

Chapter 10

Volunteerism in Urban Development the Case of Non-Cash, Non-Digital Crowdfunding Growth in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Crowdfunding is a digital-based tool for mobilizing cash for various projects contributing to urban development. This chapter argues that for societies with low digital penetration and less cash but with huge human resources and high physical interaction, crowdfunding should be used as tool for mobilizing human capital for urban development. In this sense, volunteering is a form of crowdfunding. This chapter explores the influence of volunteers in developing and maintaining their urban communities. As an activity aimed at promoting the welfare of other individuals or groups through services or cash transfers, volunteerism is a useful tool for emerging economies to fill the gap between their development resource demand and availability. Review of few relevant concepts and experiences reveal the potential contributions of paid and unpaid volunteers in Africa with a focus on the efforts to shift the Nigerian economy from an oil-based to an urban-based.

INTRODUCTION

Crowdfunding is a digital-based tool for mobilizing cash for various projects contributing to urban development. This chapter argues that for societies with low digital penetration and less cash but with huge human resources and high physical interaction, crowdfunding should be used as tool for mobilizing human capital for urban development. In this sense, volunteering is a form of crowdfunding. The focus in this chapter is to review the concepts of volunteerism, volunteering, volunteer, urban based activities,

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urban based economy and oil based economy to facilitate their usage. Volunteerism is the art of doing a willy-nilly work or rendering services to an individual or community by the volunteer. While volunteering is about giving ones time to a good cause, voluntarism could be the concept of volunteering activity. In this case, one don't get paid, but gets the chance to use ones talents, develop new skills, and experience the pleasure that comes from making a real difference to other people's lives, as well as ones' own' (www.volunteerbristol.org.uk; 2017). In the United States, for example, volunteerism is neither a new concept nor an un-common activity, in 1851 the first Youth Movement Christian Association was started where women volunteered their time to sew supplies for the soldiers. Barton founded the American Red Cross in 1881 and began mobilizing volunteers for disaster relief operations, including relief for victims of the Johnstown Flood in 1889 (www.encyclopaedia, 2017).

Moreover, volunteerism could mean the policy or practice of volunteering one's time or talents for charitable, educational, or other worthwhile activities, especially in one's community. Contextually, therefore, concept of volunteerism is used to mean; 'The principle of donating time and energy for the benefit of other people in the community as a social responsibility rather than for any financial reward' (Collins English Dictionary - 2012 Digital Edition).

In another view, volunteerism is a situation where an individual or group provides services for no financial gain to benefit another person, group or organization. Volunteering is also renowned for skill development and is often intended to promote goodness or to improve human quality of life. Volunteerism also helps to improve the way people are governed. Therefore, from the local level to the global level, volunteerism is an extremely common activity.

The definition of volunteerism may vary between people, time-periods, situations, cultures and countries as indicated above. However, in most cases, volunteerism is understood as: 'an expression of self-motivation and interest to get involved in social causes which benefit both volunteers and those for whom the action was taken'. In this chapter, therefore, volunteerism is seen as a situation where an individual or group provides services for no financial gain to benefit another person, group or organization. This definition is in line with Kidd (2013) but contradicts the radical ideas of Okeke (2017). As used in this chapter, volunteering is an activity related to skill development in the course of offering free service that is intended to promote goodness or to improve human quality of life.

This chapter, therefore, seeks to explore the volunteering models that are capable of promoting urban development in Africa. That is, to use the literature to explore a few relevant concepts and identity one for use in the analysis of the potential contributions of paid and unpaid volunteers in African countries, focusing on the potential role of paid volunteers in shifting the Nigeria economy from oil-based to an urban-based. This aim will be achieved through desktop review of literature and database analysis.

BACKGROUND

Generally, the history of volunteering may dated back to early 1700s when the missionary volunteer corps started to flourish. According to Wikipedia (2017), the verb was first recorded in 1755. It was derived from the noun volunteer in 1600 to mean one who offers himself for military service, from the Middle French *voluntaire*. One early incidence of non-digital crowdfunding can be seen in one of the world's most famous landmarks. In 1885 the Statue of Liberty in United States of America was partially financed by the crowd. This was after it became clear that the American Committee of the Statue of Liberty could not raise all the funds needed for monumental base for the Statue of Liberty, a local

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