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The Role of Youth Volunteerism in the Achievement of Local Development Initiatives in Iringa region, Tanzania

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Abstract

The concept of volunteerism is increasingly becoming a popular phenomenon in the contemporary world as it unveils how community members at local, national, or international levels support their respective societies, nations, and the world at large to achieve various development targets. The role of the youth—being an active and energetic cohort—in accelerating local development projects through volunteerism cannot be overemphasized. This paper explores the contribution of the youth cohort in Iringa region, Tanzania, in supporting various local development initiatives that have significant positive impact to their respective societies in the achievement of development initiatives in various projects. Primary data were collected through focused group discussions and key informant interviews techniques. The data were analysed using qualitative approach through the NVivo software. Findings demonstrate a clear and direct relationship between active youth participation in volunteerism activities and effective accomplishment of local development projects. Religious, school and community institutions were found to play a significant role to nurture the spirit of youth volunteerism. Notwithstanding challenges, youth volunteerism significantly facilitated the constructions of public infrastructures like hospitals, classrooms, and roads; as well as supporting the provision of various emergency services in their respective areas.

Keywords: *youth, volunteerism, local development initiatives, Iringa, Tanzania*