insecurity also varies spatially and temporally across communities, which affects where and when volunteers are most at risk. This has implications for the geographical focus and timing of volunteer activities. Importantly, local people are often acutely aware of particularly high-risk areas and hotspots. Engaging with their local expertise is likely to be crucial in understanding and ensuring the safety of volunteers.

- Different types of volunteer face specific risks, which also often vary for men and women. For example, female CHWs face additional risks in conducting their activities in both public and private spaces. Understanding such dynamics and adapting practices can reduce the level of risk that volunteers are exposed to. For female CHWs, one solution has been to work in pairs when treating patients in their homes.

- Poverty in Korogocho varies according to gender, with women likely to be poorer than men. It is thus important that volunteering-for-development organisations understand the complexities surrounding the impact of volunteering on a volunteer's wellbeing. If a volunteer's wellbeing is improved through volunteering then it may have a positive impact on gender equality. However, if it has a negative impact then women may be further driven into poverty.

- Women experience marginalisation from decision-making in Korogocho. Although women volunteers reported not being given an opportunity to input into some volunteering interventions, there is real potential for volunteerism to engage and empower women volunteers and thereby act as a beacon for inclusion and the establishment of more equitable gender relations.

7. Partners

There can be a tendency to view development 'partners' or the act of partnering as something that is done when larger development organisations select implementing partners to deliver on the ground or conversely when locally rooted organisations gain funding partners for initiatives. They are, in essence, two sides of the same process. However, what this research has found is that, although partnering between organisations is important, an often overlooked but no less crucial issue is the dynamic between the community itself and development partners. A key line of enquiry for this research was which partners work most effectively with volunteers and meet the needs of the community, thereby twisting the viewpoint from what is best for development organisations to what is best for the community.

Community representatives highlighted a number of examples in which development organisations, both internal and external to Korogocho, had had a negative impact on the community. In the case of external NGOs and agencies, most concerns related to a lack of sustained or sustainable initiatives; unwittingly creating financial dependency through the use of stipends/allowances for volunteers and handouts to residents; having overly high expectations of volunteers; and top-down programming without genuine consultation or input from local volunteers that made assumptions about what the community needed. In these cases negative consequences were largely unexpected and unintended, although no less significant as a result.

One respondent noted how the "community have some memories of NGOs who worked earlier and moved on". Unfortunately Korogocho is not an easy place for external NGOs to work, especially due to security concerns, which has led to some starting and then quickly terminating their work, others deliberately conducting very short projects to minimise their time in the community, and others deciding not to work there in the first place. The lack of long term interventions came in for particular criticism. As one local religious leader stated,

> "three quarters of NGOs benefit for themselves, they 'hire and fire' volunteers for three months but then leave them poor. Even churches do the same."
> Local religious leader

A perceived problem with external NGOs is a short-termism that only offers temporary relief – such as through short project contracts for volunteers – but does little to make a long-term sustainable difference.

However, in amongst the various interventions are also examples of better practice where external organisations have worked hard and persisted in establishing a presence in the community and in building relationships with local groups and residents. In some cases this has involved building sustained long-term relationships with trusted local partners, such as Concern Worldwide's partnership with the Redeemed Gospel Church, whereas in others, activities are based around an actual physical property in the community. Provide International, for example, which works extensively with CHWs, is well known and respected for having a facility in the heart of Korogocho.

Many long-term volunteering initiatives (and development initiatives more generally) have sought to address basic gaps in service provision, such as healthcare and education, and have had a significant impact both in their selected areas and through spillover effects such as increased local employment. The following story collected from a local resident provides an illuminating example:

> "A man and his wife lived here in Korogocho in Grogon. Both the man and woman were not educated. Because of lack of education this couple ended up having ten children. Taking care of these children was difficult. They had problems in feeding, educating and clothing the children. The woman decided to join the [local church]. Her pastor used to encourage her to never give up. He would occasionally support her as they could go for days without food. It was terrible! This woman decided to pray to God to look on her. Amidst all the struggles, her husband became a real drunkard. He was less concerned about the family. One night at about 10 pm, her pastor made a surprise visit to their home. "Mama, God has finally answered our prayers," the pastor announced. The reason being that, within the neighbourhood, [an international organisation] was starting a school for destitute children and they needed a cook. This job was given to her and it changed her life and family. As we are talking, this woman still cooks for the children in this school and all her children have also been offered sponsorship. They are living happily. The husband stopped drinking."
> Local resident

In this case the sustained presence of the externally funded school not only provided a source of livelihood to the lead character of the story but expanded to support the children into education.

It is noticeable that many residents rely on the services provided by development organisations where they address basic needs such as education and healthcare. It is easy to see such interventions as cultivating a form of community dependency, but at the same time, if the support is sustained, they can also have long-term impacts by plugging gaps in state provision. Whilst providing such services indefinitely does run the risk of allowing the state to dodge its responsibility for providing basic services to its populace, there is undoubtedly an interim role to be played by development organisations until the state is better placed to take over. And emerging evidence suggests that this may be slowly occurring in Korogocho. After years of being under-served by government healthcare facilities, a new state-funded clinic was recently completed in Korogocho. The following story from a local community member describes what happened:

> "When [a local CBO] started, there were no health facilities any closer. We experienced an overflow of patients seeking medical and health services. During this period we did hundreds of referrals to major health facilities like Mbagathi District Hospital and Kenyatta National Hospital. The Government, through the Ministry of Health, got very interested in our work and some staff were seconded to our clinic at the chief's camp. With a statistic of almost 200 patients every day, the Government saw the need to expand to another facility close by. As it were, there was no available space elsewhere and so, the Government built another medical clinic within the same compound where we are at the chief's camp. This was a good idea to allow us autonomy and for the Government to offer affordable services to the people."
> Local resident

As one CHW stated, the new health facility made people in Korogocho "feel they are being recognised by the government". The government and local administration are also often important partners to, at least, gain the approval of when implementing interventions in the community.

Slightly less well received have been the state's other interventions through the Korogocho Slum Upgrading Programme (KSUP), which is being taken forward under a partnership of various government agencies, the Italian Development Cooperation and other development institutions such as UN-Habitat. Workshop participants noted mixed community reactions to a number of the initiatives under the KSUP, such as the construction of new roads. Despite attempts at community consultation through the establishment of the Korogocho Residents Committee (KRC), its functioning appears to have been marred by claims of corruption. Challenges have included allegations that the treasurer of the committee was a former gangster and that, despite being required to undertake elections to their posts every two years, members had refused to stand down in 2010. Community reflections on the KSUP suggest that lessons relating to the importance of engaging communities and formulating interventions jointly with them apply just as much to the state in its role as a development partner.

Accusations of deliberate exploitation of volunteers and the community were directed more towards locally based organisations and individuals. Cited examples included local NGOs not disbursing funds intended for either volunteers or community members and unscrupulous individuals mobilising volunteers to attract the attention of development NGOs and then disappearing once they received funding. Cases of the latter are often referred to as 'briefcase NGOs', where organisations exist on paper but little else. The following extracts provide examples:

> "Someone will bring volunteers together but when something big or little comes, then they disappear. So in the future they [donors] won't trust volunteers."
> Member of local CBO

> "A pastor and a popular musician, who lived in Korogocho some time back, came, mobilised the youth, took pictures and promised to come back and offer some training and empowerment programmes for the youth only to disappear, never to be heard of again. We know him and we are waiting for him with knives because of his betrayal."
> Volunteer member of local youth group

> "People have learnt not to trust locals because they believe people from the community, just like our leaders, can just be mischievous and even lie about helping us. However, help from a 'white man' – the community believe – is genuine."
> Local volunteer

An emerging implication from such observations is that international volunteers may be able to better overcome local suspicions and be trusted by the community. Certainly, references in Korogocho to *mzungus*, or 'white people', being more 'genuine' suggest that international volunteers largely avoid the associations with corruption and malpractice that accompany many local leaders and indigenous development organisations. Although there could be a role for international volunteers in terms of the skills they bring and the potential increased trust they may introduce to local initiatives, there are a number of likely challenges. Firstly, whilst they may be more trusted by the local people, international volunteers also have

to contend with other community perceptions which may be more problematic. One of these is the view that international volunteers, staff or visitors have significant financial resources. As a result local people are attracted to international volunteers more in the hope of receiving allowances or materials than of contributing to local development. This can be a substantial barrier and cause projects to stall. The *Valuing Volunteering* lead researcher encountered this perception issue many times and was frequently asked in the community what they had brought to give them.

Secondly, as 'outsiders' who are highly visible in the community, international volunteers are at greater risk in terms of their personal security. Their association with having money and resources, as stated above, also makes them more of a target in Korogocho. Thirdly, using international volunteers may not actually help in empowering people to lead their own development or building local trust in indigenous community development organisations. Any intervention using international volunteers would certainly have to position itself delicately so as to take a purely supportive role in enabling local efforts rather than being seen to lead them. To summarise, there is a potential role for international volunteers but it needs to be carefully balanced against the challenges they are likely to face, some of which are significant.

Whilst some corrupt local organisations disappear with funding, others simply do not disburse the funds they receive. Religious leaders noted how some churches fundraise for scholarships and then do not release the funds. One participant highlighted another case in which

> "one organisation, still existing, they say they are assisting single mothers; they said they would give a monthly allowance but they don't give anything".
> Local religious leader

There was also a feeling expressed that smaller local organisations were exploited by larger ones. As one religious leader commented, "the NGOs and bigger churches use the smaller indigenous churches but at the end of the day the benefit only comes to the big churches and does not trickle down". Part of the problem may lie in a lack of capacity and capability of funding organisations (or partners) to screen and follow-up on local partners. As the 2010 Korogocho Socio-economic Survey found, "leaders at grassroots level are corrupt because institutions do not make follow-ups on them. There are allegations that the genuinely poor do not benefit from NGOs" (Gathuthi et al, 2010:66).

For donor development organisations, a strong implication to emerge from such findings is the vital importance of not only ensuring that initial partner selection processes are thorough and fit-for-purpose but also that suitable organisational time and resources are allocated to monitoring, evaluating and following up on how funds are spent. Over the course of the *Valuing Volunteering Kenya* research, numerous examples were encountered both in Korogocho and elsewhere where financial and project implementation reporting was inaccurate or falsified. Typical practices included 'massaging' attendance figures at training events, fake receipts, exaggerated project budgets, countless 'coincidences' where spend would exactly fit the planned budget (with fake receipts often playing a role), and secret agreements whereby a cut of the funds would end up in the pockets of staff members. Revealingly, some of these practices were reported to take place in the local partners of some major and internationally respected volunteering-for-development organisations. Such observations suggest that current systems suffer from a lack of effective implemented checks and balances.

For donors, however, choosing partners that have, or appear to have, robust processes and systems in place is not necessarily the simple solution it may seem to be. In fact, *Valuing Volunteering Kenya* has found there is hidden complexity in the partner selection process. For example, in a number of cases, donor organisations and volunteering-for-development organisations were observed to partner with, and place volunteers in, well-established organisations (some even international organisations and agencies themselves), with common justifications being that such organisations had volunteer management processes in place or gave the donor access to particular communities through their operations. Some organisations and donors were even perceived to partner with other prestigious organisations in order to benefit from their status and reputation. However, such motivations pose serious risks if the desire for increased profile undermines a voluntary organisation's central goal of enabling development. The research also found that, in some cases, the justification of extending organisational operations by partnering with large international organisations is misplaced, with little observed impact in reaching out to working with the poorest and most vulnerable populations.

Having set criteria for selecting partner organisations can be a way of minimising risk for donors and organisations looking for hosts for their volunteers. However, an important dynamic that needs to be considered is that those organisations closest to communities and the poor living within them are often, also, those local organisations that lack skills, capacity and the processes that are often demanded by donors. Research in Kenya in 2008 by United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and VSO Jitolee found that of 106 voluntary organisations surveyed, 40% reported that they did not have a policy in place for managing either staff or volunteers (UNV/VSO Jitolee, 2008). Local CBOs and associations were also less likely to have strategic or work plans. Such organisations may not have human resources policies or strategic plans but they often have immediate access to the marginalised and vulnerable populations that volunteering-for-development seeks to help. There will, of course, continue to be local organisations that are established with ulterior motives but there are also those that are well placed to facilitate locally led development but lack the skills to do so. Carefully selecting and building trusted relationships with such partners is likely to increase volunteerism's impact in bringing about change for the poorest people.

An unfortunate side-effect of corruption has been the increased due diligence checks conducted (though not always adequately) by donors and coordinating organisations, which have had a negative impact on the capacity of genuine small voluntary CBOs. In one example of a local CBO promoting community-based volunteering in Korogocho, the often extremely onerous process of proving their legitimate credentials to potential donors was often too great for an organisation run purely on voluntary effort. As a result they missed out on numerous potential funding applications and continually struggled to sustain their operations, which relied predominantly on small member contributions. Ensuring that partner selection processes are appropriate and fit for purpose was thus found to be essential for enabling even the resource-poor yet genuine local organisations to be considered as candidates.

Key messages

The issue of partners and partnerships is a complex one for communities, donors and implementing organisations. However, the central consideration, which is sometimes lost within organisational planning, is what partnerships are best for local people, and particularly the poorest and most marginalised local people.

In Korogocho, external partners need to give more consideration to ensuring they do not have a negative impact. Research findings suggest that some larger international NGOs have occasionally been guilty of unwittingly making things worse, whether it be through short-term interventions that do not give enough thought to sustainability, creating financial dependency or adopting top-down 'one size fits all' approaches that assume they know what is best for communities.

Selecting local partners is also challenging. Whilst there are genuine organisations, participants also noted widespread corrupt practices with funds not being disbursed to volunteers and recipients, and 'briefcase NGOs' making fraudulent claims for funding and exploiting the goodwill of volunteers. For genuine local groups and CBOs, the unintended consequence of this is that they often lack the skills and capacity to meet the criteria set by donor organisations.

Implications

- **One partner that is often not given due consideration is the community.** Partnerships can take many forms but if the development goal is to improve the lives of poor and marginalised people, then the communities in which they live are vital partners. Placing **more importance on communities as partners** is likely to give greater priority to engaging local people and ensuring interventions directly address local needs.

- **Many short-term development interventions were identified as having a minimal sustainable impact.** Security concerns often hampered or discouraged development organisations from engaging in prolonged initiatives in the community. As such there may be a need for external development organisations to realistically assess how security risks and working to shorter timescales are likely to impact on the long-term viability and sustainability of interventions.

- **Long-term sustained initiatives were seen to have more of an impact** in Korogocho. In some cases, this entailed **taking the time to build trusted relationships with local partners**, whereas in others **organisations established their own physical presence in the community**. Interventions that had the most impact typically **filled gaps in basic service provision**, such as healthcare and education. Whilst **providing such services indefinitely is not a substitute for having them provided by the state**, there are encouraging findings from Korogocho that **interventions can temporarily provide the required basic services until the state is ready to take over**.

- **Partner selection processes are often ineffective and risk discounting potentially valuable local partners.** Partnering and placing volunteers with prestigious international institutions also risks placing organisational status and profile above the priority of helping poor people. **Genuine local organisations often struggle to meet partnership criteria or lack the capacity to undertake due diligence checks.** However, local partners are potentially the most important for gaining access to marginalised and vulnerable populations, and nurturing champions of locally led development. **Ensuring partner selection processes take such considerations into account** is likely to enable volunteering to be a more effective tool for development in the hands of the right partners.

- **Corruption and malpractice are issues which, unfortunately, do occur particularly amongst local development and voluntary organisations.** Robust and appropriate processes are required in order to select the best and most worthy partners. However, **this needs to be balanced against the understanding and realisation that some genuine local partners may lack the capacity to comply with onerous processes**. Providing support in such cases may be appropriate.

- The act of partnering should not be seen as finishing once an initial selection is made. Findings suggest that **it is just as important for donors and volunteering-for-development organisations to invest in ongoing monitoring, evaluation and follow-ups to ensure the continued validity of partners**.

- Evidence suggests that there **may be a role for international volunteers** in communities such as Korogocho as they are seen as being more trustworthy and less likely to engage in corrupt practices. However, this **needs to be balanced against associated challenges such as perceptions of bringing financial resources; security risks**; and the potential for local people to only participate in externally facilitated initiatives rather than locally led development.

5. Reflections on the process

The value of the process

The research process aimed to model an approach for volunteering-for-development interventions that prioritises community needs and local dynamics over top-down programming and an emphasis on partner selection. By not approaching the research setting with a specific agenda and only the broad goal of understanding where, when and how volunteering is effective, findings were allowed to emerge naturally. As a result the research had inbuilt flexibility to adapt and further investigate interesting issues in a timely fashion. The depth of knowledge and information acquired over the course of the investigation is testament to the approach.

In setting up the Korogocho action research team, the approach demonstrated how an international volunteer could work with local counterparts to develop locally rooted understanding of and solutions to complex development challenges. Upon arriving at their placement in a local partner organisation, the first challenge for the lead researcher was resisting the temptation to dive straight into setting up a research team. Instead, initial months were spent developing relationships with local counterparts and gaining a feel for local dynamics. It quickly became apparent that most of the activities of other NGOs in the area aimed at understanding community needs were short-term or one-off events with limited opportunities for participation or empowerment. They also tended to get 'hijacked' by attendees more interested in receiving a 'sitting allowance' than genuinely participating. Setting up a research group was additionally impeded by the significant number of local 'briefcase' NGOs that existed only on paper in the hope of receiving funding.

Building local relationships allowed these potential stumbling blocks to be successfully navigated. With the help of a local counterpart, who had in-depth experience of the Korogocho context, a volunteer team of representatives from a range of local CBOs and volunteer groups was recruited. Crucially, the variety of volunteers involved in the research group provided continual opportunities for extending the reach of the research. As an example, the diversity in the team enabled access to a range of groups including CHWs, local CBOs, the community radio station, village elders and religious elders, the area chief and various mutual aid and support groups.

Members were given training on a range of participatory techniques including systems mapping and given the freedom to steer the research process. This gave them ownership whilst the training in systems and critical thinking enabled them to deconstruct and better understand the complex factors that cause poverty in Korogocho; ultimately they were then better positioned to take positive action to address the causes of that poverty. Over the course of nearly two years of research, the majority of team members remained engaged. And even after the fieldwork officially concluded, members ran radio shows on local stations to discuss findings from their work.

The lead researcher's volunteer placement in a local CBO was vital in building the right relationships with colleagues that had the appropriate connections in the community. Furthermore, initially living in close proximity to Korogocho and the host organisation helped to build trust and provided a good source of initial conversation in establishing working relationships.

Consequences and challenges of the research process

It was encouraging that the coordinator of the research team subsequently succeeded in being appointed to the post of coordinator of the national Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIO) Network. Over the course of the research a number of members of the research team changed jobs, completed studies or secured new opportunities. The continually changing circumstances of the local researchers did present a challenge to the research in terms of maintaining the team's dynamics. However, it is to the credit of members that many stayed committed to participating in the research even after their individual circumstances changed.

It was disappointing that more action was not incorporated within the research cycles whilst the lead researcher was in-country. However following the fieldwork, members have conducted sessions on local radio shows discussing and providing accurate information on volunteering. The team also hopes to be able to pilot a participatory budgeting exercise, whereby local groups will pitch ideas for small-scale volunteering initiatives to their peers. Nevertheless, a number of factors limited the amount of action that took place. Firstly, it took much longer than first anticipated to build an understanding of the complexity of the local context. It was felt that undertaking activities before the full picture was better understood ran the risk of causing more harm than good. Secondly, the much anticipated Kenyan national elections which took place in March 2013 dominated the early months of the research placement and made organising other activities, such as establishing the research group, very challenging. As a result the research team did not properly start its work until May 2013.

Thirdly, from May 2014 the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advised against travel to low-income areas of Nairobi which meant that, as an international VSO volunteer, the lead researcher was prohibited from entering Korogocho. The security advisory was issued largely in response to the perceived threat posed by the Al-Shabaab terrorist organisation and groups affiliated to them, as well as general levels of insecurity in Nairobi's informal settlements. Although the research team remained active, it did present a challenge in terms of the lead researcher not being able to access the community to help facilitate activities.

The lead researcher's positionality with regard to the research site

As the lead researcher and only white 'Western' person living in the neighbourhood of Korogocho, I was constantly aware of my position as an 'outsider'. Interestingly, being a clearly identifiable 'foreigner' in such an environment had a number of advantages. Firstly, the fact that I was not choosing to live in the one of the Nairobi neighbourhoods frequented by 'expatriates' meant that I was perceived by local people as wanting to engage more with the community. As a result, I was able to build helpful relationships where I both lived and worked. The downside, however, was that I most likely experienced a greater level of 'culture shock' than other VSO volunteers who moved into accommodation of a higher standard in more developed parts of the city. Secondly, I actually felt safer in the local neighbourhood than in other areas with more international residents, even though my community was more frequently flagged in security advisories as being a potential site for unrest. The reason for this was that not living in a more international neighbourhood meant that I was not subject to the same level of threat directed towards international residents in those areas, such as muggings at gunpoint. In my neighbourhood, I believe I was seen more as a novelty than a potential target of criminal activity. Additionally, living in the same accommodation as local people helped to lessen the perception that I had belongings or a standard of living that would make me the target of crime.

Challenges were encountered in Korogocho where I was less well known and residents struggled to draw a line between me being an international volunteer and being a rich 'White Westerner' and a potential source of funding. As one participant said in a research workshop in which I was present, "they see a mzungu [white person], like in this meeting, and they think there is money". At times throughout the broader *Valuing Volunteering* project it was particularly testing as I would regularly receive emails, phone calls and texts from various (often unknown) people asking for assistance and opportunities. This presented an interesting challenge to my initial volunteer motivations. I had planned and hoped to make as much of a difference during my time in Kenya as possible, which saw me at the start of my placement trying to offer assistance wherever it was requested. However, it quickly became apparent that the sheer volume of requests meant that it was not sustainable or even possible to attempt to address them all. As a result, I had to take the decision to focus on the core objectives of the project so as to not be overwhelmed.

My status as an international volunteer undoubtedly helped in creating interest in the research project. The 'outsider' status aided in gaining access to key stakeholders, and my perceived neutrality also meant that I could engage with sensitive issues such as ethnic affiliation and politics without being seen to be taking sides. However, there were challenges and potential disadvantages. I continually had to deal with and counter the perception that the research had a large budget which local people could benefit from and, as mentioned above, I had to deal with numerous requests for assistance and job opportunities. This was all the more challenging when requests came from people I was either working with or had an established friendship with. The downside was that, after a while, such requests led to me developing a natural suspicion of local people who attempted to become friends with me, as on many occasions it would be a precursor to asking for financial assistance.

6. Conclusions

The dynamics surrounding volunteerism in Korogocho forms its own complex though permeable system. Whilst local context and relationships play a vital role, these are also influenced by wider systemic factors.

National perceptions of volunteering create challenges for volunteering-for-development organisations looking to use volunteerism as a tool to reduce poverty. The widespread use of allowances and stipends has distorted views on volunteering, leading to a substantial grey area or blurred line between volunteering and low-paid work. For many poor people, volunteering has become a survival mechanism in the face of limited alternative options to secure a livelihood. For Kenya's many unemployed people, particularly young graduates, volunteering is often seen as a 'stepping stone' to formal employment and it is not unusual for people to believe that if they are patient in volunteering then a paid opportunity will eventually come their way. The fact that people are perceived to volunteer as a survival mechanism or 'stepping stone' means that volunteers are often seen negatively, either as only interested in personal gain or as conducting low-status activities such as rubbish collections or environmental clean-ups.

National perceptions are echoed in Korogocho's local dynamics. A pervasive finding, for example, was how most people felt there was misunderstanding of and confusion around what volunteering was. This created challenges for genuine volunteers, such as CHWs, who struggled with a lack of community trust and receptiveness to working with them. Being based in the community helps local volunteers build trust but they have to make concerted and sustained efforts to be effective. Interestingly such national and local perceptions do not affect all forms of volunteering in the same way. Whilst formal volunteering initiatives are often associated with paid allowances, which makes some question the motives of the volunteers, informal volunteering often occurs 'under the radar' without attracting such suspicions. One reason is that informal volunteering like self-help groups and individual unstructured actions is rarely regarded or acknowledged as volunteering.

Both formal and informal volunteering have a significant impact in improving the wellbeing of people in Korogocho. Formal volunteering schemes were seen to plug critical gaps in public service provision, especially in healthcare and education. They also support some of Korogocho's most vulnerable people such as at-risk women, drug addicts and criminals. Whilst many interventions are funded and/or run by external donors, there are also local CBOs using volunteers to make valuable contributions. Some have even succeeded in gaining funding and growing to become NGOs. Informal volunteering was found to be extensive in Korogocho, yet little recognised and even less appreciated. Self-help groups in which 'volunteers' often double as 'beneficiaries' were seen to be increasing community resilience to development challenges and positively impacting on the wellbeing of members by improving self-esteem, confidence and support networks. Dedicated support groups were also helping particularly vulnerable groups such as single young mothers and people living with HIV/AIDS. Informal volunteering was also reported through the individual activities in people's social networks, where it could be viewed as an expression of social capital. Whilst labelling informal volunteering and attempting to measure it might allow for its contribution to reducing poverty to be better valued, there is also a risk that such efforts may formalise something which is most effective because it is ambiguous, sometimes impromptu and largely considered to be normative community behaviour.

A range of reasons were revealed for why people volunteer. The most obvious distinction was between monetary and non-monetary motivations, with many respondents claiming that those who were primarily not motivated by financial gain were the 'genuine' volunteers who would be dedicated to making a difference for the benefit of others. Whilst there is undoubtedly some truth in this, the realities of life in Korogocho mean that many people simply cannot afford to volunteer without some form of compensation to cover food, transport or the opportunity cost of what they could earn whilst volunteering. For volunteering-for-development organisations a challenge exists in providing allowances that cover expenses without veering into the grey area of confusing the activity with paid work, and also in finding suitable and reliable local volunteers to work with. There can be a temptation to offer higher allowances to attract volunteers, but the research found little evidence that this succeeded in attracting more skilled, dedicated or reliable local volunteers. In fact the opposite was more likely to be the case. As a result, external NGOs often have to sift through large numbers of volunteers with short-term contracts in what was referred to as a 'hire-and-fire' approach in order to find good volunteers. Once reliable volunteers were found, external NGOs would usually try hard to retain them and effectively 'own' them, even when, in cases such as CHWs, they are a community-owned resource. There are, however, alternative ways to finding good volunteers. The research found that recruiting volunteers who had previously worked for free was effective as the volunteers' motivations had essentially already been proven. Offering training opportunities instead of, or alongside, a reduced basic allowance was also viewed as a potential way of disincentivising some of the most monetarily motivated applicants.

When financial gain was not the primary motivating factor, volunteers mentioned being driven by wanting to make a difference and 'being the change' they wanted to see. Importantly, volunteers said they were most motivated to continue to volunteer when they could visibly see or experience the positive impacts of their work. This implies that better involving volunteers in the review, monitoring and evaluation of interventions may also be a complementary way of sustaining volunteer efforts. Volunteers noted how gaining personal and professional skills were motivating factors and, for some, an unexpected benefit. Issues that lowered volunteer motivations were feelings of being exploited, undervalued and not respected. Having people take credit for their activities was also a frustration.

Stipends and allowances have a substantial impact on volunteering in Korogocho. Worryingly for volunteering-for-development organisations, findings unexpectedly revealed that the payment of relatively large allowances is creating financial dependency that is undermining the capacity of resource-poor local organisations to attract and work with volunteers. Many local volunteers simply refuse to give their time to local groups and CBOs which cannot afford to pay them an allowance. Instead they direct their attention to acquiring more lucrative opportunities with external NGOs. The stipend culture was thus seen to be making things worse rather than better.

The varying levels of stipends was seen to fuel community suspicions of corruption as any organisations paying less than whoever paid the most were perceived to be embezzling funds. Additionally, the varying amounts create competition between local volunteers for the highest-paid opportunities. Once acquired, some volunteers will often go to great lengths to both retain them and ensure that any further opportunities are directed towards their family, friends or ethnic group. A negative side-effect is that some volunteers fear making their opinions known during the implementation of projects in case they are seen as being critical and taken off the project. The result is that interventions miss out on the immense local expertise of community volunteers and inadvertently become more top-down and less participatory.

The degree of community consultation and engagement as part of volunteering interventions was a recurring theme throughout the research. Repeatedly, volunteers and local residents noted how external NGOs would often only consult a select number of key stakeholders, which usually meant the chief and village elders. The voices of ordinary poor and marginalised people were rarely heard in the design or implementation of volunteering interventions in Korogocho. This situation is even worse for women, who are less included in local decision-making processes. Security concerns also mean that public consultation is either short and 'shallow' or that participants are ferried out of Korogocho to consultation venues elsewhere in Nairobi. This practice creates significant resentment among local participants who feel the money could be better spent on initiatives within the community. It is also a disempowering process as people are taken from their communities to the 'invited spaces' of venues that are controlled by consultants and development organisations (Gaventa, 2006).

Numerous gender dynamics in relation to volunteering were uncovered – some expected and others less so. Social expectations of the roles of men and women have led to clear gendered divisions between volunteering roles. Women, for example, are far more likely to be found in healthcare roles such as CHWs, reflecting their perceived normative gender role in looking after the family. Men, in contrast, are more likely to volunteer in more manual work roles such as construction or providing security. Interestingly, the research found that the perception of men as the primary income earners in households meant that they were more likely to view volunteering as an opportunity to gain an allowance. Gendered social expectations are thus intertwined with volunteerism's perceived overlap with low-paid work.

Normative gender roles affect the types of volunteering taking place in Korogocho and how the act of volunteering is perceived. For example, within the household, male and female volunteers recounted cases of being made to feel as if they were not fulfilling their expected family duties by their non-volunteering partner. For men, this amounted to not earning money from volunteering, whereas for women, volunteering was seen as taking them away from their duties in the home. In an unexpected finding, the fact that women do spend more of their time in the immediate vicinity of the home meant that they were more likely to engage in informal volunteering by cleaning shared spaces and helping neighbours.

Volunteers are sometimes placed at risk whilst volunteering, and these risks are often greater for women. CHWs, for example, have to deal with specific risks associated with helping people in public spaces and the private spaces of people's homes. Volunteering-for-development organisations also do not necessarily give enough consideration to the safety of volunteers when interventions may challenge vested interests within the community. As the ambassadors of projects on the ground, volunteers are often in the front line if there is resistance to change.

The wellbeing of volunteers is particularly significant in relation to women volunteers. Women in Korogocho earn on average 10% less than men, and in an already poor community this means women are likely to be even poorer than men. If a volunteering intervention is poorly designed or implemented and leads to negative impacts on the wellbeing of volunteers, there is a severe risk that women volunteers will be worse affected.

Volunteering-for-development organisations face a challenge with regard to how they can successfully implement volunteer interventions whilst also contributing to creating more equitable gender relations. There is a chance that the community will resist initiatives where volunteers are not used in expected gender roles, but at the same time not challenging such dynamics risks further entrenching gender relations that negatively impact women. Whilst short-term implementation may be required, organisations should also take a longer-term view and integrate dedicated gender goals to bring about sustained behavioural change.

In terms of development partners the most important is the community – something that is often lost in the world of implementing partners, coordinating partners and donors. There are many pitfalls that face external volunteering-for-development organisations looking to implement interventions in communities such as Korogocho. Without knowing the local context it may be difficult to know whom to trust and there are significant risks such as unwittingly selecting a local partner that consciously or unconsciously gives preferential treatment to a particular ethnicity. Ultimately, taking the time to understand the local context and build trusting long-term relationships with local partners were key components of success. Things tended to not go to plan when organisations failed to adequately screen local partners and/or not invest sufficiently in conducting follow-ups and thorough monitoring and evaluation.

The *Valuing Volunteering* research has revealed intricate dynamics regarding volunteering in Korogocho. Some of the findings were expected, with direct relationships between causes and effects. However, many were also unexpected, with indirect relationships such as the unintended impact of the allowances offered by external NGOs undermining the capacity of local voluntary CBOs. Volunteering is having a positive impact in Korogocho by providing basic services, helping vulnerable and marginalised groups and building resilience to development challenges. However, there also numerous challenges emanating from the national to the local scale that threaten to and do undermine the effectiveness of volunteering. There are even cases where the actions of development organisations make things worse.

Importantly, for volunteering-for-development organisations looking to understand and develop theories of change around how their interventions may work, the Korogocho research approach reveals that at least part of that development logic lies hidden in the community. Only through sustained engagement and participation that gives poor and marginalised people a say in how development happens is it likely that such local knowledge will be able to positively influence development interventions. The *Valuing Volunteering* research in Korogocho has modelled an approach and way of working that both empowers local people to better understand the challenges they face and acquires valuable learning that can be used by volunteering-for-development organisations to design better initiatives that have an increased likelihood of reducing poverty. Consequently, it is hoped that the research acts as an example to others wishing to facilitate development in a similar fashion.

7. Recommendations

1. Volunteering-for-development organisations need to ensure that their understanding of and approaches to volunteerism **integrate national and local perceptions and contexts**. Working definitions may have to be continually adapted over time as perceptions change, or varied geographically so as to **be relevant to the communities being worked with**.

2. Communities that trust volunteers are more likely to be more receptive to working with them, which increases effectiveness. Understanding which types of volunteers are most trusted by communities and the ways in which trust can be increased are therefore important. Organisations should aim to select and support volunteers to **facilitate the building of trusting relationships between volunteers and communities**.

3. Opportunities exist to **combine formal and informal volunteering into complementary system-wide interventions**. This involves understanding the local context and offers the potential to integrate the best bits of formal and informal volunteering. Facilitating locally owned self-help groups, for example, can combine the organisation and resources of large NGOs with the dedication and mutual support provided by local groups. Volunteering-for-development organisations should also explore how formal opportunities can be linked to and offer a progression from informal volunteering.

4. Genuine volunteers are motivated by wanting to make a difference and by **witnessing the impact of their efforts**. As such, volunteering-for-development organisations should explore possibilities for **involving local volunteers in monitoring and evaluation processes** or, at the least, ensure that they are included in the dissemination of findings on the impact of interventions.

5. Volunteering-for-development organisations should fundamentally re-examine any of their community consultation processes that entail **taking representatives away from their communities to external venues**. Wherever possible, **consultation and engagement should take place in the community**. If security concerns are used as justification for using external venues, then the organisation needs to seriously reconsider whether it should be working in the community at all.

6. Stipends and allowances have a major impact on volunteering in communities such as Korogocho and can create financial dependency that erodes local capacity to work with volunteers. Volunteering-for-development organisations need to thoroughly **assess the likely and unintended impacts** of offering allowances and tailor their approaches accordingly, bearing in mind that sometimes offering no allowance or compensation may negatively impact on the wellbeing of volunteers. **Balancing allowances with non-monetary incentives** such as training opportunities should be explored as a way of moving away from an allowances culture.

7. Dedicated gender goals need to be **integrated and mainstreamed** into volunteering interventions in order to establish more equitable gender relations. Such goals also need to form part of **longer-term programmes and strategies to bring about behavioural change**.

8. Volunteering-for-development organisations need to give more consideration to the **security of volunteers**, particularly local volunteers, and the increased risks faced by women. This also needs to encompass **the risk to the wellbeing** of local female volunteers in poor communities who face being pushed further into poverty if interventions negatively impact volunteers.

9. Volunteering-for-development organisations should adopt a **long-term approach** and take the time to **build trusting relationships with local partners**. They should also ensure that robust and ongoing mechanisms and processes are in place for **selecting and continually assessing the performance of partners**. Above all, decisions need to be taken that prioritise the needs of the most important partners – communities and the poorest and marginalised within them.

10. Volunteering-for-development organisations should explore volunteering approaches, such as that used by *Valuing Volunteering Kenya* in Korogocho, that both **empowers local communities to develop local solutions** and provides **valuable organisational learning** to help improve volunteerism's impact in reducing poverty. **Crucially, such approaches should be seen as an opportunity to involve volunteers in project design, community engagement and developing localised context-specific theories of change** rather than just during the implementation phase of interventions.

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9. Appendices

Appendix A: Specific Research Methods

The following provides a synthesis of the specific methods used during the course of the research.

a) Semi-structured interviews and informal discussions

Throughout the research process, semi-structured interviews were used by both the lead researcher and the research team. When conducting community research, every attempt was made to conduct interviews in the local setting. This was deliberate in order to empower people by allowing them to express their views in environments where they felt comfortable. For NGOs and CBOs interviews were often conducted at their offices, as representatives were expected to feel at ease in their own premises.

Before undertaking community interviews, volunteer researchers first received training in interview technique and practised using small group role play and in front of the whole team, with participants encouraged to provide constructive criticisms and suggestions. After discussing the appropriate procedure for conducting an interview and the initial questions the group wanted to ask, an interview guide was devised to act as an aid in the field. A copy of the interview guide is attached as Appendix 2.

During community consultations the research team split into groups of three and four and generally conducted interviews in pairs, taking it in turns to lead in asking questions and taking notes. Where there was a group of three, the third member would act as an additional question-asker or note-taker.

Following the interviews, notes were either typed up or used directly to inform the construction of systems maps.

b) Systems mapping

Korogocho is a complex place with a range of challenges and varied dynamics relating to volunteering. To embrace and make sense of this complexity, systems mapping was used to better understand the interrelations between issues and stakeholders and navigate mutually agreed ways forward.

The systems-mapping technique used standardised colour-coding to allow comparisons across maps conducted by different groups and over time. On the maps, red signifies issues, blue denotes stakeholders, green shows factual information and observations, and black indicates possible solutions and future lines of enquiry. Figure 8 shows a systems map constructed by members of the local research team.

Figure 8: A systems map of issues relating to development and volunteering in Korogocho drawn by members of the local research team
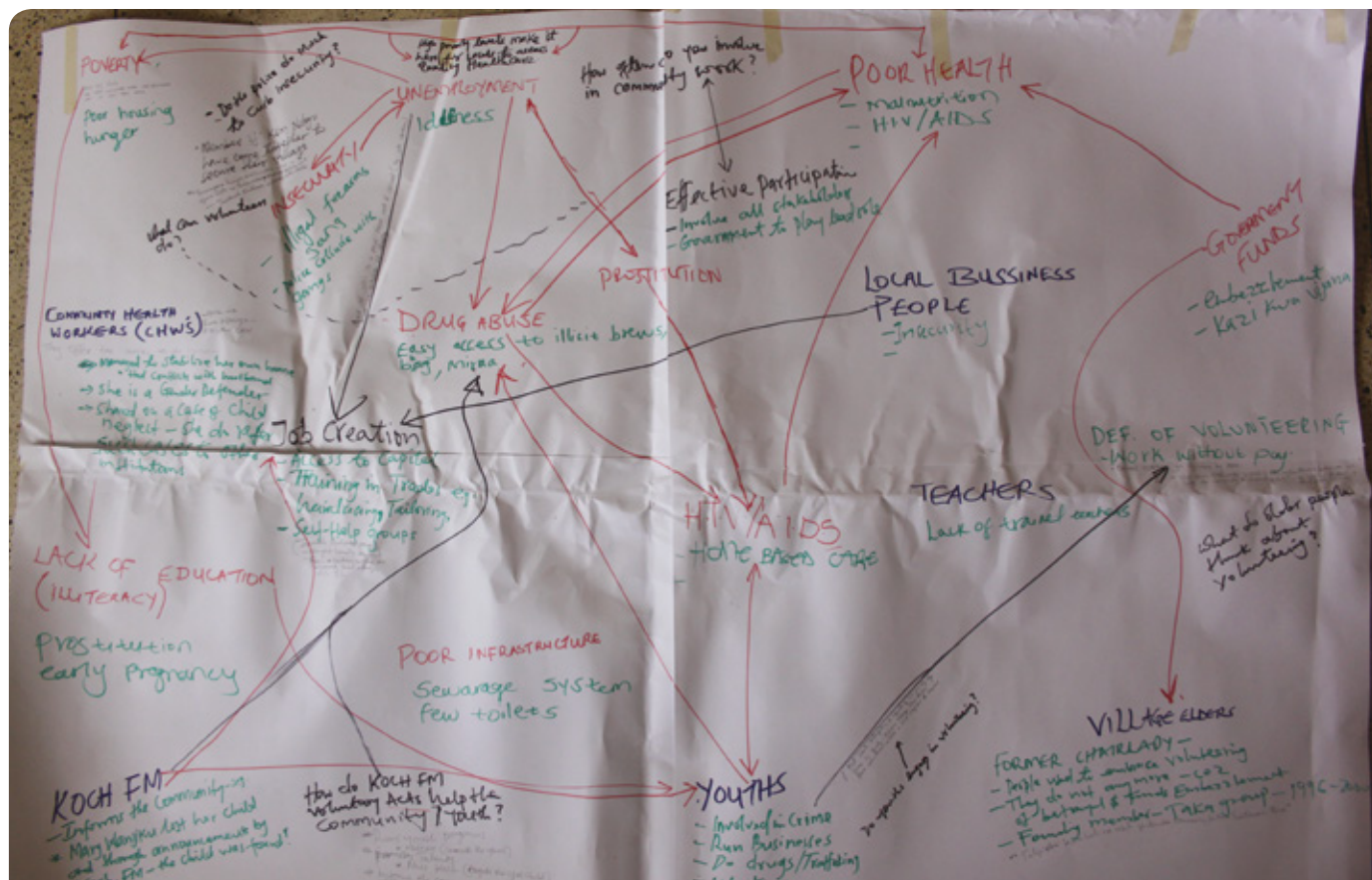
The research team were divided into smaller groups of three to four members in order to construct the maps. Although it is possible to undertake the mapping approach with larger groups, the smaller numbers allowed members more exposure to the technique and promoted sharing across the groups. Figure 9 shows the research groups in action.

Importantly, systems maps were used to identify and analyse relationships between issues and stakeholders in Korogocho. They proved to be particularly useful in building shared understanding across members of the research team and revealing unexpected relationships and issues. For example, researchers found through mapping out the issues that in some cases the desire for quick results and the high allowances paid to volunteers by some NGOs were actually undermining the capacity for local volunteering. This will be covered in more detail in the findings section.

c) Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions were used as a tool in validation workshops testing emerging findings. Although workshops often used other participatory techniques as well, focus group discussions were an important constituent part.

Focus groups were facilitated by members of the local research team and the lead researcher. In discussions with community members who preferred to speak in Swahili, members of the local research team took the lead in facilitation. Comments were translated into English in situ and also subsequently by note-takers. Although certain local researchers had a natural flair and passion for facilitating, efforts were made to allow all members of the research team the opportunity to facilitate as part of their personal and professional development. Following each focus group, the research team convened to reflect on how the process had gone and the key findings that emerged.

d) Neighbourhood mapping

Neighbourhood mapping was used as a participatory tool to understand the geographical dimensions of local challenges and volunteering activities. The tool was adapted from one outlined in the VSO facilitator's guide to participatory approaches (VSO, 2004). The approach entailed first asking participants to jointly draw a map of their local community indicating what and where challenges and problems existed. Next, members annotated the maps in red indicating what volunteering activities were taking place and where. This was followed by using green to identify where and what new volunteering opportunities could make a positive difference.

In contrast to the illustrative example shown in FIgure 10, participants in the Korogocho neighbourhood-mapping exercise preferred to use Post-it notes to indicate volunteering activities as this facilitated discussion around where the notes should be placed. Green and red marks were placed on notes to show whether they were current or potential volunteer activities. Figure 11 provides an example of a Korogocho neighbourhood map.
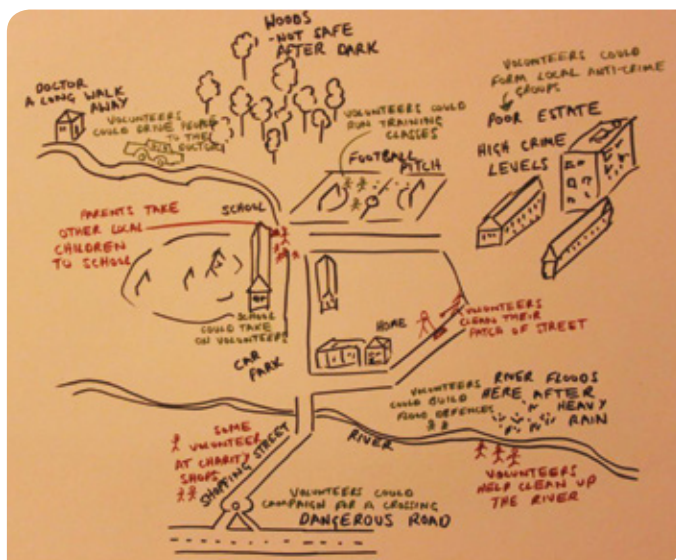
Figure 9: Members of the Korogocho research team constructing systems maps

Figure 10: Example of a neighbourhood map showing local problems and volunteering activities (the two maps are illustrative examples created by the researcher for training purposes)
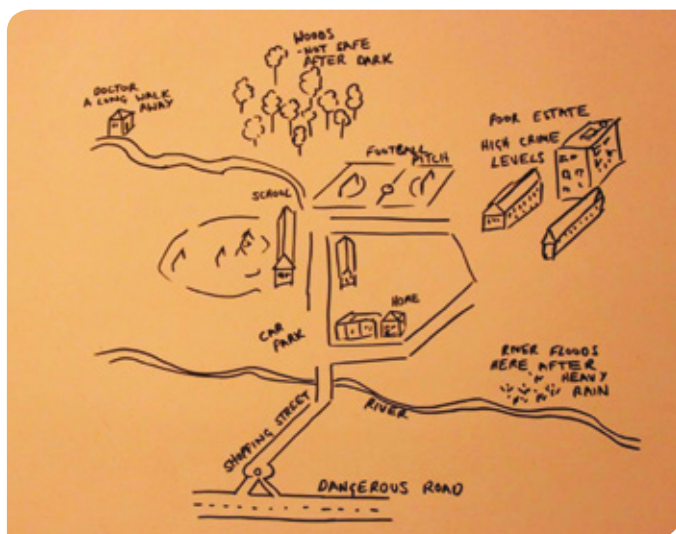
Example of a neighbourhood map identifying local problems

The same map with red indicating current volunteering activities and green showing the potential for new volunteering activities

Figure 11: A Korogocho neighbourhood map produced by community members during a workshop in May 2013

e) Network mapping

As part of participatory workshops with local CBOs and self-help groups, representatives were asked to develop a profile of their organisations including details such as number of members, areas they are working in, basic history and any organisations they receive funding from. Participants then presented to each other and placed their profile on a large flip-chart canvass, after which lines were drawn indicating relationships and partnerships between organisations. The sessions concluded with a discussion of the findings and whether there were opportunities for more collaboration between the groups and organisations.

f) Participatory statistics

In some workshops, focus group discussions were used to identify a number of challenges, either for Korogocho as a whole or for particular groups of volunteers such as CHWs. These were then written onto flip charts and each participant was given a number of stickers labelled 1–3 with which to vote and rank the issues or challenges. This provided a quick statistical snapshot of key issues. On another occasion, workshop participants were asked to fill in answer cards to five questions, which combined closed and open questions. The technique allowed for a large amount of information to be collected in a relatively short period of time and provided the basis for further discussion around emerging themes (Holland, 2013).

g) Storytelling using the Global Giving story collection tool

Initial fieldwork in Korogocho emphasised the value of informal discussions and listening to people's experiences. This subsequently led to an exploration of the potential of telling and collecting stories as an appropriate method for the research setting. Global Giving, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, had already run a storytelling pilot which had collected over 57,000 stories across Kenya and Uganda from 2010 to 2013. Interestingly, they had not managed to collect any stories from Korogocho due to the difficulty of working in the area.

The Global Giving storytelling approach uses local 'scribes' or story collectors to talk to people in their communities. Using short 'story forms', the process starts by asking participants to "tell a story about a time when a person or an organisation tried to help or change something in your community". Crucially by letting the participants choose the topic with minimal prompting, they are empowered to talk about what they think is important and relevant in their communities. With no specific initial questions, the approach also avoids a common pitfall of participants only talking about what they think the interviewer/story collector wants to hear about.

Story collectors note down the key points of the stories and then ask a series of questions which urge the participant to reflect on their own story and categorise factors such as key inputs, experiences, feelings and outcomes. In essence, this enables participants to analyse and code their own stories, thereby ensuring another stage of the research process is rooted in local people and communities. Once completed, story forms are scanned electronically and sent to Global Giving which provides free analysis across stories to show emerging trends. This also provides a highly cost-effective means for small local organisations with tight budgets to collect and analyse local data. More information on the approach can be found on the Global Giving website and in Maxson (2012).

To make sure the story-forms were relevant to Korogocho, the lead researcher used the Global Giving website to design a tailored form with appropriate follow-up questions. The local research team were then given a day's training in how to use the forms, after which they went into the field to talk to local people. Using the same practice as Global Giving, members of the local research team were offered a small payment for every story they collected. The amount offered was not equivalent to a paid salary but did offer a little compensation for the time taken to collect the stories. In total over 30 stories relating to community efforts in Korogocho were collected, extracts of which are included throughout this report. A sample story form is included below.

Appendix B: Korogocho field interview guide

VALUING VOLUNTEERING INTERVIEW GUIDE

REMEMBER: Write as much down as you can in people's own words. Use "quotes" to tell their story and ask if it is OK to take notes.

1. **Introduce yourself (and others with you)** – give your name, the organisation you work/volunteer with. Ask for their name.

2. **Introduce the research** – you can use your own words but here is an example of what you could say:
   "We are doing a community-owned research project called Valuing Volunteering that is looking at better understanding the roles and impacts of volunteers. It is being supported by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), an international volunteer organisation, and the UK's Institute for Development Studies."

   [If people ask for money or appreciation, you can say that the research will benefit the community and because it is looking at volunteering there is no money to hand out].

3. **Ask them if they could give you a few minutes to discuss their views on volunteering.** Explain that their views will only be used for the research and their identity can be kept anonymous if they choose.

4. **If they agree, ask if it is OK to take some notes** – you can say that it will help to remember important points.

5. **At the end ask for their permission to use any quotes, their contact details and if they can recommend anyone else who may be good to speak to.**

GENERAL QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. Have you ever volunteered? If yes, doing what and why? If no, why?

2. What do you think about volunteering? Do you view it positively or negatively?

3. Have you come into contact with volunteers? If so, what kind? What did you think of them?

4. Is there much volunteering in [insert community name]? Yes or no, please explain why you think this is.

5. What are the challenges or issues that [insert community name] faces? What challenges do you face in your daily life?

6. Do you think volunteering could help tackle any of these challenges?

7. Do people volunteer through church? If yes, what do they do?

8. Do you take part in any Harambee activities? Do others? If yes, what activities?

9. Tell me a story about a community effort in [insert community name]? What happened? Did things improve or get worse?

Valuing Volunteering was a two year (2012 – 2014) global action research project, conducted by VSO and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) to understand how, where and when volunteering affects poverty and contributes to sustainable development. This case study is part of a series of inquiries conducted in the Philippines, Kenya, Mozambique and Nepal which explore the role of volunteering across different development contexts and systems. Using Participatory Systemic Action Research it asks local partners, communities and volunteers to reflect on how and where volunteering can contribute to positive, sustainable change.

For more information about the global *Valuing Volunteering* study please contact: enquiry@vso.org.uk

Dr Simon Lewis is a social researcher and strategist with over a decade's experience in various policy-related fields from international development to national, regional and local government. He has particular passions for social innovation, complexity, and participatory approaches that put people at the heart of decision-making processes. Simon was the lead researcher and project manager in Kenya for the *Valuing Volunteering* action-research project. After completing the research, Simon was a core part of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) team commissioned to review the work of Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) in the fields of participation and governance. He currently works for VSO developing the evidence base for volunteerism's role in reducing poverty and devising approaches for more effectively utilising volunteers in development interventions. Prior to this research Simon worked in policy and strategy in UK local and regional government, provided policy advice to a UK Member of Parliament and held a teaching post at Durham University. He holds a PhD in applied social sciences from Durham University and has an undergraduate degree in geography.

The Korogocho Research Team was made up of the following individuals from different local organisations working in Korogocho; Meshack Odede (Progressive Volunteers); Evelyne Odhiambo (No Means No Worldwide); Joyce Mwchala (Youth Initiative Kenya – YIKE); Lucy Wjeri (Provide International); Miriam Enane (Provide International); Ruth Njoroge (Provide International); James Mbuto (Koch FM); Kevin Maina (Blue Cross International); Keziah Kenga (Community Health Worker). The Korogocho Research Team continues to meet and take forward the research. They have also used the findings to strengthen their work within Korogocho and to input into discussions on the Kenya national volunteering policy.