

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
FACULTY OF ARTS
SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

VOLUNTEERISM IN KENYA:
*A case study of a Community based organisation in Kenya,
The Kenya Red Cross Society*

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ABSTRACT

As an area of sociological inquiry, the study of volunteering generally ranks lower than other areas. Much of the knowledge extant on volunteering is generated in the developed world, with little or no knowledge of the same in the developing world. This study seeks to make a contribution to the knowledge on volunteering in Kenya, by exploring various aspects of the same in a community-based organization in Kenya. The study focuses on the practice of volunteering within a community-based organisation, the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS).

The main objective of the study was to explore volunteer management practices within the KRCS and in particular, to study the processes of volunteer recruitment, training, deployment, supervision and motivation of volunteers. In addition, a general profile of volunteers in the branch was established and the structures and systems that support involvement of volunteers highlighted.

Existing literature on the subject of volunteerism reveals that there is indeed a growing interest in the subject. Some work has been done on various aspects of volunteering including the relationship between religion and volunteering. However, and as mentioned above, such literature is generated in the developing countries. The literature also indicates that little work has been done on the subject in Africa and in Kenya in particular.

The tools used to gather the data included a guide for interviewing key informants, and a questionnaire, which was administered to a sample of volunteers in two branches of the KRCS, Machakos and Nairobi KRCS Branches. Through interviewing the Headquarters Staff, Branch Staff and Volunteers in the organisation, the data reveals that majority of the volunteers are young, single and female. The data also suggests that, within the organization, there is little formal systems for the support volunteer management.