Final Report
Evaluation of approaches to
National Volunteering, VSO Nigeria
2016

Project	Evaluation of approaches to national volunteering
Context	Aims to document approaches to national volunteering to offer evidence of how these models work and their strengths and weaknesses
Scope	National Volunteering, VSO Nigeria
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Acronyms

CAEV	Community Agricultural Extension Volunteer
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CCSV	Community Citizen Service Volunteer
CCGV	Community Citizen Governance Volunteer
CDA	Community Development Association
CDC	Community Development Committee
CEV	Community Extension Volunteer
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CV	Community Volunteer
EMIS	Education Management Information System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICS	International Citizen Service
INS	Inclusive Neighbourhood Spaces
LCDA	Local Council Development Area
LGA	Local Government Area
MOE	Ministry of Education
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NGVP	National Graduate Volunteers Program
NGV	National Graduate Volunteer
NPV	National Professional Volunteer
NV	National Volunteering
NYSC	National Youth Services Corps
OCDI	Olive Community Development Initiative
PMLT	Partnership Monitoring and Learning Tool
RV	Returned Volunteer
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNV	United Nation Volunteers
USD	United States Dollars
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
VSON	VSO Nigeria
YAN	Youth Action Nigeria
YP4G	Youth Participation for Governance Project

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background, purpose and approach to the evaluation

VSO works with volunteers to fight poverty and reduce inequality. In addition to international volunteers, national volunteers also play a role in VSO's interventions in various countries. National volunteers contribute to their own development and development of their communities through volunteering. VSO understands national volunteering as any form of voluntary activity undertaken by people of that country, either within their community or in another part of the country, which contributes towards local or national development. It may come in different forms depending on context and programme. In Nigeria, VSO delivers its project outcomes through a pyramid of volunteers which include national volunteers.

The aim of this evaluation is to help VSO understand the contribution of national volunteering models towards the achievement of programme and project objectives and outcomes in Nigeria. It aims at evidencing the different models in Nigeria and how they operate and contribute towards delivering programmes and project outcomes for actors in the Nigerian context.

An evaluation framework and tools for data collection were developed collaboratively with the VSO Nigeria Programme Team based on an agreed terms of reference. Within this framework, a number of existing national volunteering in VSO Nigeria programmes were identified and explored through the study. A diverse range of stakeholder types including volunteers from different models, partner staff, community stakeholders, children, youth, VSO staff and community members as well as some state level officials were engaged during fieldwork in two project locations – Ikorodu Local Government Area and Kwara State. A limited number of stakeholders were also engaged from other VSO Nigeria programme clusters. A mix of methods were used to gather information, including qualitative (interviews, focus groups) and quantitative (volunteer surveys) approaches. Some level of desk review of secondary material available from VSO Nigeria was undertaken.

Key Findings

Five distinct national volunteering models are evident from the study: National Youth Service Corps model, volunteers in the National Graduate Volunteering programme, national volunteers in the International Citizens Service (ICS) Programme, a host of community volunteers recruited from and serving in and close to their own communities, and the highly skilled and experienced professional volunteers. These have been found to pose relative strengths and weaknesses that impact on their effectiveness in contributing to the outcomes and sustainability of the volunteering interventions.

The main distinctive feature found about the models has been the knowledge and understanding of local contexts that national volunteers bring to their placements, particularly community and graduate volunteers. The study further revealed that national volunteering models in Nigeria offer many benefits largely to the volunteers themselves and also to partners and the communities. The major benefit identified is the opportunity volunteering offers for young people to develop relevant skills and increase their understanding of local communities, developmental challenges and strategies and to get involved in community development. National volunteering also enables people to understand, influence and own the development of their countries and communities. It is a useful approach for empowering local citizens and increasing their voice and participation in governance at the local level. It has been found that volunteering heightens the motivation and commitment of volunteers for continued action and thereby fostering active citizenship, particularly amongst young people.

Effectiveness and contribution of volunteering models
Based on the outcomes reported by stakeholders, the study revealed that national volunteering models contribute in different ways towards achieving VSO Nigeria's project objectives and outcomes.

The contribution of national volunteering is two-fold according to the evidence reported. Volunteers provide professional support and capacity building for partners, communities and primary actors on the one hand, and on the other also deliver services that produce outcomes towards improving people's lives and giving more voice and agency to vulnerable groups in society such as youth and children. It was evident that volunteers take part in service delivery to primary actors in communities; such as teaching students, extending extension services to rural farming communities, and thereby contributing to improving lives for these actors. Volunteers further engage and empower other marginalised groups to have voice and become active citizens. National volunteering also enables marginalised groups in communities such as women farmers and young people to build skills through volunteering. It further provides capacity for partners to increase quality of their services and reach to marginalised communities.

It was also evident that different models contribute to different outcomes for communities and other individuals through the services volunteers provide. Graduate volunteers and NYSC corpers have been shown to contribute to improving teaching and learning in rural schools in the absence of regular teachers. Where the intervention is replacing government service delivery, it creates dependency and is therefore not sustainable. However, stakeholders have noted that volunteer teachers are contributing to improving performance in rural schools for which there is increased demand for volunteers. The study was not able to verify improvement in academic performance of the selected intervention's schools due to time limitations and unavailability of data.

NYSC corpers, ICS national volunteers and other community volunteers have been shown to contribute to empowering children and youth in communities, giving them recognition and voice to participate in governance at the local level. Through the use of inclusive neighbourhood space for children and youth, community structures are being influenced to become more responsive to the needs of children and towards solving community problems. Changes in behaviour and attitudes of community members, children and young people are other outcomes reported as a result of these models. A major highlight from the study was that for broad based community mobilisation, awareness raising and introduction of innovation and creativity into local communities, team-based ICS placements deliver the best results when they work with other models more integrated into the communities. The short-term nature of ICS volunteer placements and placement of NYSC and ICS volunteers in communities other than their home localities are found to be factors affecting the effectiveness of these models.

There is some evidence of community volunteer models delivering outcomes for communities beyond the volunteers. Skills and knowledge gained by community volunteers working as women extension agents have produced positive effects on other farmers and contributed to improving agricultural practices, leading to increase in yields and incomes for marginalised farmers and women in particular. Although it was not possible to establish the scale of livelihood impact for wider communities as a result of the placement of community agricultural extension volunteers, there were outcomes reported which show increase in livelihood assets such as farm machinery, additional farming plots and improved well-being for farming communities as a result of activities of community volunteers.

Improvement in health and nutritional status of families, better education of children, improved social status are reported as indications of improved well-being by stakeholders.

There is evidence indicating that graduate volunteers play coordination, project management and reporting roles in VSO projects and programmes, and that both graduate volunteers and professional volunteers also contribute to building partner capacity and service delivery. A number of NGO partners in Nigeria have benefitted from the placement of graduate volunteers in their organisations as critical resources in support of partnership and service delivery.

Community volunteering models, graduates and NYSC corpers have shown the potential to extend the reach of partners' services to marginalised groups and communities. Some partners are beginning to incorporate volunteering models into their own programming as a result.

Some challenges have been identified through the study for volunteers and the volunteering interventions, impacting on their effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The lack of general understanding and national policy promoting volunteering, unclear expectations from volunteering, and lack of support for volunteers' activities were major challenges. The quality of the partnership and monitoring and reporting processes have also been shown to influence effectiveness and understanding of the scale of volunteers' contribution.

Additionally, the study highlights that there are factors which further influence the effectiveness of the volunteering models: the level of community integration of volunteers, the length of placement, the level of experience of the volunteer, the type of placement and the partnership are all considered key ingredients in volunteers' effectiveness.

The study revealed that community support for volunteering models is another key factor in achieving placement objectives and delivering outcomes. It was also evident that not all volunteering models receive the same level of support from VSO, partners and communities. Where support is lacking, volunteers have found it difficult to deliver their activities and achieve desired results. Community volunteering models appear to be least supported amongst the models. NYSC corpers also do not receive coordinated support, particularly from the communities in which they are placed. This affects their ability to deliver activities; for instance, in schools and in children parliaments.

Graduate and professional volunteering models with longer term placements have demonstrated they are able to contribute to delivering strategic support to VSO's interventions. Short term placements are considered useful for mobilisation and awareness raising interventions that do not require long term engagement at the community level.

The study found that the reported outcomes from volunteering models are not well documented in by VSO Nigeria and partners. It was therefore not possible to establish the scale and scope of the contribution of volunteering models to particular impacts for primary actors beyond the reported outcomes from stakeholders.

Relevance and sustainability of volunteering models
National volunteering is relevant in the context of VSO Nigeria's programming. It is evident that national volunteers play significant roles in all projects, from project management and coordination, mobilisation and empowerment of marginalised groups to delivering services directly to partners and

primary actors. The different models work together as a network of volunteers in each project and contribute to achieving outcomes. Different models have also been shown to contribute to outcomes based on their relative strengths and weaknesses. The reported outcomes from different volunteering models fit within VSO programme and project objectives.

Community ownership and sustainability
The study found that where volunteers are based in or close to their own communities there is an increased potential for interventions to be owned and changes to be sustained but only with community support. Community volunteers recruited from and serving within their communities offer the greatest potential for sustained ongoing community ownership and sustainability of volunteering interventions. This was evident in the case of community agricultural extension volunteers in Nasarawas, Kaduna and Zamfara. They retain skills and capacities in their communities, contribute to building knowledge and skills of other farmers and bridge the gap between other models that work in the same localities such as graduate volunteers and NYSC corpers. Community volunteers in Ikorodu, by their closeness and integration in communities, are able to work more closely with community structures to improve governance and participation of vulnerable groups.

Where national graduates work in partnership with local community structures and in strong partnerships with effective systems for monitoring and support, there is also a high potential of fostering local ownership and sustainability. This can be applicable to professional volunteers who are currently in limited number in the programmes. It is been indicated by stakeholders that graduate volunteers in the Kwara education programme, for instance, need to be recruited locally to increase their potential to sustain the models. Conversely, NYSC corpers and ICS national volunteers serve in communities other than their own localities and therefore are seen to offer less potential for sustaining interventions and fostering wider community ownership and support. The short term nature of ICS placements further erodes sustainability; although different cycles can be placed within same communities, there are usually gaps between them. While NYSC corpers are placed to overlap so that one set can to support the integration of new ones and continue with community activities, not all corpers achieve this transition. It was evident from Kwara that those placed in schools as volunteer teachers may not teach in the same subject areas handled by previous volunteers.

Inclusion of marginalised groups in volunteering
Overall, community volunteering models have been shown to be more accessible to individuals and marginalised groups in Nigeria. They are considered the most inclusive model as they do not require educational attainment like other models, have flexible volunteering arrangements, can be full time or part-time, short or longer term. ICS volunteers equally do not need educational attainments compared to graduate, NYSC and professional volunteering models which are restricted to those who have educational attainment, requisite skills and experience to offer. National professional volunteers require a minimum of five years' experience and so the criteria for volunteering is very restrictive.

Active Citizenship
There is evidence that national volunteering models are promoting active citizenship in young people. Motivation and commitment to volunteering were found to be enhanced in volunteers as a result of volunteering experience, which further promoted continued action after placements. National volunteers reported positive impact on personal development of volunteers, further boosting active citizenship. Evidence from stakeholders also points to national volunteer models impacting on communities in cases where the communities are engaged.

Role of partnerships
There was evidence that the models have the potential to deliver the desired outcomes where the quality of the partnership is also strong. Where the partnership is weak, this results in lapses in coordination, support and communication, thereby affecting morale and delivery of volunteers in achieving placement objectives and maximising results. There was evidence that the quality of the partnership with NYSC appears strong, especially at a national level. Other partner relationships are variable, with partnerships with state public institutions being the weakest. Where the quality of the partnership is weak it affects the ability to achieve and sustain results.

It was also evident that some of the models are not being deployed to provide sustained outcomes, such as those in Kwara State where volunteer teachers are gap-filling and replacing state service provision in rural schools. Though volunteers may have contributed to improving the quality of teaching and learning, the inability of the State education department to retain them after their placements as permanent teachers does not ensure sustainability of outcomes produce.

Stakeholders appreciate VSO's contribution in the partnership, helping to promote a particular approach to volunteering, building partners' and volunteers' capacities. Stakeholders consider partnerships with institutions like NYSC important in delivering volunteering interventions. The study however highlights the tension in considering mandatory national service as national volunteering. This tension or assumption requires further clarity on the place and role of mandatory national service schemes in VSO national volunteering interventions.

National Volunteering in fragile and insecure environments
The potential for models to contribute to achieving outcomes in fragile states was recognised by stakeholders where volunteers can serve as role models and support mobilisation, rehabilitation and peace building efforts. The closer they work with communities, the more effective they could be in achieving and sustaining outcomes. However, thorough risk analysis was suggested as a basis for designing interventions involving national volunteers in such high risk environments.

Policy formulation
There was an identified need for a national volunteering policy and a perceived role for VSO Nigeria to play in reviving the policy development process in the light of the recent change of administration and VSO Nigeria's membership of a national thematic working group on volunteering.

Recommendations
The following recommendations for VSO are based on the findings from this study:

- Given the challenges concerning the application of some models to provide short-term solutions to service provision by public agencies, and the weakness of the partnership with state level institutions, it is recommended that VSO Nigeria considers how to regain focus of the volunteering model to achieve and sustain outcomes. The case in Kwara State has shown that volunteer service delivery is replacing state service provision and this creates dependency on the VSO intervention.
- The difficulty in establishing and understanding the scale and impact of volunteers' contributions in this study indicates a lack of robust monitoring and reporting processes on

national volunteers in VSO Nigeria's operations. It is recommended that VSO develops a framework for monitoring and documenting the scale of NV interventions and understanding the impact of volunteers in their placements and on primary actors in particular. An M&E system for capturing NV scale, contribution and impact must include partners and volunteers.

- It is suggested that in designing interventions focusing on national volunteers, VSO undertakes a more rigorous assessment of communities, resources and structures and takes steps to embed NV activities in local communities to foster ownership, ensure support and sustainability of interventions.
- Orientation and training provided to volunteers was appreciated as contributing to volunteers' effectiveness in placements. Where training was not delivered in a timely way it affects its effectiveness for volunteers. It is suggested that VSO Nigeria plans and delivers training to volunteers in a timely manner.
- It is further suggested that VSO considers institutional processes and mechanisms for learning and sharing among serving volunteers.
- It is suggested that VSO reviews the place and role of mandatory national service schemes in its national volunteering models and that VSO assesses its strength in policy formulation and facilitates the policy process through its membership of the NV thematic working group.

1. Introduction

VSO understands national volunteering as any form of voluntary activity[1] undertaken by people of that country, either within their community or in another part of the country, which contributes towards local or national development. National volunteering may be very localised, unstructured and informal (also expressed as civic engagement/community participation), or may be in more structured volunteering schemes. Volunteers may work full time, part time, continuously or intermittently alongside their other commitments. Volunteer action must complement (rather than replace) existing government service provision.[2]

The aim of this evaluation is to help VSO understand the contribution of national volunteering models towards the achievement of VSO Nigeria programme and project outcomes and objectives. It aims to evidence how the different national volunteering models operate and their relevance for delivering programmes and projects in Nigeria.

The following evaluation questions were developed to shape the study:

Impact
- How appropriate and relevant are the different national volunteering models implemented by VSO Nigeria and partners in relation to their own national volunteering programmes and VSO programming in general in the Nigerian context?
- What has been the contribution of national volunteering approaches/models to achievement of VSON programme and project objectives and outcomes? What role has the quality of partnerships with key institutions like NYSC played towards achieving and sustaining results produced through national volunteering approaches?
- What is the impact on active citizenship, personal development of youth and impact in the community?

Applicability & Sustainability

- What is VSO Nigeria's contribution to national volunteering and in which ways is national volunteering effective in delivering the desired outcomes? What factors inhibited or accelerated the effectiveness of these models?
- How do the different national volunteering approaches lead to long term sustainable changes for target beneficiaries and communities?
- What are the best practices from these models and what could VSON improve in its national volunteer modelling to deliver greater impact?
- Does this model play a crucial role in ensuring local ownership and sustainability? Is this a more feasible option in fragile and insecure contexts?

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[1] VSO (2014) Global Theory of Change. Definition of Volunteering for Development; 'Within the context of VSO's work we understand volunteering as both a formal or informal activity comprising the following key elements: 1) it is done out of individuals' free will 2) is conducted outside of the household for the benefit of the wider community 3) is driven by motives other than financial gain 4) is directed towards poverty eradication and 5) is not a substitute for paid work.'

[2] VSO (2014) Volunteerism and post 2015 position paper

- How do various models contribute to the SDGs agenda and VSO's future position, advocacy and potential volunteering for development framework in Nigeria?
- What role can the VSO model play in drafting policies on volunteering in Nigeria?

2. National context

Nigeria is classified as a lower middle income country with a GDP of 331.7 billion[3] USD and significant poverty, with 67.98% of the population living below 1.25 USD per day and 43.25% of the population living in multi-dimensional poverty.[4] Nigeria has a low Human Development Index of 0.504 which ranks it at 152 out of 187. Life expectancy is 52.51, HIV prevalence is 3.1%, infant mortality rate is 78 per 1000 live births and under-five mortality rate is 124 per 1000 live births. The gross enrolment ratio for primary school is 81% with a drop-out rate of 20.08% of the overall primary cohort and the gross enrolment ratio for secondary school is 44%.[5] Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation with a total population of 173.62 million[6] and 70% of the population is under the age of 30. The unemployment rate stands at 23.9%[7] and with such a significantly young population the projected population growth is high as is the potential for increasing unemployment especially amongst young people. There are concerns with security in northern parts of the country.

3. VSO Nigeria's programmatic approach

VSO Nigeria's country strategy 2012-15 shifted programming from three thematic areas – HIV and AIDS, secure livelihoods and education – to a youth-centred integrated program which addresses the key priority of the productive engagement of Nigeria's youth in the peaceful development of the country. Working primarily in three geographic clusters (North West, North Central and South West, with aspirations for South-South in future (Figure 1).

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[3] World Bank (2013)

[4] Human Development Report *Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience*, (2014) United Nations Development Programme

[5] ibid p3

[6] ibid p3

[7] Ibid p3

Figure 1: VSO Nigeria Programme Clusters
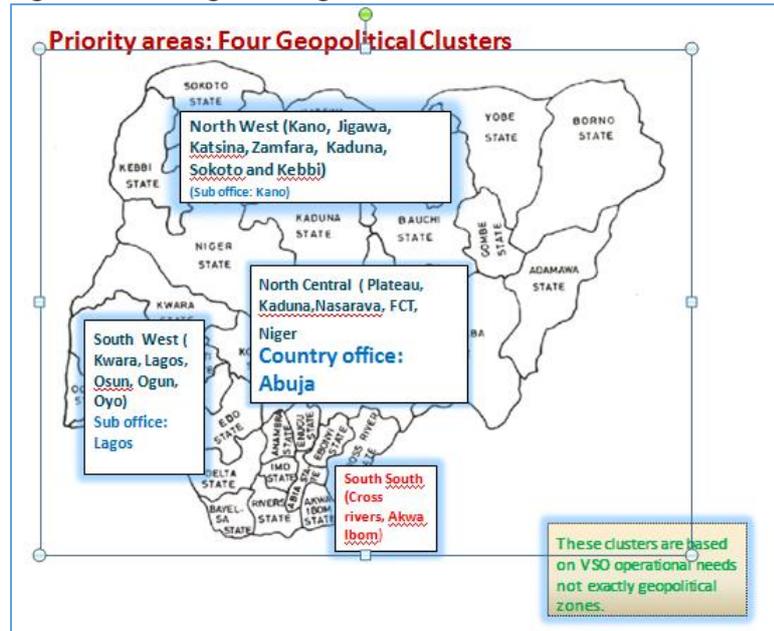
VSO Nigeria engages youth as active citizens in their own development through a range of programmes, using a flexible mix of volunteering approaches including national volunteering which plays a significant role in the overall programmatic approach. This approach is further strengthened through a "**Pyramid" approach** (Figure 2). The Pyramid of volunteers is a framework for the delivery of projects across each theme in each cluster which aims to ensure and enable the engagement of youth[8]. This model aims to make volunteers' contributions to results for young people effective and sustainable by linking the work of various volunteering models to deliver desired project results.

Figure 2: VSO Nigeria Pyramid of Volunteers

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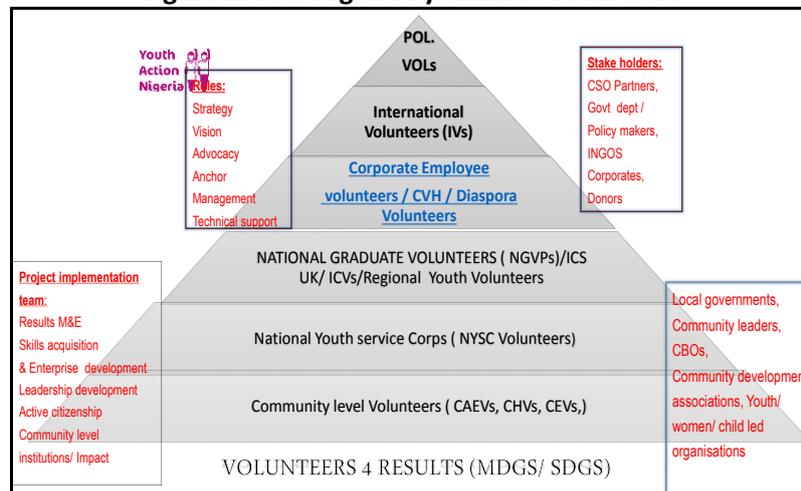
[8] VSO Nigeria Programme Plan 2014/2015

4. Approach to the study

Terms of reference were developed by the Impact and Accountability team (now the Monitoring, Evaluation and Research team) in close liaison with VSO Nigeria and with input from the Regional Director. The team worked in close liaison with VSO Nigeria to identify two case study locations for the main focus of the fieldwork, which were Ikorodu and Kwara.

Once the terms of reference were agreed, a series of evaluation tools were designed to collect evidence based on the identified evaluation questions (annex 1). These tools were adapted as the fieldwork progressed in order to increase the depth of detailed questioning and to reflect the diversity of stakeholder types. The terms of reference identified a number of existing models of national volunteering used by VSO Nigeria and the evaluation framework was developed using the model of national volunteering as a unit of analysis.

A case study approach was adopted for the fieldwork with two case study sites (Ikorodu and Kwara) being identified by programme staff in conjunction with the evaluation team. In the case study areas, interviews and focus groups were carried out with a total of 73 stakeholders (29 in Ikorodu and 44 in Kwara) plus observation of one children's parliament in Ikorodu. There were 29 children who took part in this meeting. The detailed findings and context of these case studies can be found in annex 6 and annex 7.

In addition, a number of partner staff in other programming clusters - Nasarawa, Kano and Zamfara - were interviewed to understand the types of national volunteering models in their programmes. These covered partnerships in education and livelihood programmes.

Further methods used within the fieldwork for this study included:
● A document review
● A staff workshop at the start of the fieldwork with VSO staff
● A staff validation workshop at the end of the fieldwork to test emerging findings and interpretation of analysis
● A focus group with NYSC staff at their head office – a national stakeholder in Abuja
● Telephone interviews with a number of partners based outside of the case study areas
● Interviews (one telephone and one face to face) with the two National Professional Volunteers
● A focus group with CAEVs and representatives from their respective partner organisations from Kaduna State
● An online survey for current national volunteers (annex 2)
● An online survey for former national volunteers (annex 3)

A total of 211 stakeholders participated in the study which included two staff workshops, 13 focus groups, 28 interviews and two surveys – one for current national volunteers and a second for returned national volunteers. The table below shows the range of methods used to collect data and the number of stakeholders involved.

Table 1. Study Participants and Methods of Data collection

List of stakeholders and study methods	One to one interviews	Focus groups	Workshops	Surveys	Total
VSON staff	5		6		11
Partner staff	11	11(1)			22
International volunteers			2		2
NYSC		24(3)		33	57
NGV	3	13(3)		11	27
National ICS volunteers	1		2	37	40
Community volunteers		3(1)		2	5
Community stakeholders	1	4(1)			5
Youth Parliamentarians		3(1)			3
Children Parliamentarians /pupils		7(2)			7
Teachers and head teachers	5	4(1)			9
NPV	2				2
Volunteers responding to the survey that did not specify type of volunteer group				21	21
Total	**28**	**13**	**2**	**104**	**211**

Of the two surveys, 50% of the current national volunteer returns were from NYSC volunteers; and of the returned national volunteer survey just under 60% of returns were from former ICS national volunteers. Annexes 4 and 5 show the demography of the survey participants for current and returned volunteer surveys respectively. In all, only a third (30%) of all survey respondents were female. There was more female representation in the interviews conducted.

Limitations
The study was limited to two case studies, selected in collaboration with the Nigeria programme team. Two projects were focused on in the case study locations; one in participation and governance and the other in education. Due to time constraints, it was not feasible to explore the volunteering models in other projects in the same clusters or in other locations beyond these two.

Although some selected partner staff from other VSO programming clusters were interviewed to understand the types of volunteering interventions in their programmes, they do not represent the full range of VSO programmes using national volunteering interventions in these locations. Findings are therefore in relation to the two case studies and the two communities visited.

In the case studies, the number of communities/schools included where national volunteering models are being deployed was limited. Only two communities were visited and with more time it would have

been beneficial to extend the fieldwork to more communities or VSO project locations to gain a broader range of perspectives from primary actors. In the case of Ikorodu, community members were involved in the study; and in Kwara, community stakeholders and school principals were interviewed. A limited number of students were also interviewed in Kwara state. Only one school was visited in Kwara out of 25 VSO intervention schools. A number of community stakeholders were interviewed, in addition to school principals from a number of VSO intervention schools and selected students.

The study used focus groups to engage volunteers in the different models. Focus groups were organised for the different volunteer groups to get their perspective on each model. A range of partner staff were also interviewed but some do not have any direct engagement with volunteers.

The team also could not assemble and review all secondary sources of evidence on national volunteering in Nigeria. Evidence available is also not specific to each national volunteering model, making it difficult to use. This challenge was compounded by the fact that monitoring data was not readily available on actual numbers of volunteers or the volunteers' activities, both at partner and VSO programme level, particularly for community volunteers. There was limited reporting on the activities of national volunteers in the programmes. Although some partners capture data on volunteers, it does not follow any established standards. Also, while some volunteers were required to keep data on other volunteers such as CAEVs, it was not evident that this data was readily available. Data on scope and scale of volunteers' activities was very limited. It is therefore not possible to establish the scale of volunteering in each of cases studied.

Finally, only a limited number of volunteers completed the survey: 42 for current volunteers and 39 for returned volunteers, representing a return rate of 40.5%. This is not representative of the numbers of current and returned volunteers reported in VSO programmes. The respondents' views in the survey have primarily been used to confirm/validate perspectives shared by other participants through focus groups, and interview sessions.

5. Findings

It has been found that national volunteering plays a significant role in VSO Nigeria's strategy and interventions. National volunteers can be found in all programmes and in all clusters. The findings presented here are based on the two case study locations visited - Ikorodu and Kwara - and on the perspectives of stakeholders interviewed from other programme clusters in Nasarawa, Kano, Kaduna and Zamfara. The specific findings from each fieldwork location are presented in separate reports.

5.1 General Findings

Five main national volunteering models were found in VSO Nigeria's interventions. These are described in details in section 5.2 below. They include a significantly large number of volunteers serving their mandatory national service in VSO Nigeria's projects, graduates and a few highly skilled professional volunteers as well as a host of community volunteers selected through informal channels. There are also the ICS national volunteers who serve alongside their UK counterparts in short-term placements.

Volunteers in all these models have been found to play different and complementary roles, from project management and coordination to delivering direct services to partners and primary actors in communities. National graduate volunteers and national professional volunteers build the capacity of partners and other volunteers and coordinate activities in local council development areas or in schools. Graduate volunteers, ICS volunteers and NYSC corpers mobilise communities and establish inclusive spaces for young people and children. They facilitate and guide meetings, they train and mentor children and teach them useful skills. Both graduate volunteers and NYSC corpers teach children and students directly in rural schools, or serve as links between CAEVs and other farmers and actors. They serve as the primary capacity development resource for VSO's targets in the locations visited; building critical skills and capacities in children, young people and communities. Through these roles, volunteers have contributed to producing some outcomes for themselves and others in communities. To a large extent, these outcomes fit within VSO Nigeria's programme objectives.

This finding highlights the tension regarding the purpose and relevance of the NYSC volunteering model. A significant number of volunteers in VSON operations are supplied through this NYSC mandatory service. This raises the question as to whether or not this mandatory national service is indeed actually volunteering.

The findings also highlight national volunteering models' contribution to delivering development outcomes for primary actors, as well as being an approach to engaging and empowering marginalised groups and communities to have greater voice and become active. This dual role appears to have been characteristic of all the different models working in complementary networks across projects in Nigeria.

Within the context of the case studies explored, it is also evident that the volunteering models in one study location involve national volunteers being deployed to provide services to rural communities and contribute to some outcomes for primary actors. This was the case of volunteer teachers in rural schools. Community volunteers also provide direct service to other community members. In another case, volunteers were seen as animators and facilitators of the empowerment of other groups such as children and youth.

It was evident that the impact of national volunteering is thus two-fold. Volunteers provide professional support and capacity building for partners, communities and primary actors on the one hand; and they also deliver services that produce outcomes contributing towards improving people's lives and giving more voice and agency to vulnerable groups in society, such as youth and children, on the other. From the case studies and perspectives of participants, national volunteering models appear to be delivering direct and vital services to primary actors in communities such as students and farmers, thereby contributing to improving lives for these actors. National volunteering also enables marginalised groups in communities such as women farmers and young people to build skills through volunteering. These volunteers further engage and empower other marginalised groups to have voice and become active citizens. National volunteering further provides capacity for partners to increase their services and reach to marginalised communities.

From the study, it was evident that the different models work together as a network of volunteers in each project. Different models have also been shown to contribute to outcomes achieved by different interventions. Each model contributes based on the relative strength and weaknesses reported.

It emerged from the study that national volunteering models are being developed in response to the needs of VSON's programmes. Evidence of adaptive programming was found in one situation where the volunteering intervention is re-directed at where it will yield better results. Some of the models can be said to be applicable and relevant to the contexts and needs.

Some factors that affect the effectiveness and sustainability of the volunteering models evident from the study include the level of community integration of volunteers, the length of placement, the level of experience of the volunteer, the type of placement (whether individual or team) and the level of support for volunteer activities. Other ingredients are the quality of the partnership and the level of community support. The study found that volunteering models that were integrated with and closer to communities and that were working in strong partnerships, have higher potential for interventions and outcomes to be sustained. It was shown from stakeholders' perspectives that community volunteers offer the greatest potential for sustained ongoing community ownership and sustainability of volunteering interventions. However, also according to stakeholders, the sustainability of the community volunteering models is dependent on community support. For instance, community agricultural extension volunteers and volunteer teachers recruited from communities often working in or close to their own communities have been shown to play an important role in sustaining activities in communities and schools. They retain skills and capacities in their communities and bridge the gaps between other models that work in same localities. It has been shown that by their closeness and integration in communities, volunteers are able to work more closely with community structures and understand communities more. Where community support is lacking - as will be demonstrated by a lack of understanding, resource limitations, or lack of awareness on the roles and aspirations of volunteers - models are deemed unsustainable.

In the subsequent sections, the national volunteering models evident from VSO Nigeria's programming, are presented together with key characteristics, benefits and challenges of national volunteering. The reported strengths and weaknesses of the models are given, as well as inter-linkages between the various volunteering models. The reported outcomes for both volunteers and wider communities are also presented, from the perspectives of stakeholders.

5.2. Models of national volunteering in Nigeria

Table 2 below shows the five main national volunteering models that were evident from the study. These range from the mandatory one year in-service placement of NYSC corpers to a few highly skilled and experience professional volunteers. A number of volunteering models have been categorised as community volunteers. Each model is described further below.

Table 2. National Volunteering Models of VSO Nigeria

National Youth Service Corps	• National service with primary placement and CDS (community development service). Some carry out VSO CDS (one day per week) and others carry out a VSO primary placement (four days per week)
National Graduate Volunteers	• post-service graduates to volunteer after their mandatory NYSC service to fill capacity gaps in education and agriculture livelihoods in rural and under-served communities
ICS National Volunteers	• Implemented within the VSO Nigeria cluster based programme implementation structures working alongside NYSCs, NGVs and CCGVs
Community Volunteers	• Includes National Education Volunteering Programme, Community Agriculture Extension Volunteering Programme, Youth Parliamentarians, Community Citizens Service Volunteers and Community Citizen Governance Volunteers
National Professional Volunteers	• Targets skilled and experienced national professionals with a minimum of 5 years experience. Currently at embryonic stage • Emphasis placed on supporting skills acquisition and entrepreneurial capacity development

5.2.1 National Youth Service Corps

National Youth Service Corps ("corpers", as they are primarily called) comprise a major category of national volunteers used in VSO Nigeria's programmes. They are in-service volunteers recruited and placed through the NYSC structure as part of a one year mandatory service. These corpers serve in primary placements identified by VSO. They additionally perform voluntary community development service in the community of placement. They are reported to be working in most of VSO Nigeria's interventions.

In the case studies, NYSC corpers deliver direct and vital services to primary actors in VSO project communities. In Kwara State, NYSC volunteers are teaching in rural secondary schools to help improve the quality of teaching and learning in Maths and Science subjects. There are about seventy-five (75) NYSC corpers in Kwara State supporting the Kwara State Ministry of Education and VSO partnership. They are reported by stakeholders as delivering vital services to primary actors which would not have been possible due to the lack of resources and personnel to otherwise serve rural secondary schools.

Corpers also organise and empower other marginalised groups, such as youth and children, to have voice and become active. In the Youth Participating for Governance programme in Ikorodu, NYSC corpers animate and facilitate the activities of youth and children's neighbourhood parliaments. NYSC corpers also work as community volunteers in other VSO programmes, with between fifty and seventy-five deployed in the education and agri-based interventions according to officials.

As mentioned above, this is a major volunteering model which presents some tensions. It has been described by volunteers and officials as a volunteering model, but according to descriptions it is a mandatory national service. Does their mandatory nature mean it is not volunteering?

It would appear from the perspectives of officials and stakeholders that the NYSC corpers are described as volunteers because of: 1) being placed in a VSO related assignment as their primary placement, unlike their other counterparts that serve in other organisations, departments and institutions not necessarily attached to any project aimed at delivering results for community members; and 2) the fact that these corpers agree to serve in rural areas unlike in the urban centres where many of the NYSC corpers are placed. All NYSC corpers are also required to undertake community development service; a one-day community action. According to volunteers, this action is yet another avenue through which volunteering is promoted through this mandatory service. Volunteers in VSO operations consider themselves as special, are reported to have a heightened sense of and commitment towards volunteering and are likely to become active after their volunteering experience. Some participants also observed that the level of orientation, preparation and personal development outcomes derived from serving in a VSO placement surpasses what others gain in the normal NSYC placement. It was therefore not only through the community development service that corpers are volunteering.
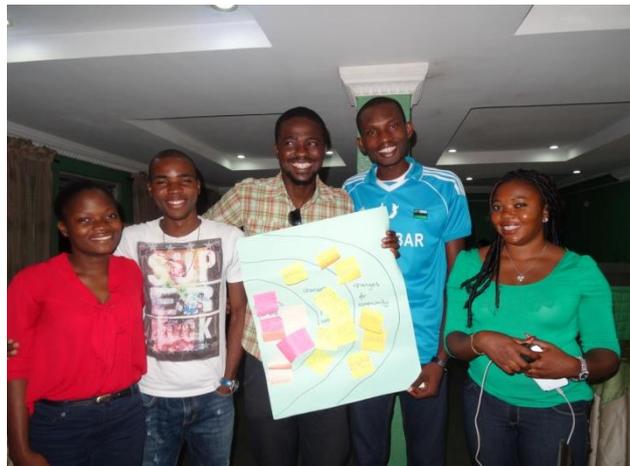
Volunteers recruited through NYSC usually serve in communities other than their own localities. They are seen as further removed from communities, although they live in the community during the duration of placements. This model is only open to people who have completed school and so is also less inclusive of other community members. In one case, they are being deployed to fill gaps in service provision and this raises questions about the sustainability of such a model.

5.2.2 National Graduate Volunteers

National graduate volunteers (NGVs) are predominantly post-service volunteers recruited and placed by VSO to support delivery of specific projects and partnership activities. They serve full time in one or two year placements. They serve in different capacities depending on the need of the partner involved and the project activities being delivered.

According to staff, national graduate volunteers support the education programme by filling gaps in rural secondary schools as volunteer teachers. In VSO livelihood projects, they support the Making

Markets Work intervention by linking up with Community Agriculture Extension Volunteers on a daily basis and providing monitoring support and capacity building.

Graduate volunteers also serve as staff for partner organisations, providing professional support to programme delivery. In one partner organisation, there were two graduate volunteers leading on the implementation of two partner interventions where they deliver services to primary actors. Some NGVs are retained by partners as permanent staff after their placement. Evidence reported by stakeholders indicate that between 20 and 30% of NGVs placed with NGO partners are retained after their placement.

Graduate volunteers also play coordination, project management, monitoring and reporting roles in some project locations. In the Ikorodu governance programme, graduate volunteers coordinate activities of other volunteering models at local government level. Some are also placed within communities and help to manage the children's parliaments. Thus the NGV model appears to be both delivering professional support for VSO and partners' interventions and delivering key outcomes for community members.

It was evident that VSO Nigeria has built the capacity of some partners to recruit, place and manage graduate volunteers. This volunteering model has been shown to have a high potential of fostering local ownership and sustainability when volunteers work in partnership with local communities and in strong partnerships with effective systems for monitoring and support. Where volunteers are not recruited from the communities in which they serve, this raises concerns for their sustainability as the skills developed are not retained within the communities after placement. Where they are used to fill capacity gaps in partner service delivery, without a conscious effort to retain them for longer term service delivery, it was found that this creates a dependency on VSO as in the case of Kwara.

5.2.3. ICS national volunteers

ICS national volunteers, like their counterpart international youth volunteers from the UK (and now South-South volunteers), are youth volunteers recruited to work in the International Citizens Service programme in three month cycles. They work alongside their international colleagues in specific communities, usually outside their own localities, in support of VSO projects in livelihoods, education and participation and governance. They usually work in teams, hosted by local community members as host parents and work on specific projects identified by the team in addition to their active citizenship awareness raising events.

There are reports that ICS volunteers work closely with NYSC corpers, graduate volunteers and other community volunteers, particularly in the Youth Participation for Governance Programme in Ikorodu. Evidence shows that there have been over 100 ICS national volunteers in VSO Nigeria's projects. There is also an active network of past ICS volunteers and many are still engaged in different types of active citizenship activities after their placement through the ICS Youth Action Nigeria network. Some ICS volunteers become graduate volunteers or community volunteers to support other VSO projects.

ICS volunteers predominantly mobilise and engage marginalised groups within communities, raising awareness and educating on young people's rights. In Ikorodu, they play an active role in establishing youth and children's parliaments. They are reported to also deliver services to communities directly in other project locations.

From the study, ICS national volunteering model was found to be more inclusive than NYSC and graduate volunteering models. It does not require academic qualification, although recruitment is through a more formal process. It engages vulnerable groups in society such as young people and offers them opportunities to develop relevant skills and experience. It contributes to impact on the volunteers which has been shown to foster active citizenship. ICS volunteers are usually placed in communities away from their own, although they live within the communities in which they serve. They only serve for a period of three months. Although they may be replaced by other cycles, the different cycles may also not work on same projects and activities in the same communities. This model was found to be the model with the least potential for community ownership and sustainability amongst the models.

5.2.4   Community volunteers

VSO Nigeria also works with a number of volunteering models which can be categorised under community volunteering. These are usually people selected through informal channels in their own communities to facilitate, animate, mobilise, train or serve as links to other volunteers and community members. Their placements vary in length and they may work full time or part time.

In the Ikorodu Governance Project, VSO uses Community Citizen Governance Volunteers (CCGVs) and Community Citizen Service Volunteers (CCSVs) to mobilise, establish and animate youth and children's parliaments - Inclusive Neighbourhood Spaces (INS). CCGVs are active youth selected from youth parliaments to support children's spaces, while CCSVs are former NYSC corpers who now volunteer to support the VSO-led Back to School project in Ikorodu.

VSO also selects community members, usually lead farmers, to serve as Community Agricultural Extension Agents (CAEVs) in their own communities and provide vital extension services to other farmers. They work with NYSC corpers and graduate volunteers who serve as trainers and links with other actors. Partner staff interviewed from Nasarawa and Kaduna States indicated that the community agricultural volunteers are able to provide training and animation to other farmers and help diffuse improved agricultural practices to community members. Each CAEV volunteer works with a group of farmers in their own community.

This model of national volunteering has been shown to be the most inclusive of the models. It does not require academic qualification, and has more flexible recruitment and placement practices. It offers opportunities for marginalised groups in communities, such as farmers and young people, to volunteer and to develop skills and capacities. It delivers outcomes for volunteers themselves and other vulnerable members of society. Because they are recruited from and based in or close to, their own communities, this model has been shown to have increased potential for interventions and changes to be sustained. It was shown from stakeholders' perspectives that community volunteers offer the greatest potential for sustained ongoing community ownership and sustainability of volunteering interventions. For instance, community agricultural extension volunteers and volunteer

teachers recruited from communities working in or close to their own communities have been shown to help retain skills and capacities in their communities. Community volunteers also bridge the gap between other models that work in same localities and give continuity to projects and activities. It has been shown that by their closeness and integration into communities, volunteers are able to work more closely with community structures and understand communities more. However, community support is a key ingredient to the ownership and sustainability of this model.

It has also been found that this volunteering model is the least supported amongst all models, with support usually provided by external agencies. Community volunteers have raised this lack of support as a major challenge affecting their reach and effectiveness.

5.2.5   National Professional Volunteers

VSO also recruits and places highly qualified and experienced individuals to provide professional support to partners and to other volunteering models. Two such volunteers were in placement at the time of the study, one as a national professional volunteer in the education programme in Kano and the other supporting VSO Nigeria's communications work at the programme office. This model of volunteering is in its formative stages and could become one of the most useful models for delivering skills enhancement and highly technical capacity building to partners and other volunteers. It requires high levels of experience and skills and so is not inclusive like the community volunteers. It can foster community ownership and sustainability if volunteers are recruited from and serve in or close to their own communities. They may be used to provide targeted services to partners and stakeholders. The potential of this model of national volunteering is apparent but its practice is currently on a limited scale in VSO Nigeria.

Figure 3. NV Numbers reported through PLMT data
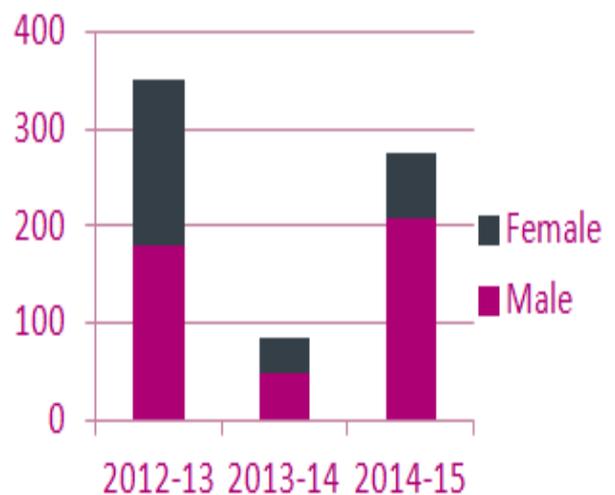
5.3   Scale of national volunteering in VSO Nigeria's operations

In order to determine the scale of national volunteering in VSO Nigeria's programmes and projects, the team reviewed secondary data reported through VSO annual reporting processes and verified with these with staff. Partners were also asked to share information on volunteering activities and data held in files.

As noted in the limitations of the study, data available from secondary sources was not specific to the national volunteering models evident from the study. Reporting through the VSO annual reporting process only captured NV numbers for partnerships that were reported on. There were no standards for capturing activities and results produced particularly for primary actors through national volunteering. In addition, there is limited data from both VSO and partners on actual numbers, activities and outcomes of NV placements. Due to limited reporting on specific volunteering models and the lack of reporting standards, mechanisms and weak secondary data, it was not possible to establish the actual numbers of the different volunteering models in all of VSO Nigeria's programmes.

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Volunteers themselves also confirmed that little programme information is reported back to VSO and partners on their activities. Community volunteers noted the difficulty they face in capturing information on activities and outcomes, and even more so in understanding the impact of their work in communities. Yet again, some partners observed that there were no reporting obligations when it comes to the activities of national volunteers, although some showed evidence of documenting activity reports and personal interest stories from volunteers.

Indicating the scale and reach of national volunteering models was therefore very difficult in the study. However, an attempt is made below to give an indication of volunteer numbers based on information gleaned from the annual reporting process and from different project specific reports accessed during fieldwork.

Analysis of VSO's annual Partnership Monitoring and Learning Tool (PMLT) showed that from 2013/14-2014/15 there was a significant increase in the number of partners in Nigeria working with national volunteers. In 2013/14 a total of seven out of 24 partners (29%) worked with national volunteers and in 2014/15 the number increased to 13 out of 19 partners (68%).

PMLT data combined with ICS data shows that the number of national volunteers reported in 2013/14 was significantly lower than in the previous and subsequent reporting periods. Figures for 2014/15 show a significantly lower proportion of female national volunteers (Fig 3).

Table 3 below shows the profile and scale of national volunteering in Nigeria by volunteer model. The national professional volunteers are only operating on a very small scale at present. It is not possible to provide a comprehensive figure for the number of community volunteers as they are recruited and operate in a more fluid manner than other models. Figures are available for the CAEVs, but there are other types of community volunteers for which figures are not collated.

Table 3: Scale of National Volunteering by Model in VSO Nigeria

	NYSC	NGV	ICS	CV	NPV
Estimated number 2014/15	434	64	50	474(CAEV)	2
Estimated number since start	800	400	112		2
Length of placement	1 year	1 year	3 months	Varies – usually ongoing	Varies
Who recruits	VSO with partners	VSO with partners	VSO	Community usually	VSO
Full time/part time	4 days/week if primary placement or 1 day/week if CDS	Full time	Full time	Full time or part time	Full time or part time
Number of states working in	3	4	4	4 (CAEV)	2

5.4. Distinct characteristics of national volunteering models

National volunteering models are regarded by stakeholders as important elements in the delivery of projects and activities by VSO and its partners in Nigeria. Evidence from participants shows that the national volunteering models identified above have unique characteristics which make them a useful tool in supporting VSO Nigeria's programme objectives. Fig 4 presents the key characteristics across volunteering models identified by stakeholders.

Fig 4. Distinctiveness of National Volunteering Models

Knowledge and understanding of the local context, local issues and challenges

Increased connecion to own communities and national development

NV offers opporttunities for nationals to develop relevant skills and knowledge

Distictiveness of National Volunteering Models

Models offer flexible space for people to engage and contribute depending on their interest and motivations

Cost effective means of resourcing and delivering capacity building

NVs are patriotic and passionate individuals committed to development of own country - a pool of resource for development

Participants noted that national volunteers have knowledge and understanding of the context in which they are volunteering. This leads to familiarity with local issues, community needs and challenges. This is particularly true in the case of community volunteers recruited from the same communities or localities in which they serve.

> "National volunteers understand the local environment – because they are nationals, they are familiar with the local issues, environment and have knowledge about the local context. National volunteering is for nationals who seek to contribute to their country's development" [VSO Volunteer].

> "National volunteers are able to manage the culture better and most national volunteers understand the problems from grassroots better than international volunteers" [returned volunteer].

Others added that national volunteers are able to cope with local communities more effectively than international volunteers.

Volunteers also identified in the survey that the most common difference between international and national volunteers is that national volunteers understand their communities and people more than international volunteers.

> "Nationals have a better understanding of the community they are working in than the international volunteer" [Volunteer].

"I think it is a fact that the national volunteers are used to the challenges more than international volunteers who are probably seeing such as new environment for the first time" [Volunteer].

Participants, including community stakeholders, agree that this local knowledge and understanding is further heightened through volunteering work.

National volunteers are seen as patriotic and passionate individuals who are concerned about the development of their own country. These committed individuals constitute a resource pool that can be harnessed to solve issues or in pursuit of broader development goals.

"NV is about passionate and patriotic individuals who are passionate about the development in their own country. They come from different backgrounds, gender, localities and cultures but a common bond is the commitment for change – a sense of making things happen" [Volunteer].

"NV is for nationals contributing to their country development. This engenders a sense of ownership and continuity for impact within a nation" [VSO Staff]

According to participants, national volunteering also provides opportunities for people to develop knowledge about their country and its developmental challenges, and to acquire relevant skills to contribute to nation building. According to some participants, volunteering is an eye-opener for the volunteers as a result of the issues they see and activities they undertake in their placements.

National volunteering models offer different spaces or opportunities to volunteers. The models are considered to offer different opportunities for volunteering and this flexibility is very distinct. Individuals may volunteer full time or part time. They may volunteer in their own communities, or other communities outside their own localities. They may volunteer in different models where feasible. The study found that community volunteers can volunteer as CCGVs in between school terms and help mobilise other community members including youth and children. Graduates volunteer full-time in their placements and thereby provide some consistency and continuity. Former NYSC and ICS volunteers can now volunteer for a period of three months in support of specific projects. For stakeholders, this flexibility enables VSO programmes to bring in different resources to support objectives at different times during the life of a project.

National volunteers also feel connected to their communities, based on their increased knowledge and understanding of local issues coupled with the fact that some live and serve in their own communities. Participants felt that national volunteers are able to develop good working relationships with community members and local structures where they are well integrated. When they work with international volunteers, they are seen as providing "*the gateway*" to the communities for international volunteers.

National volunteers are considered a more cost-effective means of resourcing programmes according to staff and partners. Partners see experienced and committed volunteers as more accessible professional support for their interventions. They have been shown to help increase partners' services and reach to communities.

"NV adds value to young people's 'skills. Volunteers do not leave the same. A cost-effective means of harnessing local human capital" [VSO Staff]

Some volunteers also see a distinct role for national volunteering in supporting family systems in the context of Nigeria. Some volunteers described how national volunteering can serve as a better community support mechanism due to problems associated with a move towards nuclear families.

Finally, participants also identified the buy-in from government and state level institutions for national volunteering which give some importance and recognition. Both national and state level officials have expressed appreciation and acceptance of national volunteering in delivering their mandates, although they acknowledge the lack of national policy that would provide its practice the legal framework and backing. Other participants also noted that a lack of understanding of national volunteering hampers its practice and support from national and state level institutions and even from families and communities.

5.5 Benefits of national volunteering

Interviews and focus group discussion with VSO staff, volunteers and other stakeholders show that national volunteering does have benefits, some of these emerging from its distinctiveness, yet others from the volunteers' attributes, skills and experience which they exhibit during their placements. Again, other benefits also derived from the contributions volunteer make to projects outcomes. Some benefits accrue to the volunteers themselves, and others to primary actors and wider communities. There were benefits reported for VSO and for partner organisations using national volunteering models in their interventions. In this section, the benefits derived from national volunteering are presented.

National volunteering contributes to national development

All stakeholders agree that national volunteering contributes to national development. Through volunteering, people get to know and understand the nation's development strategies, policies and practises and how these work in different localities. Volunteers get to understand more local issues and challenges and are also able to impact on communities and individuals in the communities in which they serve through their actions. Volunteers are seen as giving back to communities through their volunteering actions and the community development activities they initiate which contribute to improving lives, services and ultimately national development. Volunteers are also considered by stakeholders as an important resource pool available to support developmental initiatives within their own communities and the nation at large.

"Building skills for national volunteers can empower a nation" [Partner]

These views are confirmed through the volunteers' survey where all 44 current volunteer respondents agreed that national volunteering contributes to national development (Fig 5). In the case of returned volunteers, (Fig 6), 93% of respondents agreed that national volunteering contributes to national development.
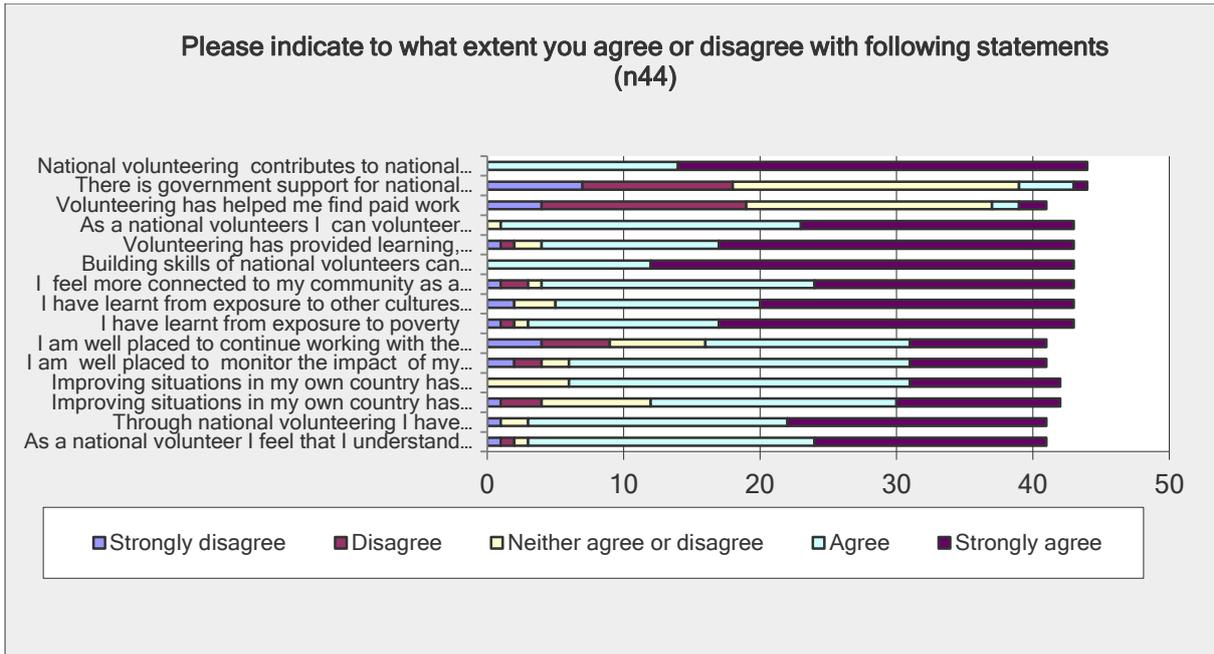
Figure 5. Current Volunteer Survey Response on Benefits of Volunteering
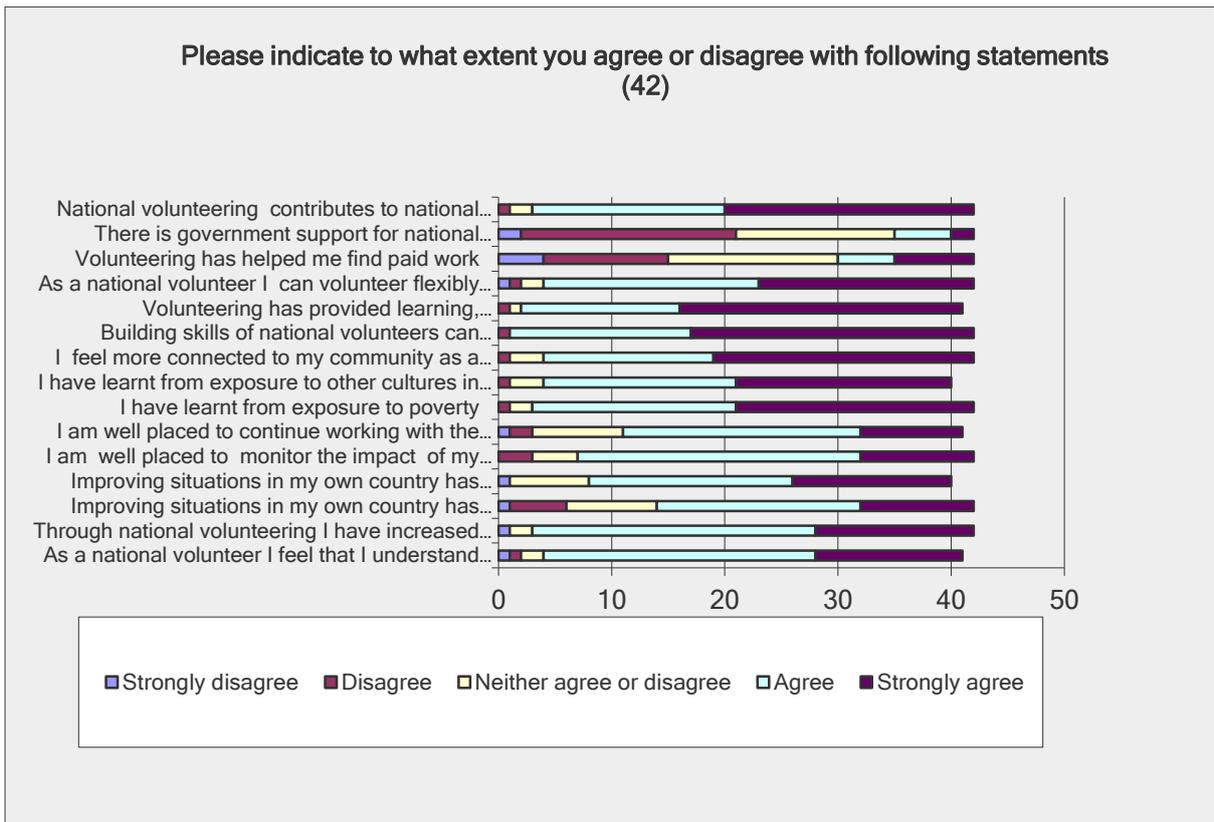
Figure 5: Returned Volunteers Responses on Benefits of Volunteering

National volunteering contributes to increased understanding of local environments and issues
All stakeholders in the study agreed that a major feature of national volunteering is the heightened understanding of the local context and associated challenges. This increased local knowledge and understanding is a major benefit derived for volunteers and for actors who involve national volunteers in programme and partnership activities.

> *"Because they are nationals, they are familiar with the local issues, environment and needs. They see problems and can bring solutions. This ability to understand the local context is empowering of the volunteers and other stakeholders because it promotes participation, and there is likelihood of sustainability of outcomes through national volunteering" [International volunteer]*

More than 90% of current and returned volunteers who took part in the survey also agreed that they felt they understood the local environment better through volunteering (Fig 5 and 6).

National volunteers support development of communities by engaging in community development activities, delivering public services to primary actors and working together with other actors to improve particular situations in rural communities in particular. Participants observed that apart from volunteers working on VSO objectives in their placements, they also undertake other community development activities, described as community development service for NYSC volunteers. Some volunteers create awareness and facilitate behaviour change in adults and young people, while others introduce activities aimed to improving living conditions in their communities. Evidence from focus groups and interviews with partners and community stakeholders shows that through these activities national volunteers contribute to changes for communities and individuals.

National volunteers often carry on to be active after their placement
In the volunteer survey, returned volunteers have reported that they continue to take social action in more areas after placement than they did before placement (Fig 7). Volunteers in the survey were asked to indicate their experience of volunteering and other social actions taken before and after their placement. More than half (62%) of returned volunteer respondents indicated in the survey that they have taken social action after placements in the majority of action areas listed; an increase from about 49% who undertook social action before volunteering. This continued action after volunteering fosters active citizenship among young people in particular. Evidence from case studies on active citizenship also indicates that youth volunteer placements can act as a powerful catalyst for active citizenship. In Nigeria, this drive has gained momentum through a number of routes which have all played an important role in developing and nurturing active citizenship, such as:

- Celebration and recognition of success through returned volunteer meetings and events.
- Strong support and enthusiasm from programme staff, which acted as a source of motivation for volunteers.
- Opportunities to meet and network with other volunteers, which were considered very valuable.
- Volunteers being offered opportunities to play an active role in the office, which provided a significant opportunity for individuals to learn new skills, take responsibilities and gain experience that they felt would be useful for their future careers.
- Working together on joint action with other young people, which was often felt to be motivating and made action more stimulating and easier to achieve.
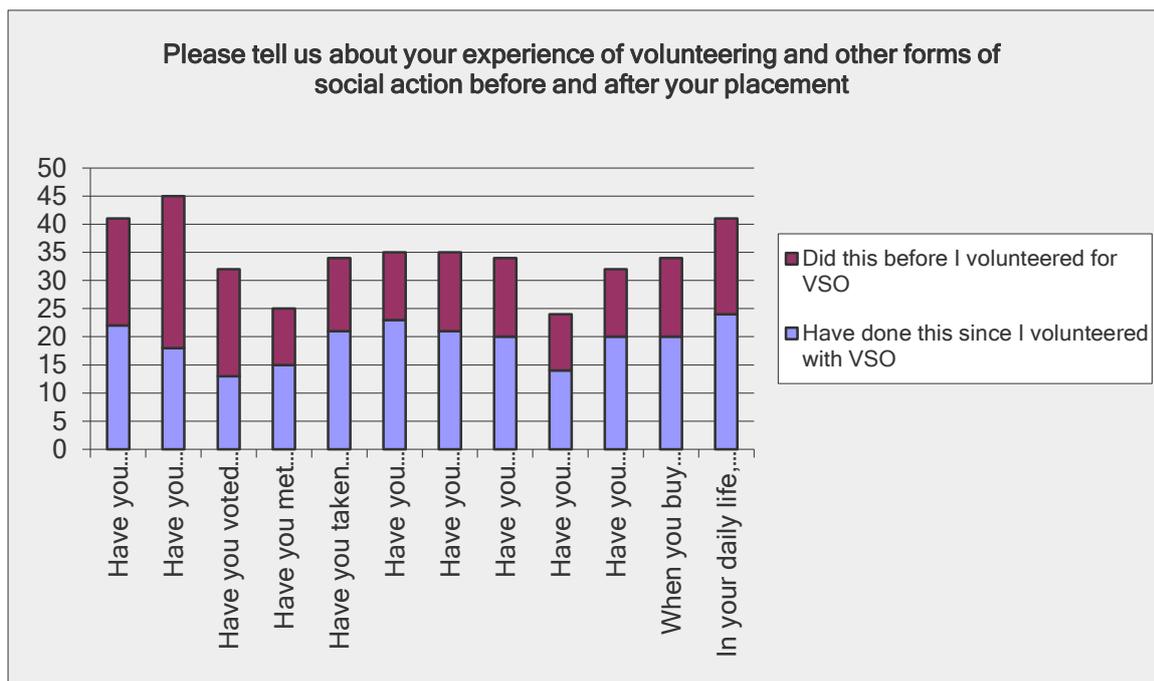
Fig 7: Social Action taken by returned volunteers before and after placement

National volunteering offers opportunities for young people to develop relevant personal and professional skills

The availability of a pool of committed individuals with a heightened sense of ownership and commitment for change is what VSO Nigeria envisions as a precondition for change. Volunteers, partners, staff and community stakeholders all noted that a major benefit derived by volunteers from volunteering is the increase in their personal and professional skills and experience. From focus groups with volunteers, it was clear that volunteers gain a lot personally through volunteering. There were accounts of how volunteering had enabled some to develop skills in leadership, networking, project planning, communication, organisation and public speaking among others. Others mentioned how their confidence increased through volunteering.

> *"Before volunteering I was shy, but now I mingle well with others. I get to expand my knowledge and skills beyond animal husbandry to cover crops. My goal is to become a big time animal and crop farmer in future" [volunteer]*

Personal development through skills building is one of the most cited benefits mentioned by volunteers in the survey and by other stakeholders. Volunteers in all models reported that the skills built through pre-placement and in-placement training and/or through sharing and learning from each other and working together on specific activities, is invaluable for them.

National volunteers are exposed to other cultures

For the volunteers, the opportunity to learn about other cultures and communities in Nigeria is a major benefit. According to some volunteers, this enhances diversity and cultural exchange among young people in particular. National volunteers working in other localities and with international volunteers are opened to perspectives, cultures and approaches other than their own.

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> *"For a multi- cultural country like Nigeria, promoting peace, tolerance and diversity are important ingredients toward national development and volunteering gives the opportunity to meet different people, learn new skills and share new ideas"* [Volunteer]

Connectedness to own community and greater ownership of community problems

National volunteers serve mostly in rural communities and are thus exposed to poverty in under-served communities. This creates opportunities for change, as people learn more about the poverty experienced by others. The results is greater awareness and motivation for many volunteers. Many volunteers reported that before volunteering they were not aware of particular situations but have changed their behaviours and perceptions about their country, its problems, and what people need through volunteering.

> *"NV offers opportunity for self-development- it opens the mind to see hidden potentials and values one has as a person, to explore opportunities and build internal capacities and raises the consciousness of oneself and one's own community, its needs, problems and opportunities"* [partner]

Volunteering increases employability

Stakeholders have indicated national volunteering increases employability for young people. Nigeria's population is youthful, with unemployment being the greatest threat to national development. Both volunteers and community stakeholders see volunteering as a means of equipping young people for the job market. While VSO staff emphasise the importance of the professional skills development training they receive during placement, the volunteers emphasise the experience gained in placements and learning from other volunteers as enhancing their employability. Increased employability of volunteers was also reported by officials, especially in non-governmental organisations some of which are VSO partners. There were reports of between 20-30% of graduate volunteers, employed although this evidence cannot be verified. It appears this view is not shared by all participants, however. In the survey, only 28% of returned volunteers felt that volunteering helped them to find a paid employment. 35.7% did not think that volunteering has helped in securing paid work. Responses from current volunteers show even lower scores; only 4% agreeing that volunteering increases their employability, while 46% did not.

Community volunteers felt they have gained a lot of **recognition in their communities** from volunteering.

> *"Co-farmers appreciate the training I offer them and this makes me happy in my volunteering work"* [CAEV]

For partners, volunteering has **eased their work and increased their reach** by providing needed capacity to expand services to other communities.

> *"As ordinary extension staff, our reach would have been limited. Volunteers have reached more farmers than we would have reached by ourselves"* [Partner].

However, this view is challenged by volunteers who felt that they would reach more communities with services if adequate resources were available and if the challenges they faced were resolved.

Stakeholders also identified other benefits deriving from national volunteering, as listed below:

- National volunteering offers the potential for continuity and sustainability of programmes and projects done by others. Volunteers are seen as ready vehicles to take projects to communities and working within their own communities fosters continuity. Volunteers working closer to their own communities are seen as having higher potential for sustaining programmes.

- National volunteers are considered to be well placed to monitor partnership activities and outcomes. For VSO staff and partners, volunteers can support programme development, monitoring and reporting on volunteers' contribution to project outcomes. National graduate volunteers in the YP4G project in Ikorodu serve in coordination, monitoring and reporting roles on VSO's interventions. Similarly, volunteers placed with partners to provide linkages to CAEVs in the MMW project are required to support monitoring and reporting on the activities of CAEVs. This potential is, however, not well harnessed currently in VSO programmes in Nigeria.

- NV provides opportunities for mutual learning between the volunteers and community members. NV is seen as a mutually beneficial action for individuals and communities.

- For VSO, national volunteers provide a ready resource to support VSO's youth-centred programming. By using young people to deliver its activities, young people are being developed to facilitate change for other youth.

In the volunteer survey, respondents were asked to write one word that describes their volunteering experience. Figs 8 and 9 show descriptions of current and returned volunteers of their volunteering experience. Current volunteers described their experiences mainly in positive terms, but also highlighted the challenges they experience in their placements as described in the next section. Returned volunteers described their experience largely in very positive terms.

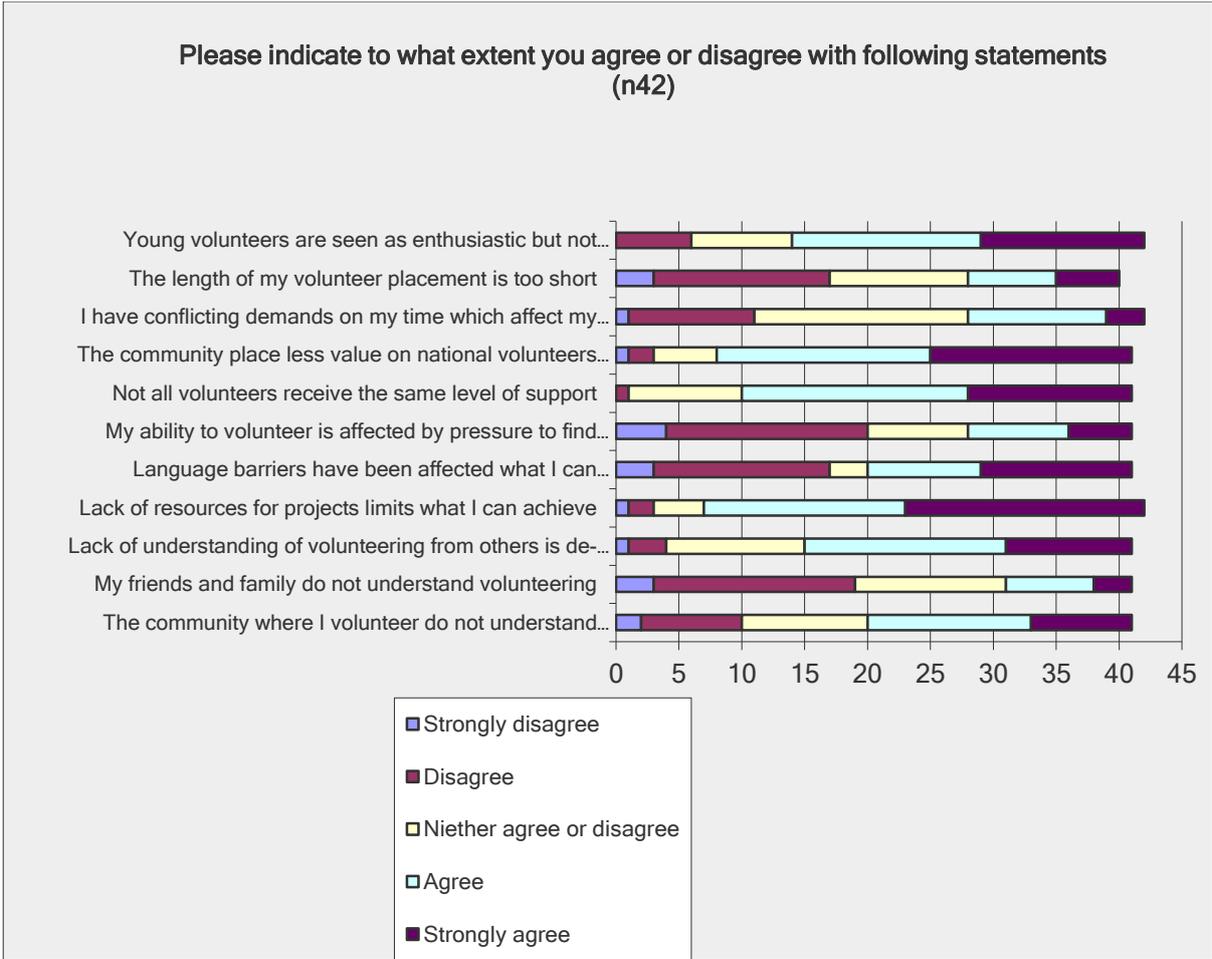**Fig 8. Current volunteers' description of volunteering experience**

Fig 9. Returned volunteers' description of volunteering experience

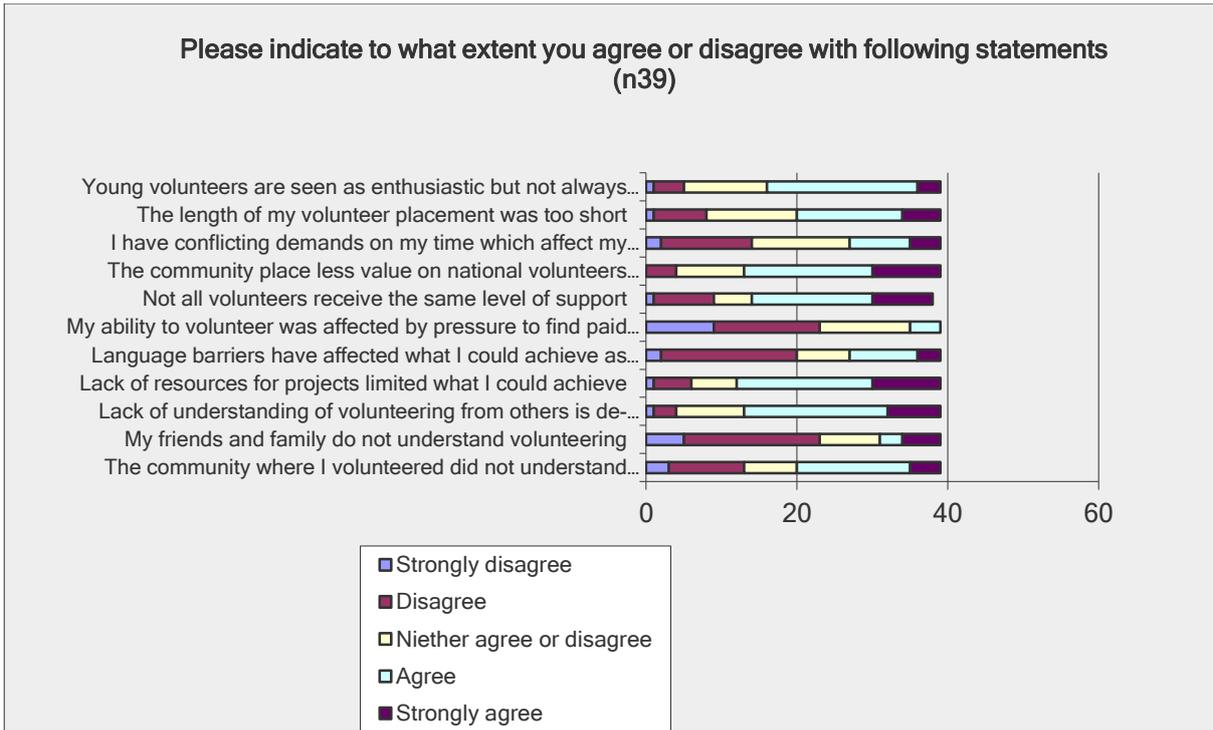### 5.6 Challenges of national volunteering

Stakeholders also spoke about a number of challenges in the interviews and focus groups. The challenges were further used in the volunteers' survey and respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the identified challenges. Many of the challenges were corroborated by current and returned volunteer respondents.

A key challenge to national volunteering as reported by volunteers and other stakeholders is the lack of understanding of volunteering nationally, which leads to lack of support and acceptance for volunteers from families and communities. This perceived lack of understanding is also associated with a lack of support from state institutions, materially and financially, for volunteering interventions. Stakeholders were unanimous that the absence of a national policy on volunteering also promotes this lack of understanding which poses a threat to promoting volunteering as a tool for national development on a wider scale. Some stakeholders allude to the fact that, currently, the National Youth Service Corps recruits and places volunteers in just seven out of the 36 states in Nigeria.

This view is largely confirmed by survey respondents. As many as 75% of current volunteers and 49% of returned volunteers (Fig 9 and 10) indicate that the communities in which they volunteer do not understand volunteering. Understanding of volunteering by friends and family members is deemed higher by respondents, with only 24% of current volunteers and 21% of returned volunteers feeling that friends and family members do not understand volunteering, while 46% and 59% respectively indicate that their friends and families do understand volunteering). For a large number of both current and returned volunteers in the survey, this lack of understanding from others is de-motivational.

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with following statements (n42)

Young volunteers are seen as enthusiastic but not…
The length of my volunteer placement is too short
I have conflicting demands on my time which affect my…
The community place less value on national volunteers…
Not all volunteers receive the same level of support
My ability to volunteer is affected by pressure to find…
Language barriers have been affected what I can…
Lack of resources for projects limits what I can achieve
Lack of understanding of volunteering from others is de-…
My friends and family do not understand volunteering
The community where I volunteer do not understand…

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Niether agree or disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Figure 10: Current Volunteer Responses on Challenges of National Volunteering

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with following statements (n39)

Young volunteers are seen as enthusiastic but not always…
The length of my volunteer placement was too short
I have conflicting demands on my time which affect my…
The community place less value on national volunteers…
Not all volunteers receive the same level of support
My ability to volunteer was affected by pressure to find paid…
Language barriers have affected what I could achieve as…
Lack of resources for projects limited what I could achieve
Lack of understanding of volunteering from others is de-…
My friends and family do not understand volunteering
The community where I volunteered did not understand…

Legend:
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Niether agree or disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Figure 11: Returned Volunteer Responses on Challenges of National Volunteering

The view above seems at odds with the fact that mandatory NYSC corpers constitute the largest number of volunteers in VSO Nigeria's operations. On the one hand there appears to be no culture and understanding of volunteering according to stakeholders yet there is a national institution mandated to recruit and place graduates in national service. This inconsistency between understanding and practice requires further exploration. Currently, mandatory NYSC corpers serving in VSO defined placements are called volunteers and constitute a major model of volunteering in VSO Nigeria.

There appears to be a lack of clarity on expectations from volunteering – is volunteering a vocation or a means to an end? To some volunteers, the real purpose of volunteering is not clear to stakeholders and community members. This can affect commitment levels and causes some volunteers to leave their placements uncompleted in search of paid jobs that are considered more rewarding and lucrative. This lack of clarity is compounded by the apparent lack of clarity and focus in some partnerships where volunteering models are used.

Volunteers also felt that although they are enthusiastic, they are not always taken seriously by community leaders and power holders. This perception is largely confirmed by both current and returned volunteers in the survey. As many as 66% of current and 60% of returned volunteers who responded agreed that this is a major challenge of national volunteering.

> *"Some people may not share your vision so you won't get enough support, sometimes they may even resist or challenge your ideas because they see you as a young person or a volunteer" [returned volunteer]*

As many as 80% of current and 67% of returned volunteers confirmed that this perception fosters a feeling of communities placing less value on national volunteers compared to international volunteers. According to some volunteers, VSO also respects and pays more attention to the needs of international volunteers and supports them better in their placements than national volunteers. Again, they observed that international volunteers are more supported and listened to by their home governments than national volunteers are from their governments in-country.

> *"…national volunteers are not seen as change agents. Even if communities see them as doing good work, they are not seen as constructive and able to make inputs by policy makers and public officials. They are considered young and therefore inexperienced in many areas [Volunteer].*

> *"International volunteers are taken more seriously than national volunteers" [Volunteer]*

Not all types of volunteer models are reported to receive the same level of support from stakeholders. While some volunteering models such as ICS receive more structured and coordinated support for activities, community volunteering models in particular do not receive any structured support for volunteers' activities in communities. Community volunteers, for instance, complained about a lack of support financially and materially from both VSO and the communities for activities in the youth and children's parliaments. CAEVs have also complained about a lack of logistical support for covering the wide-ranging communities with which they interact. This accordingly affects their ability to implement plans. In the survey, volunteers largely confirm these views: as many as 75% and 62% of current and returned volunteers respectively identified this as a major challenge for national volunteering.

This apparent lack of support was attributed by partners and state officials to inadequate human and financial resources within partner organisations and rural communities. Volunteers in the survey also agreed that inadequacy of financial and material resources in rural communities, partner organisations and even at the level of state institutions poses a major threat to promoting national volunteering in Nigeria. More than two thirds (83% of current, 62% of returned volunteers) of respondents in the survey agreed with this view.

Some volunteers described how their activities are not adequately supported either by their host organisation or institution or by their community. In Kwara State, for example, serving graduate volunteers and NYSC corpers indicated that they find it difficult to organise core activities in schools in which they teach and in communities, due to lack of material and financial support. There were reports of some volunteer teachers having to raise funds individually to support activities and undertake other projects in schools to improve teaching and learning. Some of these activities, however, are beyond the scope of the partnership with VSO; such as renovating school buildings, replacing chairs and providing school materials.

Participants in focus groups reported that pressure from families and peers to secure paid jobs or gainful employment, as opposed to volunteering, was another challenge. They noted that volunteering is viewed by families and peers a free service. This pressure sometimes outweighs the commitment of volunteers, leading to some volunteers dropping out of placements.

> *"Some volunteers drop out due to pressure to find paid work so that you can look after yourself and contribute to your family upkeep" [Volunteer].*

"The mind-set of young people about volunteering versus gainful employment. Volunteering is considered altruistic, something one does for free without any gains in return. It is seen as a lazy way-word lifestyle for not for the serious minded. This perception affects young people's commitment and sustainability of commitment and motivation levels" [Volunteer].

Returned volunteers and partner staff see the length of placements of some of the volunteering models as too short and unrealistic for any meaningful impact from the volunteers. At least 49% of returned volunteers thought this was the case, while 30% of current volunteers in the survey agreed that the length of placement is an issue. A larger number of respondents here are NYSC corpers in one year placements, for which the length of volunteering is not seen as an issue (43% of current volunteers did not consider the length of placement as a challenge according to the survey).

"For shorter term models such as ICS, people may not understand the purpose of the volunteers' actions during such short placements, and the possibilities of the volunteers not grasping the local issues does affect their ability to work effectively" [Returned volunteer].

Although it was reported by public officials and VSO staff that there is buy-in from state and government institutions for national volunteering, an absence of a national policy is identified by some stakeholders as a challenge to working with state institutions in volunteering interventions. The partnerships with state institutions are therefore reported to be weaker than with NGO partners doing NV interventions. This affects partnership activities, planning and coordination and monitoring and reporting on the impact of volunteer interventions.

"Volunteering is not commonplace in Nigeria making it hard to build momentum and recruit. NV is embryonic both in policy and practice" [Partner staff]

Volunteers in both case studies have also noted weak programming, lack of feedback mechanisms for volunteers to engage, poor monitoring and documentation from partners and ineffective communication lines between VSO, the partners and volunteers.

Language is a barrier for some volunteers who are placed away from their own communities, which is also considered a challenge. Over half of current volunteers (51%), and 31% of returned volunteers, thought this was a barrier to volunteering. Partners also confirmed that language could become a major barrier for volunteers placed in rural communities outside their own localities. However, other stakeholders were of the view that some local languages are understood across larger geographic zones, which could enable volunteers to work if they are able to communicate in any of these major languages.

Conflicting demands on the time of community volunteers who do not volunteer full time affects their ability to volunteer. CAEVs, for instance, have to work on their own farms as well as organising and training other farmers. Additional challenges specific to each of the cases are further explained in section 7.

5.7. Assessment of the strengths and weakness of the models
In order to identify the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of the models presented in section 5.2, the study assessed the strengths and weaknesses reported by participants for each model based on their experience. It was not possible for all stakeholders to compare and contrast each model in

terms of relative effectiveness because not all models are experienced in the same manner in the cases studied. It was evident that the models have their own strengths and weaknesses which contribute to its effectiveness in achieving project goals and objectives. Table 4 below shows the main strengths and weaknesses reported for each model of national volunteering.

Table 4: Strengths and Weaknesses of the Volunteering Models

Factors	NYSC	NGV	ICS	CVs (CCSV, CCGV)	NPVC
Strengths as factors contributing to effectiveness of the model	Can recruit in large numbers and can reach more people as working directly in rural communities with high levels of poverty High demand for VSO programme from those recruited Length of placement enables volunteers to be grounded in the programme Fits within existing government structures Overlap between the cycles give continuity Can link their studies to the placement Government involvement gives a clear mandate Government pays the volunteer allowance	Experienced volunteers Motivation is high Ready to serve full-time Recruited from within the state so skills are retained in local community Increasing development practitioners (~ 20-30% go on to work for partners as staff Placed with partners and play a role in promoting VSO's agenda They are flexible and mobile Full time volunteers Placed locally so have local knowledge	Bring new ideas and perspectives as going to a new community Energy harnessed to raise community awareness Based in host home in community so increases understanding and build links and local ownership In country orientation Host homes understand the programme Host homes offer support Handover systems in place to pass key information from one cycle to the next	Live in the community so have a first-hand understanding and knowledge of the context and environment Support other types of volunteers to build links into communities Help to provide continuity between cycles May provide support once the programme ends Have a stronger stake in the community than non-local volunteers which so have an important role to play in holding local leaders to account. Extends the reach of partners work Supports building of community structures and unity which support community mobilisation	NVPs offer the potential to create a resource in the northern cluster where it has been difficult to place international volunteers Have the potential to offer strategic support and mentoring to other cadres of volunteers Can harness capacity of unemployed and offer them opportunity to foster existing skills and develop new ones
Weaknesses / factors which inhibit effectiveness of the model	Responsibility of the volunteer lies with both VSO and government which can lead to conflicting interests or lack of clarity Can get the wrong balance of skills	Some drop out as looking for permanent jobs Numbers are lower than other models and there are specific costs as VSO pays a percentage of the allowance	Timeframe is short Continuity is limited as not always overlap between cycles Harder to build community links when host home is not based in community that they work in	Less formal arrangements and structures so expectations are less clear Harder to monitor the work as there may not be clear links and reporting systems into VSO or partner	Numbers are small and has not really taken off at present

40

	State officers need clear understanding of VSO programmes Volunteers come with less experience		Expectations of volunteers not always realistic	Can face challenges of suspicion and mistrust when working with other community members	

The key strength of the NYSC volunteering model, according to participants, is the readily available pool of young and enthusiastic individuals who can be recruited and placed to support programmes and activities through an existing government structure. NYSC volunteers can be recruited in large numbers in a continuous cycle, fostering transition and continuity of project activities in one location. It is seen as a more cost-effective model by stakeholders because costs towards the upkeep of volunteers are shared between VSO and the government. NYSC volunteers serving in VSO placements have been shown to demonstrate great motivation for volunteering and active citizenship as a result of orientation and training received before and during their placements.

However, as noted earlier, NYSC corpers undertake a mandatory national service. More thought is required as to whether channelling this pool of young individuals to support activities that will add value and produce better outcomes for primary actors and communities constitutes volunteering. Another weakness found with this model is that, because the corpers are recent graduates, they do not have much experience and therefore require good pre-placement orientation and training. Where this training has not been provided on time, corpers have found their work difficult. It was noted by participants that when serving in placements outside their home localities, they usually project a visitor's mentality which makes some of them give negative attitude and show less commitment to their work.

The national graduate volunteering model is VSO led. Volunteers have previous volunteering experience, they are reported to be highly motivated and have the skills to contribute more in their placements. They also serve full time and are available to work on interventions. They serve as more accessible capacity for partners and help widen the reach of partners' services and activities. They help bridge the gap between international volunteers and other volunteering models and communities. If recruited from within the local community, they have the potential to foster community ownership and sustainability of interventions and outcomes. Graduate volunteers are reported to be the trainer of trainers of, cascading knowledge and skills gained from international volunteers other national volunteers and partner staff. However, this does not appear to be the case. Due to resource limitations, VSO is not able to recruit and place graduate volunteers in large numbers. The potential for drop out also exist but this was not reported by stakeholders, rather the inability of state level partners to retain them after their volunteering service to teach in schools was identified as a major flaw in the partnership and in providing a long term solution to the teacher supply need in rural schools. The model appear therefore to be used as a gap-filling measure and not a capacity building intervention for a long tern solution to the need identified by VSO.

The ICS national volunteering model's greatest strength is team working, creativity and cross cultural learning opportunity it offers volunteers. Team working adds value and is appreciated by the volunteers. The ability of ICS volunteers to use creative methods to raise community awareness, teach children in schools and initiate community activities was commended by community stakeholders. The use of community members as host parents fosters integration into local communities. It was found to be a more inclusive model, with less restrictive requirements that promote participation of

young and vulnerable groups. Its major weakness is the short-term nature of placements which affects what these volunteers are able to achieve.

> *"By the time you get to understand why they are there, it is time for them to leave" [Community Stakeholder]*

Community volunteers are seen as closer to their communities, understand the local environment better, have easy access to communities and can mobilise community members including farmers, young people and children for action. They help in building community structures and support other types of volunteers to build links with local communities. They provide continuity between cycles and placements of other volunteers in same communities and may continue to provide support even when a programme ends.

> *"Community volunteers are the bridge between the communities and other volunteering models" [Stakeholder].*

Community volunteers speak the local language and are able to communicate effectively with community members on daily basis, not only during trainings or demonstrations. Partners indicate that they extend the reach of their work and have a higher stake in sustaining the benefits of interventions and project activities. By building capacities, skills and knowledge of these vulnerable members of communities, the model delivers significant impact for marginalised groups and is therefore considered the most effective in delivering results for primary actors, vulnerable groups and communities. They are considered to have high potential to foster community ownership and to sustain project activities if supported. They also represent the most inclusive model requiring no educational attainment and involving vulnerable groups in communities - women and youth. Skills and knowledge gains are retained and this contributes to building community assets and capabilities.

However, as in the case of Ikorodu, they are found to be very fluid and not available full time for project activities. Young community volunteers usually have other ambitions and plans such as going to school which make them not always available for volunteering activities. They are also the least supported amongst the models. Community volunteers have lamented of a lack of support – material, logistic and financial - to support and widen their activities and services. Because community volunteers are selected through informal channels, there are no formal structures for engagement and expectations are less clear. Monitoring the activities and understanding the impact of their work is most difficult. Community Agricultural Extension Volunteers indicated that they are not able to monitor and report on the scale of their interventions in the communities as they do not have any clear links with reporting systems in VSO. Some observed that they face suspicion and mistrust when working with other communities, which demotivates.

National professional volunteers have the potential to bring rare skills in support of VSO's capacity building activities for partners and other volunteers. They have the potential to deliver like international volunteers although they are not significantly used in the current programmes. They also have the potential to offer strategic support and mentoring to other volunteers as in the case of the education project in one of the northern clusters. Like graduate volunteers, they can foster community ownership and sustain interventions when they are recruited from their own localities and work closer

to partners and stakeholders. Because of the skill requirements, this model is the least inclusive. Numbers are small in the current programmes and its potential is yet to be maximised.

Two areas that the study explored are the level to which the models foster community ownership and sustainability of interventions and outcomes and the level of inclusiveness of the model itself to national and marginalised groups. Based on interviews, interactions and taking the strengths and weaknesses reported by stakeholders for each model, the team mapped out these two factors as shown in Figures 12 and 13.

Sustainability here is considered to be the extent to which the volunteers are integrated and close to the communities and inclusion is the extent to which the volunteering model is accessible to others including marginalised groups and community members. The study found, as depicted in Figure 12, that where volunteers are based in or close to their own communities there is an increased potential for models to foster community ownership and sustainability. Community volunteers offer the greatest potential for community ownership and sustainability. CAEVs and volunteer teachers recruited from communities often working in or close to their own communities have shown to play an important role in sustaining activities in communities and schools. They retain skills and capacities in their communities and bridge the gaps between other models that work in same localities. NGVs and NPVs also
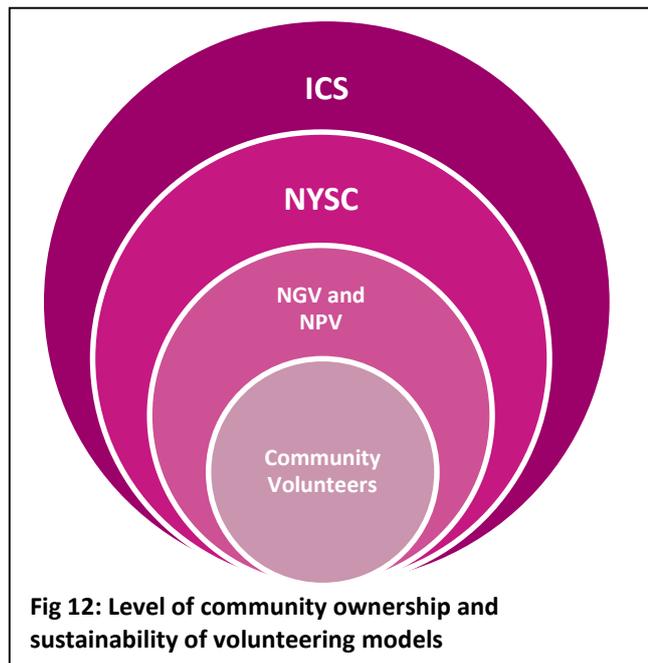
Fig 12: Level of community ownership and sustainability of volunteering models

have a high potential of fostering local ownership and sustainability where they work in partnership with local communities as well as in strong partnerships with effective systems for monitoring and support.

Other volunteering models - NYSC corpers and ICS national volunteers - were found to offer less potential for community ownership and sustainability because volunteers in these models are recruited from outside the communities in which they serve. The short term nature of ICS models further affects its ability to foster greater community ownership according to stakeholders.

As mentioned earlier, inclusion is the extent to which the volunteering practice involves communities and marginalised groups in the intervention. The study found that community volunteering models are the most inclusive model of volunteering in the Nigerian strategy as they foster an increased sense of community (Fig 13). Community volunteers are usually recruited from and live within their own communities. They do not require educational attainment and often not allocated specific recruitment

criteria. They are flexible and may be part time. For instance, CAEVs are community members selected from their own communities. They belong to the marginalised groups such as farmers.

ICS volunteers however, may not come from the same area as the communities in which they volunteer. They include both international and national volunteers and are also considered more inclusive than NYSC and NGVs who are restricted to those who have educational attainment, experience and skills to offer. The use of community members as ICS host parents fosters integration into local communities. It was found to be a more inclusive model, with less restrictive requirements that promotes participation of young and vulnerable groups. On the other hand, NPVs require a minimum of 5 years' experience and so the criteria for volunteering is very restrictive. They are the least inclusive among the models in Nigeria.
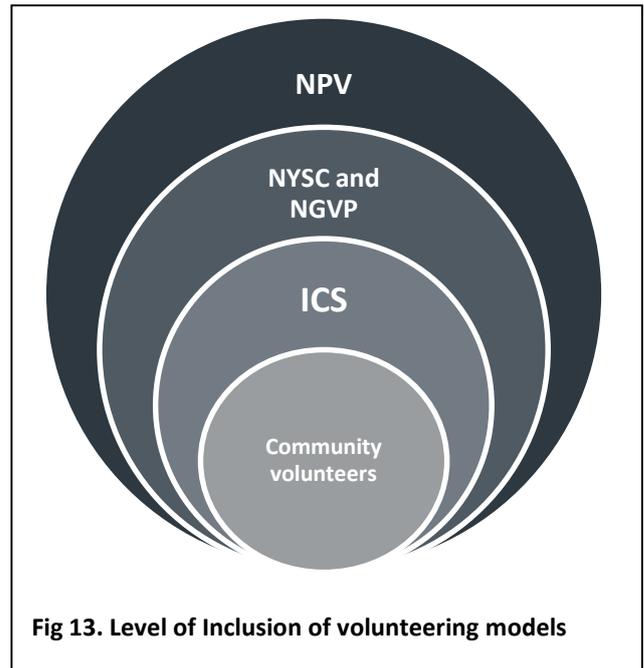
Fig 13. Level of Inclusion of volunteering models

5.8. Interrelationships between national volunteering models

In order to understand inter-relationships between the different volunteering models, participants were asked to comment on how they see the volunteers working together in their placements. From the participants' perspectives it was evident that the different volunteering models work as complementary teams around VSO project objectives (Fig 11). The study found that there was a network of different volunteering models playing complementary roles to achieve common programme objectives in each case study intervention.

Network of volunteers
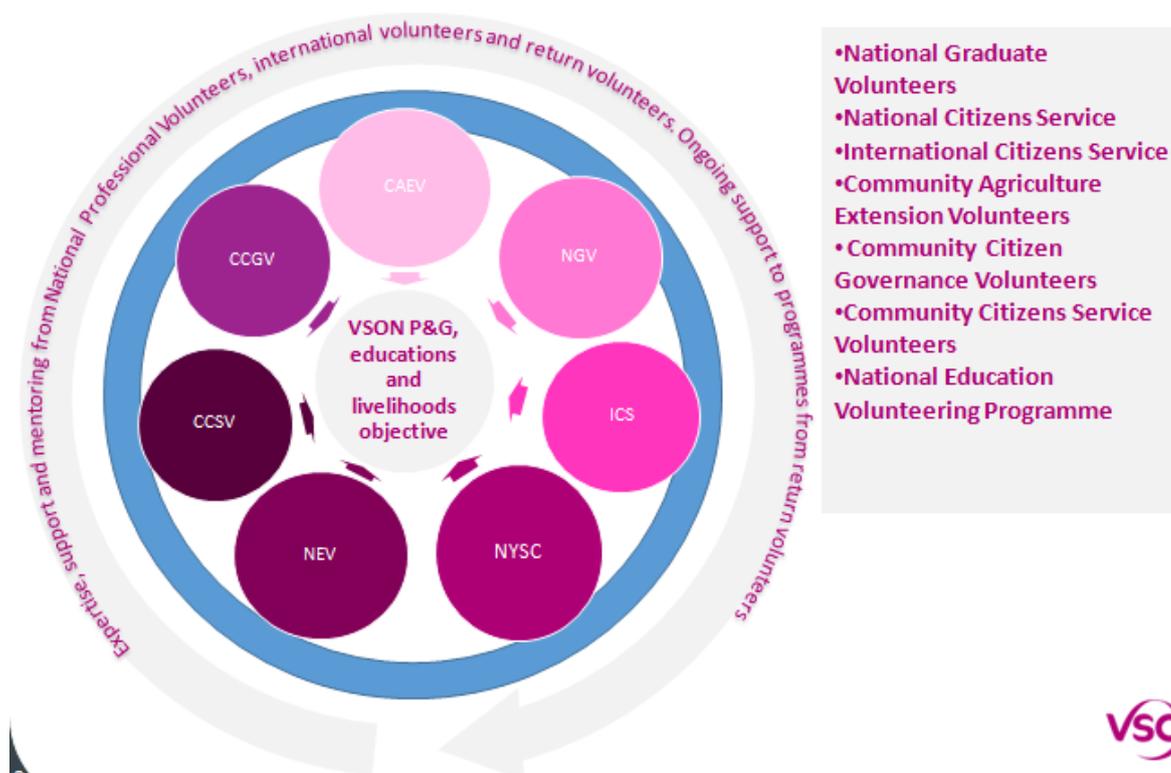
Figure 14: Interrelationships between volunteers in VSO Nigeria's programmes

At the core of the activities of volunteers in the various models are VSO's programme and project objectives in education, livelihoods and participation and governance. National graduate volunteers, NYSC corpers and ICS volunteers all engage with stakeholders and primary actors at the community level. Community volunteers – CAEVS, CCGVS and CCSVs - work directly with primary actors and community structures – farmers, youth and children, CDA and CDS and local government authorities. It has been shown from the case locations visited that NGVs, ICS and NYSC volunteers work together with children parliaments in Ikorodu LGA. Some national graduate volunteers play coordination, project management, monitoring and reporting roles in addition to supporting specific activities in communities.

In Kwara and Kano States, graduate volunteers and NYSCs volunteer teachers work as teams in rural secondary schools in the education programme. While NGVs play lead roles, they are reported to work with the NYSCs on extra-curricular activities which support the teaching and learning of students.

In the livelihood programmes in Nasarawa and Kaduna States, NGVs and NYSC corpers serve as the links between partner staff, sector actor and CAEVs. They provide training to a set of CAEVs who also work with a group of ten other farmers or group members. Their role also includes monitoring and reporting on activities of community volunteers and outcomes for other farmers. NGVs, according to VSO staff, serve as lead trainers for other volunteers and CAEVs. This practice however does not work according to the reports from the volunteers.

It was reported by stakeholders that the NYSC corper works closely with ICS volunteers in project communities and offer continuity to activities initiated by cycles of ICS volunteers. There was evidence that they also support community volunteers such as CCVGs and CCSVs in the governance programme in Ikorodu working together to mentor children. Returned NYSC volunteers also participate in network activities and sometimes are recruited to become NGVs. ICS volunteers work with all volunteer models in the communities in which they serve.

Professional volunteers are meant to provide specialist support to all other volunteering models and partners in key strategic areas. One NPV reported that he delivers training and mentoring to about eight graduate volunteers and thirty NYSC corpers in one locality. Returned volunteers also play a role in supporting current volunteers although this potential is yet to be fully harnessed.

When probed for differences in how they experience the different volunteering models, community members indicate that they do not always see a difference between the different types of volunteers.

> "*All we see are sets of volunteers working with VSO and partners in support of specific objectives to support communities solve their own problems [community stakeholder].*

5.9. Reported outcomes from national volunteering models

In order to understand the contribution of the different volunteering models to programme objectives and outcomes and the impact of volunteering on primary actors, stakeholders were asked to identify the changes they observed as a result of volunteers' activities in the different models. These changes were explored for different categories of primary actors - the volunteers themselves, other people – youth and children and communities at large using the rippled model (Annex 1 – evaluation framework).

It has been found that national volunteering contributes in different ways to achieving VSO project objectives and development outcomes. However, most importantly, national volunteering contributes to empowering volunteers, giving them a voice and skills to become active. It has been shown that some of these volunteers constitute the marginalised in the communities therefore, national volunteering can be said to contribute to impacting the marginalised in society. In the next section, outcomes reported for volunteers and other community members are presented.

5.8.1 Outcomes reported for national volunteers

Participants reported through interviews, focus groups and the volunteer survey a number of outcomes for the volunteers who served in the different models. The major outcomes reported related to the personal development gains from volunteering. These gains include increased self-confidence and awareness, tolerance, leadership qualities, maturity in mind, increased independence and self-esteem as well as an openness to challenge and be challenged. Many volunteers have expressed how their confidence increased as a result of the knowledge and skills gained in their placements. Some also identified that the challenges they work through, the activities they lead on and working together with other volunteers also contributed to their personal development.

Furthermore, these personal development outcomes were validated through the survey. More than two-thirds of all respondents agreed in both surveys that volunteering contributed to their personal

development in particular, increasing their self-confidence, self-esteem and tolerance among others. (Fig 12 and 13).

Interviews and focus groups with partner staff and community stakeholders also demonstrated these changes for volunteers. State officials believe this is one major outcome produced for volunteers from their volunteering experience.
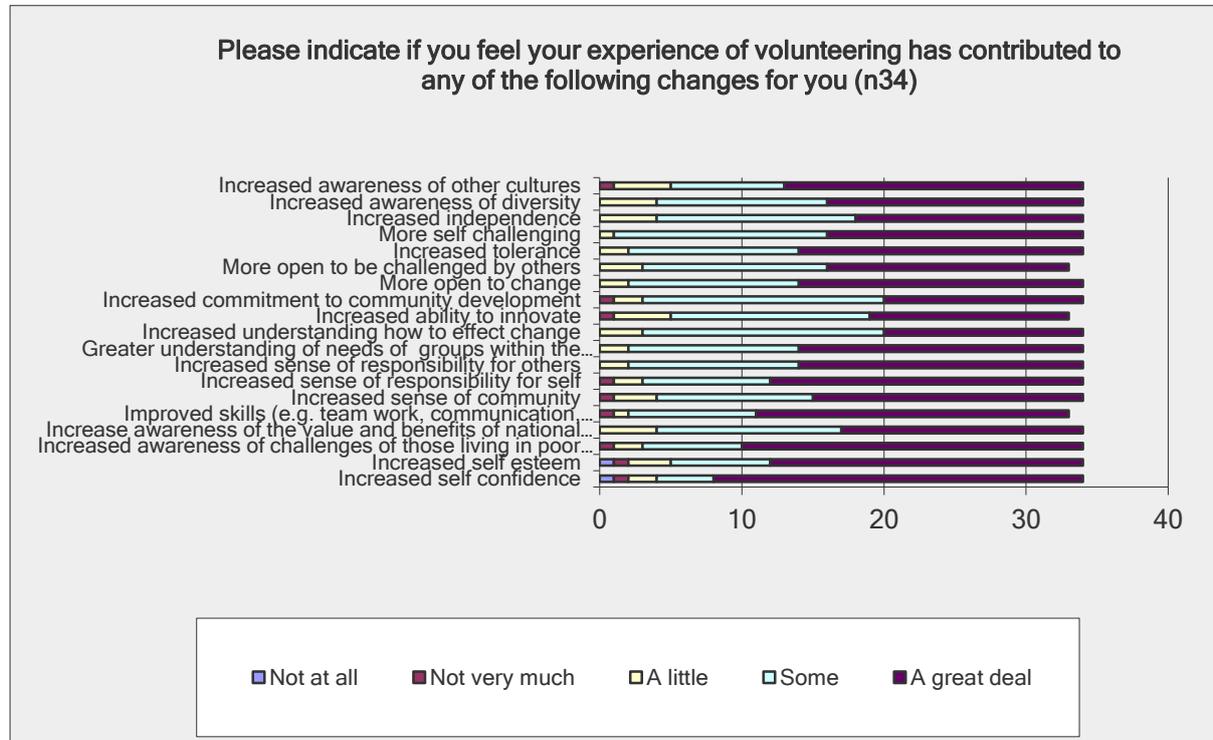
Figure 15: Changes for volunteers reported by current volunteers
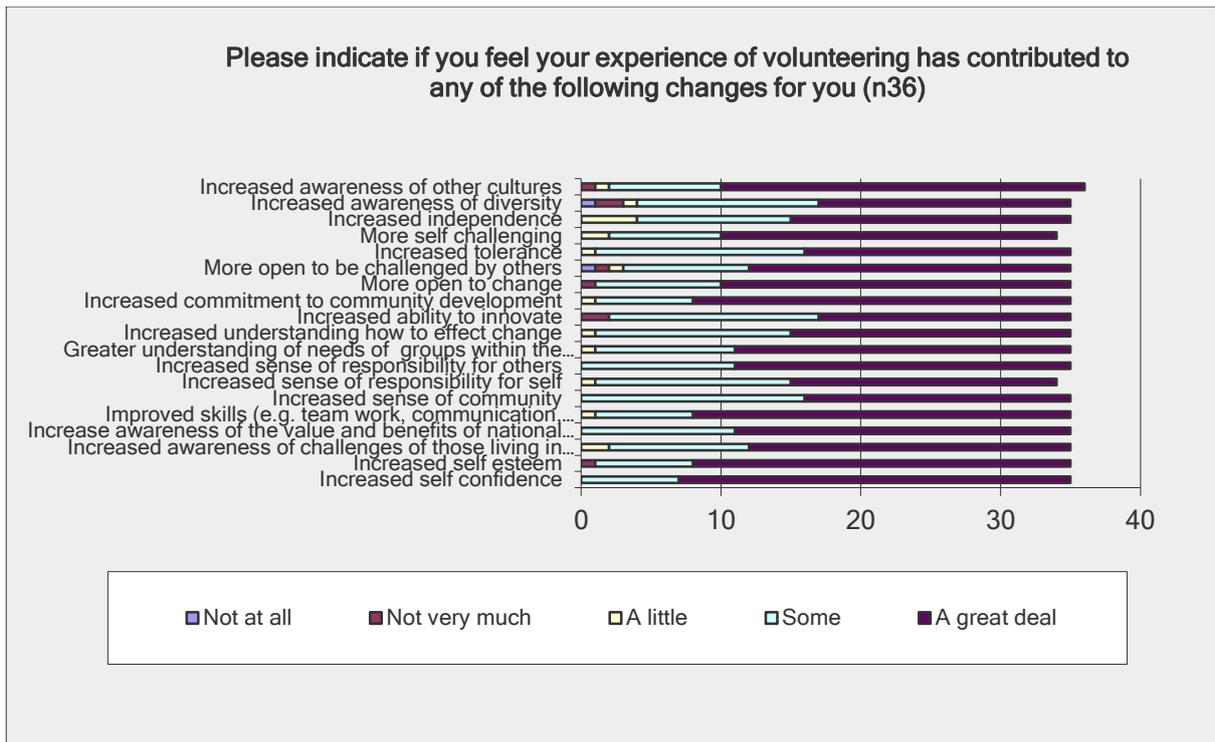
Figure 16: Changes for volunteers from RVs

One of the outcomes in the governance programme is increased awareness of challenges in rural and underserved communities. Volunteers reported that they have increased awareness and understanding of community challenges and issues through serving in rural communities. The result of this experience of community challenges, problems and issues is the motivation to take action to solve some of these challenges.

> *"It is a programme that exposes the challenges of Nigeria as a development nation to you. VSO programme exposes us to the rural areas to learn more about these issues….I want to register my appreciation to VSO Nigeria for exposing me to this wonderful interesting and most challenging service to fatherland. Thank you so much"* [Returned Volunteer]

> *"Serving in a rural area makes me exposed to the challenges in the rural areas and to see difference between education in urban areas like Lagos to rural areas…exposes one to unspeakable problems of leadership, focus on money…"* [Volunteer]

One participant noted that this increased awareness of challenges results in a heightened sense of the value of national volunteering. This, they added, fosters active citizenship and causes other youths in their communities to volunteer.

> *"It was a privilege to serve and make lasting impact in the lives of young people. I wish to be involved in more volunteering"* [Returned Volunteer].

Closely linked to this is the increased sense of community and sense of responsibility for self and others that volunteers feel from their volunteering experience. Community stakeholders and volunteers agreed that this also results in increased commitment and responsibility which leads some

volunteers to initiate community development activities in the placements, from awareness raising of community members to supporting community and school infrastructure development.

> *"It's a programme that brought me out of my comfort zone….I have become one who is responsible not just for myself but my community at large and by extension my nation" (NYSC).*

> *"National volunteering builds ones capacity to take responsibility for developing one's nation. I want to take some action to solve some problems after my volunteering…"[Volunteer]*

Improved skills for volunteers is yet another key outcome reported by stakeholders. Volunteers, partners and community stakeholders all indicate that volunteers have improved their skills in different areas as a result of volunteering - team working, communication, teaching, lesson planning, project planning and management, agronomy, farm management and business development among others.

> *"…volunteering exposes you to many things…your talents, entrepreneurial skills, teaching skills, preparing teaching aids…. It is like preparing you for your future" [Volunteer]*

Some volunteers indicated they have developed special knowledge and skills in other areas such as a better understanding of ways of working with children and young people. Volunteers trained in child-centred methods have a better appreciation of how to handle children's issues, how to relate to them and support them in the spaces.

> *"Working with the children has made me understand children more and believe in young minds." [Volunteer]*

> *"My volunteering experience has made me to be more passionate in working with children's especially those that are out of school to enrol them back to school" [Volunteer]*

Another outcome reported for volunteers by stakeholders is an increased ability to innovate and be creative, for example, in delivering their placement objectives such as teaching students and supporting children's parliaments. Volunteers are reported to have an increased awareness of diversity and other cultures by serving in communities other than their home localities and working in cross cultural teams. Community members also confirmed that volunteers receive cross-cultural learning and orientation in their placements which contributes to promoting peace and unity among communities.

> *"They learn from us and we also learn from them, different ways and approaches to dealing with issues" [Community Stakeholder].*

These views are largely confirmed by respondents to the survey as key outcomes produced for volunteers through volunteering.

5.8.2 Reported outcomes for other individuals and communities
Evidence from stakeholders show that national volunteering contributes to some outcomes for individuals and communities which are outlined below.

Improved teaching and learning

Interviews with community stakeholders in Kwara State indicate that national volunteers contribute to improving teaching and learning in the specific subject areas in the schools and communities in which they teach. School principals, teachers and community stakeholders reported improvements in teaching and learning as a result of the volunteers teaching and extra-curricular activities in some rural schools. They noted that extra-curricular activities motivates students and enhance learning.

> *"Volunteers assist teachers by providing extra hands for teaching and supervising students in the core subject areas. Volunteers also teach other subjects for which schools do not have regular teachers, thereby reducing the workload on the permanent teachers who cover more subject areas than required in some schools." [Community Stakeholder]*

Improved performance in rural schools

In VSO intervention schools where volunteer teachers are placed, students' performance in class and terminal examinations are improving according to the stakeholders interviewed. Community stakeholders, school principals and teachers as well as volunteers in Kwara State observed that performance improved in schools as a result of the volunteers' input and use of creative methods to teach and enhance learning. In one rural secondary school, average pass rates are reported to have increased from 70% to 89% in the subjects taught by volunteers while performance in the other subject areas not handled by volunteers are reported to be lower. In another school, pass rates increased from 30% to 50% in one instance and was attributed to the work done by VSO volunteers in the school. Some school principals also indicate that they have received feedback from parents confirming improvements in their wards' performance.

> *"Parents see the impact of the VSO corper in the school. Corpers not only help the students in the school, they also help the community to improve education." [School Principal]*

In an interview with three students, they noted that they understand subjects taught by volunteers better and this is enhancing their learning and performance in class and exams.

> *"I like the way he (the volunteer) teaches and explains things to us. We learn so many things from him. He encourages us to put in more effort…we now practice more and in Maths, I understand more now than before." [Student]*

It would appear that volunteer teachers are contributing to a key project objective - improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools. One must point out however that other factors influence improvements in teaching and learning quality such as school infrastructure, learning environment and teacher motivation among others, areas not covered in the VSO intervention.

Increased enrolment and attendance of students in rural schools

School principals reported that some schools have witnessed increased enrolment and attendance in Kwara State as a result of the volunteers' work in the schools. In one school, enrolment is reported to have increased from 80 in 2014, to 140 in 2015. It was difficult to verify these views as school enrolment figures from the Ministry of Education monitoring department did not point to increased enrolment in schools in the last year.

Attitudinal change for community members
Other stakeholders from Kwara State and Ikorodu LGA felt there was attitudinal change in students, young people and community members as a result of volunteers' activities. From interviews with teachers in Kwara, it was noted that discipline improved among students due to their participation in extra-curricular activities and as a result motivational talks by volunteers. Girls' attitudes to school and studies have also improved. In Ikorodu, talents have been discovered in children and career paths identified through mentoring and club activities by volunteers in schools and communities. Similar views were also expressed by community stakeholders concerning improvements in children's attitude and behaviour towards education due to the activities of volunteers in Ikorodu.

Parents and communities are reported to have changed attitude towards their children's needs and education in both Ikorodu and Kwara State. Community members are reported to have improved awareness in health, environmental sanitation and HIV through community education rallies and health screening sessions organised by volunteers. These are contributing to improved conditions in communities according to stakeholders.

Increased capacities for community volunteers and farmers
The study found that recruiting local farmers as community agricultural extension volunteers enabled the volunteers and other farmers to gain skills, knowledge and tools needed to improve agricultural practices, increase yields and generate more income for their households. CEAVs reported that they benefited from acquiring new skills, knowledge and increased confidence as a result of training received from graduate volunteers, partners and VSO. Improvements in skills and knowledge results in the application of new farming practices and technologies on their farms.

"CAEV farmers are applying new technologies that help to improve production" [Partner staff]

Other farmers also benefit by learning and copying from the lead farmers and volunteers. This contributes to improved agriculture in farming communities.

> *"Lots of people come to learn more about my secrets…..in my locality, other farmers are eager to know and copy from me" [CAEV]*

These reported outcomes are consistent with case study findings on the CAEVs by VSO staff and volunteers[9]. Community members and others farmers were reported to have benefitted from trainings received by community women extension volunteers in particular.

Improved yields and incomes (including assets) for farmers
Community volunteering also contributes to improvements in yields and income for rural farmers. Community and graduate volunteers and partner staff in the livelihoods programme reported that as a result of improved skills, knowledge and the application of new technologies and agronomic farming practices, farmers' productivity improved. Partner staff interviewed have confirmed that there are improvements in yields for lead farmers/CAEVs as well as other farmers in the communities where volunteers were based. Evidence of improvements in production for farmers have been mentioned as a key outcome for farmers in selected partnership through VSO Nigeria's annual reporting. It was not possible however to verify this reported improvement in yields as farm level data is not readily

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[9] A case study on Nigeria Community Agric Extension Volunteers, Nov 2013.

available in the programmes. In addition, CAEVs also indicate they faced difficulties in monitoring and documenting the impact of their work in communities. They lamented the difficulty in capturing data on yields and productivity, a situation they attribute to the unwillingness of community members to disclose the full extent of farm and income data to others. Also, the study could not establish the scale of these changes from the perspective of wider community members.

Participants described farmers' incomes have increased as a result of the yield improvements though supporting data was not available to verify this. They used examples of farmers now sending their children to school and supporting their education, reports of improved nutrition in homes, signs of healthier living conditions among farmers and increases in farm assets as indications of increased income. CAEVs have noted that other farmers in their communities have increased their farming assets such as farm machinery and plot size while others have invested in other income generating activities in their communities.

> *"My skills in improved agricultural practices is real...I eat better now, my income increased from my farming, I pay school fees, I assist my family in general"* [CAEV and Farmer]

> *"Two women farmers in my group used proceeds from their farms to buy more plots of land to extend their farms. Other farmers have bought motor-cycles, threshing machines due to increased incomes generated from their farming activities"* [CAEV]

These outcomes appear consistent with outcomes documented in VSO Nigeria programme reports and case studies. However, it was not possible to review data income levels of farmers before volunteering interventions and activities of volunteers or to establish the scale of these reported outcomes as it was not possible to engage a wide range of actors and stakeholders in the study.

Improved food security in farming communities
Another outcome reported for communities as a result of interventions by community volunteers, in particular in the livelihood programmes, is improved food security in some communities. In Nasarawa and Kaduna States, it was reported that farmers are developing new ways of storing food crops for household consumption, planting and marketing. This would be a significant contribution from volunteers which could contribute to enhancing the resilience and coping mechanisms of farming communities.

> *"The hunger months are gradually dying out, although it's still happening, it is rare now"* [CAEV]

Increased mobilisation and group development
Some communities have also experienced increased mobilisation through the development of farmer groups and unions as a result of the activities of CAEVs and national volunteers, supported by partners. Partner staff and volunteers have added that some of these groups, in addition to receiving training on improved agricultural practices, farm management and business development, are being organised into savings and loans associations. Groups are able to procure farm inputs as a result, further contributing to improvements in farming practices and yields. Others offer loans to members and assist other community members. Access to credit is a major challenge for rural farmers and this is a key outcome for farmers and communities.

> *"...access to credit has improved in her community generally due to the mobilisation of the farmer group into a registered Village Savings and Loans Association"* [CAEV]

Increased partner capacity, quality of services and reach

Partner staff indicated that graduate and NYSC volunteers placed with their organisations have contributed to increasing capacity in agriculture, extension services, group formation and mobilisation among other areas. They reported how volunteers have helped other staff build new skills and knowledge as well as enhancing the quality of extension services delivered to their targets and communities. By working with volunteers, staff have improved knowledge and skills in the areas that volunteers lead on.

> *"I have learnt more from the NGVs than in 5 years in school. Working with them and the CAEVs made me practice my academic knowledge" [Partner staff].*

It has also been shown that community agricultural volunteers allowed partner organisations to expand the reach of their services. From a case study on CAEVs, it has been reported that beneficiary numbers increased from 361 in 2011, to 798 in 2013 with women farmers constituting the larger proportion of beneficiaries[10]. Within the same period a marginal increase in incomes was noted.

Sustaining interventions in communities

It has also been shown that engaging community volunteers ensures sustainability of interventions as activities continue beyond the scope of the projects. According to NSO Nigeria internal case studies, CAEVs have continued to provide extension services to their communities even after VSO interventions ceased. Community volunteers in the livelihoods, education and governance projects observed that by their closeness to communities, they stand a better chance to embed activities and continue to cascade new knowledge and skills to others in their communities.

These reported outcomes to some extent show that national volunteering models impact both volunteers and other actors in communities. The outcomes for volunteers have been confirmed by other stakeholders. It was not possible to establish the scale of reported outcomes for communities and other individuals and to verify these with broad range of community actors.

5.8.3   Unintended and negative outcomes from volunteering models

Volunteers were asked in the survey to identify any negative changes that volunteering produced for them. A very large proportion of respondents in both surveys felt that volunteering did not produce any negative changes for them. For the few volunteers who commented further, only one revealed a bad volunteering experience leading to loss of faith with the NGO volunteering partner.

> *"I lost my faith in INGOs based on my last volunteering experience" [Volunteer]*

Some revealed they have become more critical of issues, an attitude others consider a benefit rather than a negative effect of volunteering.

> *"I tend to question things more than I did before volunteering" [Volunteer]*

> *"It has taught me to be more critical of issues" [Volunteer].*

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[10] ibid

However from the challenges enumerated by stakeholders in section 5. 4, it could be argued that there are some outcomes produced which are not intended from some of the volunteering models.

In Kwara state, where the volunteering intervention is primarily gap filling and has replaced government service delivery, it can be considered a negative effect as volunteering is expected to complement but not replace service delivery by public institutions. Stakeholders' including state officials observed the inability of the state service agency to retain graduate volunteers as permanent teachers thereby providing a long term solution to the teacher deployment challenge facing rural schools. This creates dependency on the VSO volunteering intervention and raises questions its sustainability. It was evident that the achievement of project outcomes largely depend on the continued placement of volunteers in schools with community stakeholders calling for possible extensions of the volunteering intervention to non-VSO intervention schools.

In the case of Ikorodu, the refocusing of models in support of children instead of youths and empowering them through the inclusive neighbourhood spaces, would appear as unplanned according to VSO's original strategy. The pilot with youth neighbourhoods proved not to have produced the desired outcomes for young people due to difficulties in mobilising those who have other aspirations and commitments such as attending school. The apparent inactivity in the numerous youth parliaments would have become a negative consequence but for the refocusing of the volunteering intervention to where it is considered to have potential. It has been noted as programme adaptation based on learning. It is however too early to judge the full impact of the focus on children in Ikorodu.

5.9 Active citizenship

Active citizenship is one of the key objectives of VSON youth focused programmes and in particular the Youth Participation for Governance interventions. In its youth-focused programming with young people playing a significant role, the vision is for the large youth population in Nigeria (70%) to begin to take action to address poverty. Volunteering has been shown as catalyst for active citizenship.

The extent to which active citizenship is promoted through some of VSON's interventions have been documented in other studies[11]. The meaning of active citizenship for young people was found to be more about 'taking action' rather than a status or an attitude.
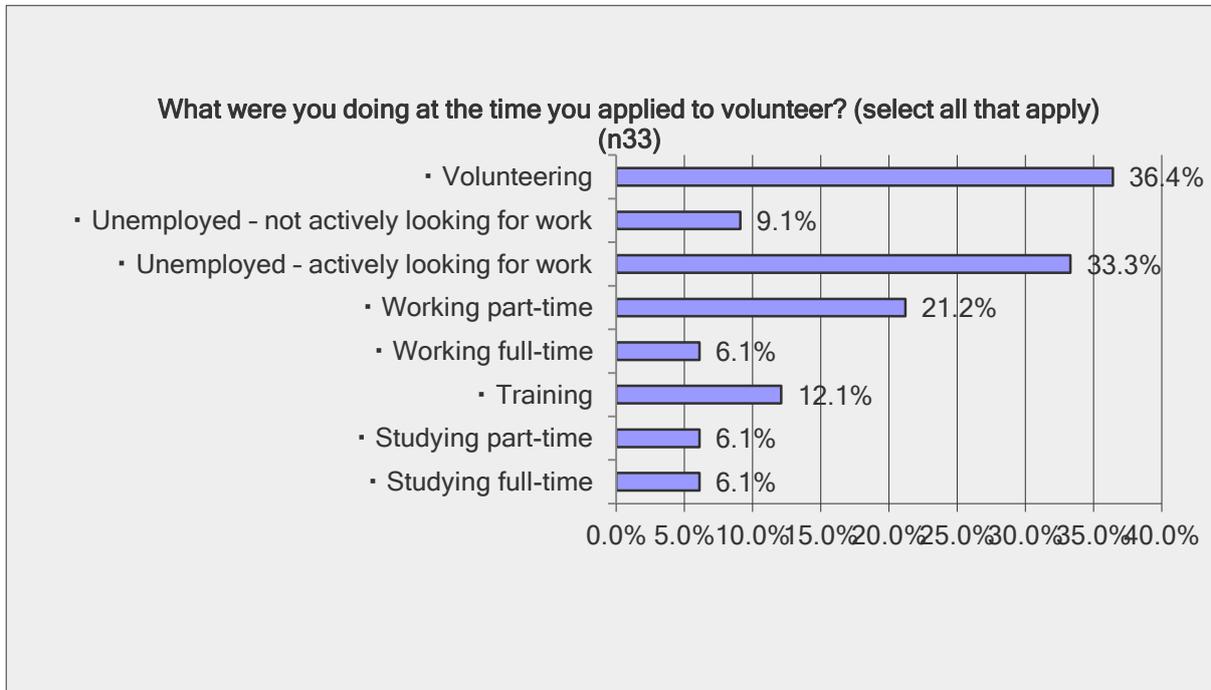
Evidence reported from stakeholders in the study indicates that national volunteering promotes active citizenship. It has been noted that volunteering motivates and encourages young people to continue taking social action even after their placements. Stakeholders have pointed out that volunteering offers opportunities for personal development, increasing understanding of own community, facing challenges and development issues. These opportunities motivate volunteers for continued action. These findings are consistent with findings of the evidence-based case study on active citizenship in VSON Youth Programmes[12]. The extent to which volunteering promotes active citizenship is evident through volunteers' motivations and through volunteering itself.
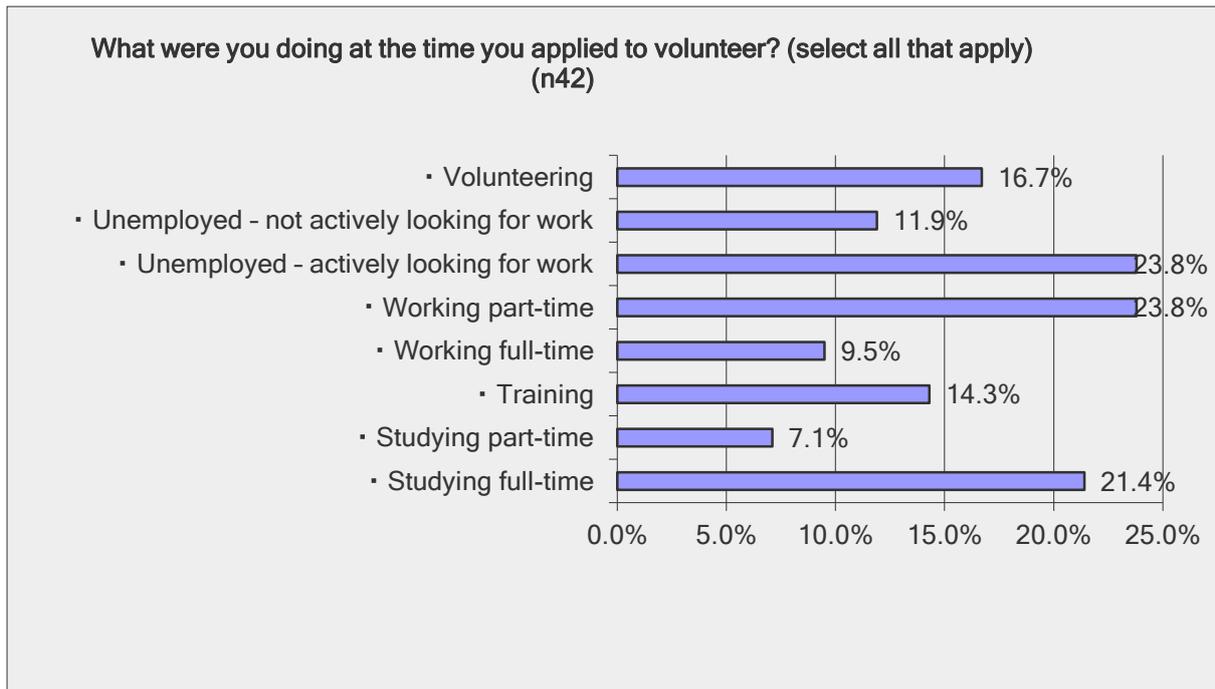
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[11] Active Citizenship in Youth programmes in VSO Nigeria – EBCS 2014 by Janet Clark
[12] Ibid

In the survey of current and returned volunteers, at least a third of respondents said that they have been involved in some voluntary activity prior to their placements (Fig 14 and 15). Volunteers engaged through focus groups noted that their enthusiasm for taking action was heightened through previous volunteering experiences. They said that this enthusiasm was triggered, in particular through interaction and learning from communities in which they previously served.
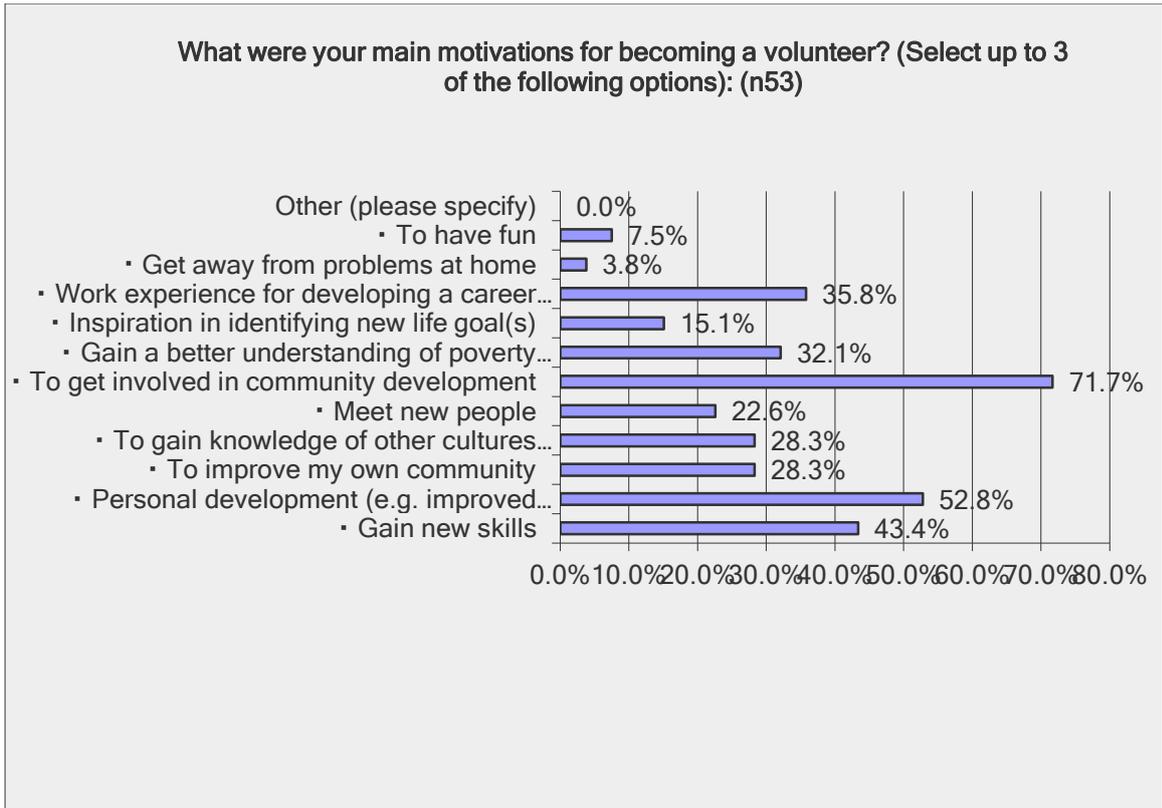

What were you doing at the time you applied to volunteer? (select all that apply) (n33)

Category	Percentage
· Volunteering	36.4%
· Unemployed – not actively looking for work	9.1%
· Unemployed – actively looking for work	33.3%
· Working part-time	21.2%
· Working full-time	6.1%
· Training	12.1%
· Studying part-time	6.1%
· Studying full-time	6.1%

Figure 17: Pre-volunteering experience of current volunteers

What were you doing at the time you applied to volunteer? (select all that apply) (n42)

Category	Percentage
· Volunteering	16.7%
· Unemployed – not actively looking for work	11.9%
· Unemployed – actively looking for work	23.8%
· Working part-time	23.8%
· Working full-time	9.5%
· Training	14.3%
· Studying part-time	7.1%
· Studying full-time	21.4%

Figure 18: Pre-volunteering experience for Returned Volunteers

Volunteers were also asked in the survey to indicate their main motivations for volunteering. Getting involved in community development, personal development and an opportunity to gain a new skills were the three most significant motivations. 71% of current volunteers wanted to get involved in community development through volunteering; 52.3% wanted personal development and 43.4% of volunteers saw it as opportunity to gain a new skill (Fig 17). For returned volunteers, the main motivations for volunteering were similar; 83% for community development, 70.8% for personal development and 47.9% for gaining new skills (Fig 18).

It has been confirmed in the study that volunteers' motivation, commitment and enthusiasm for volunteering was significantly increased through their volunteering placement in VSO interventions. This has been attributed to the particular approach to volunteering which VSO promotes, the level of orientation given and the preparation and training volunteers receive.

What were your main motivations for becoming a volunteer? (Select up to 3 of the following options): (n53)

Motivation	%
Other (please specify)	0.0%
· To have fun	7.5%
· Get away from problems at home	3.8%
· Work experience for developing a career…	35.8%
· Inspiration in identifying new life goal(s)	15.1%
· Gain a better understanding of poverty…	32.1%
· To get involved in community development	71.7%
· Meet new people	22.6%
· To gain knowledge of other cultures…	28.3%
· To improve my own community	28.3%
· Personal development (e.g. improved…	52.8%
· Gain new skills	43.4%

(Axis: 0.0% 10.0% 20.0% 30.0% 40.0% 50.0% 60.0% 70.0% 80.0%)

Fig 19. Current volunteers' motivations for volunteering

What were your main motivations for becoming a volunteer? (Select up to 3 of the following options):(n48)

Motivation	%
Other (please specify)	0.0%
· To have fun	6.3%
· Get away from problems at home	4.2%
· Work experience for developing a career…	31.3%
· Inspiration in identifying new life goal(s)	20.8%
· Gain a better understanding of poverty…	39.6%
· To get involved in community development	83.3%
· Meet new people	22.9%
· To gain knowledge of other cultures…	35.4%
· To improve my own community	35.4%
· Personal development (e.g. improved…	70.8%
· Gain new skills	47.9%

(Axis: 0.0% 10.0% 20.0% 30.0% 40.0% 50.0% 60.0% 70.0% 80.0% 90.0%)

Fig 21. Returned volunteers' motivations for volunteering

The extent of voluntary action by volunteers post placements have been shown to increase after their volunteering experience (Fig 21). A high proportion of returned volunteers indicate in the survey that they increased their participation in local groups/clubs/organisations even after their placement. They continue to provide unpaid support in their local communities and engage politicians to discuss local issues. Of equally high proportion are those that attend public meetings on issues of concern, attend events to raise funds for a charity and make ethical choices in their daily lives.
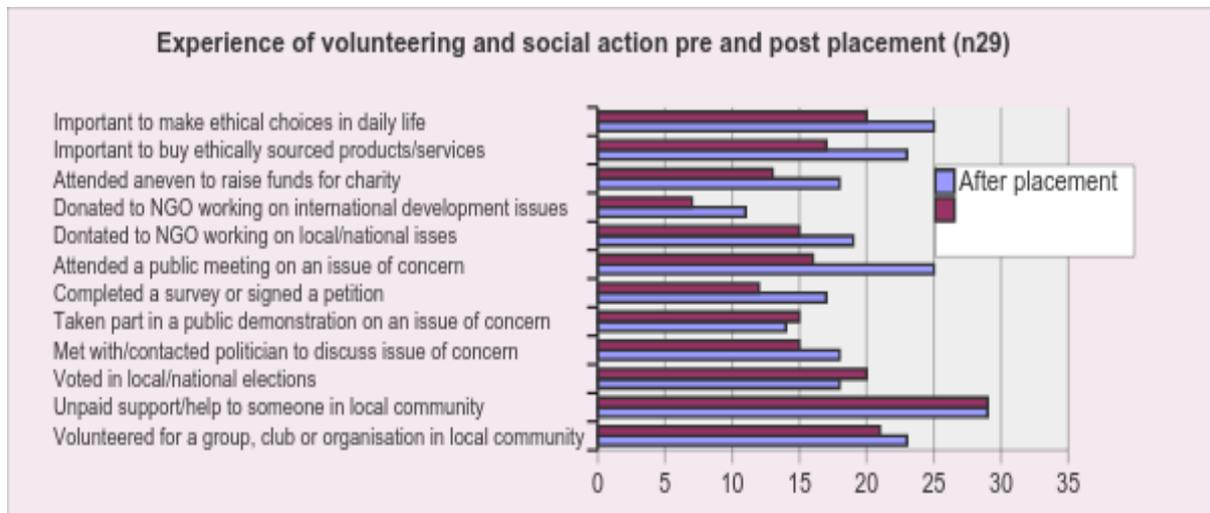
Fig 21. Experience of volunteering and social action by returned volunteers

As noted earlier, stakeholders reported that national volunteering does offer the space for volunteers to engage and contribute to nation building. Through this act, volunteers develop greater commitment and interest for community development and take action to solve community issues affecting themselves and their communities. It has also been noted that volunteering increases a sense of community and responsibility for the particular community. These benefits promote continued action from volunteers even after placements.

> *"…volunteering increases understanding not only of problems and challenges but also of national development strategies and policies which voluntary action can support" [Community stakeholder].*

> *"Volunteering has changed my view of problems in my society - the things I used to complain about or ignore, I actively think about solving" [NYSC volunteer].*

> *"Volunteering fosters volunteering and active citizenship" [VSO Partner].*

Evidence reported elsewhere also shows that youth volunteer placements act as a powerful catalyst for active citizenship[13]. In Nigeria this drive has gained momentum through a number of routes; all of which have played an important role in developing and nurturing active citizenship among young people in particular[14]. Identified active citizenship activities include:

● NYSCs volunteers who undertake community development actions (CDS) in their communities continue to follow up on some actions after placement.

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[13] Ibid
[14] Ibid

- Youth community members acting as youth parliamentarians in communities to promote active engagement of other youths and serve as role models for young people and children.
- Returned volunteers taking action at home through the YAN network and continue networking with other volunteers in support of identified projects.
- Volunteers re-volunteering as graduate volunteers or community volunteers such as CCSVs to support other VSO interventions.

Evidence points to volunteers continuing to engage and act in their communities after ending their placements. While others re-volunteer, there is also growing network of returned volunteers – also named "life-long volunteers". Although more informal, these networks of volunteers can serve as a support system for other volunteering initiatives. In Kwara State, the Active Citizens group serves as a networking platform for all volunteering models. This platform could potentially support the VSO Back to School initiative.

It has also been documented through an evidence-based case study on Youth Programmes in Nigeria that volunteers face some difficulties when taking action after their placements, with the difficulty in accessing small scale funds to support their community development actions being the major challenge. Other challenges identified include inaccessibility of non-monitory resources such as expertise or accreditation which could sometimes facilitate their engagement with authorities and those in power.

As reported by volunteers in the focus groups and through the survey, pressure from families to find paid employment constitutes a challenge to their continued voluntary action. A lack of clear understanding of volunteering also poses a challenge for continued engagement and social action. As observed earlier, volunteers noted that community members perceive volunteering as a lazy and way-ward lifestyle, not for the serious minded. This perception affects people's commitment and motivation levels to continue taking voluntary action.

5.10 The role of partnerships in delivering national volunteering models
The volunteering models are delivered through partnerships with both public sector and NGO partners in Nigeria. Partners felt that VSO offers a different perspective on volunteering which focuses on specific interventions and with greater individual motivation compared to other agencies. This makes VSO national volunteering models quite distinct. They appreciate this distinctiveness of the VSO model and its role in building capacity to deliver national volunteering.

Participants believe VSO and partner organisations bring different strengths to the partnership towards delivering national volunteering interventions. They observed that public institutions, like the NYSC, offer a strategic advantage in delivering national volunteering.

> "*The NYSC is the official institution responsible for national volunteering in Nigeria. It provides human resources base and platform to develop interest of youth in volunteering. It has the systems and structures in place to recruit, place and manage volunteers in different states in Nigeria. It has the mandate to promote and facilitate national volunteering towards meeting the country's development challenges and community needs and have the interest of extending the in-service placement into other sectors such as health" [NYSC Official].*

It was considered strategic for VSO to work with national agencies which have the mandate and platform to able to recruit large numbers of volunteers for its projects and activities. VSO staff also think that the NYSC structure offers VSO a cost-effective means of harnessing local human capital. However it has been shown that the NYSC corpers serve in mandatory placements although VSO uses them in support of specific developmental interventions which benefit both volunteers and others in communities.

Other partners also support the recruitment, placement and management of other volunteers such as graduate volunteers. These are mainly state level public institutions such as the Ministry of Education in Kwara State and NGOs partners. It was clear that these institutions offer the platform to reach marginalised communities within the partnership while VSO brings the programming.

NGO partners support monitoring and programme developments involving volunteers. These partners believe that VSO volunteers provide critical capacities for delivering services thereby expanding their reach to marginalised communities. It was evident that all partners involved in the study have benefited from at least one of the national volunteering models - NGVs in particular. VSO also uses the services of national volunteers for programme office tasks such as coordinating events and for logistic and administration support.

Partners believe VSO brings a unique approach to volunteering and capacity building for programming and the management of volunteers. Partners appreciate the capacity building, training and mentoring they receive from VSO staff and international volunteers which supports the delivery of national volunteering interventions. Exchanges and study tours to other countries for learning and knowledge exchange were identified as valued capacity building support from VSO.

Volunteers also appreciate the pre-service preparation provided by VSO staff, in-service training and skills building, integration into communities as well as spaces for learning and sharing. Where these have not been delivered as planned, volunteers have shown frustration as this affects their ability to work effectively in their placements.

A number of challenges were identified by participants which affect the quality of the partnership particularly with state partners. Some noted a lack of synergy between VSO and partners in planning, delivery and communication around national volunteering initiatives. This affects the coordination of support to volunteers, communication, monitoring and reporting on project activities and outcomes. Others observed expectations are not always clarified and well managed between VSO and partners and this leaves volunteers unsatisfied in placements.

VSO staff similarly described the challenges involved in working with government and state institutions. They observed that while working relationships at the national level appear cordial, that cannot be said of the partnership at the state level.

Partners would value opportunities to meet collectively with VSO for periodic reviews and reflection on the volunteering interventions. Volunteers would also appreciate opportunities to be involved in feedback processes, learning and sharing from other volunteering models.

5.11. Policy landscape on national volunteering in Nigeria

National and state level stakeholders confirmed that there is currently no clear policy on national volunteering in Nigeria despite having a national institution like the National Youth Service Corps mandated to recruit and place volunteers for one year mandatory service. According to stakeholders and VSO staff, there is a draft national policy on volunteering developed in conjunction with stakeholders including the National Volunteering Service, VSO and United Nation Volunteers. They conceded that momentum has been lost in the policy formulation process and there is a potential role for VSO in this regard, to revive its progress following the change of political administration. VSO is also a member of the National Volunteering Thematic Working Group and has a role in facilitating the policy process through its membership.

Stakeholders noted that volunteering is not yet grounded in the Nigerian context and no strong culture of national volunteering exist although there are some organisations in addition to VSO such as the Red Cross which are supporting volunteering activities.

> *"National volunteering is embryonic in Nigeria - until I started working with VSO I had not heard of national volunteering beyond mandatory service"* [NYSC Official].

Partners interviewed also confirmed that VSO appears to be the only organisation promoting national volunteering in all its programmes and projects. They also see a role for VSO in policy formulation by collaborating with other international agencies to revive the draft policy. They added that VSO could ensure that the policy is enabling rather than enforcing since some states are already engaging with volunteers through VSO interventions.

Other stakeholders see VSO's role as supporting policy work on girls' education especially in northern Nigeria through national volunteering. Yet, some suggested VSO could support the thematic working group to push forward the policy process. Some partners also felt that VSO in collaboration with civil society entities could advocate for more resources from government to support young people volunteering. Finally, there was the view that VSO could continue working with a few of the states that are open to promoting volunteering and help them to strengthen their national volunteering approaches as a basis for evidence-based advocacy.

5.12 Role of volunteering in fragile states

Stakeholders see the potential of using national volunteers in conflict management and emergency response interventions, in supporting internally displaced persons and in helping peace building. Some stakeholders and partners staff reported that volunteers are already placed in communities in Kaduna and Kano. Others noted that volunteers can serve as role models for other youths to impact values and patriotism in young people and to serve as youth leaders.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This section presents the main conclusions from the study highlighting some of the learning and implications for VSO programming and recommendations based on these.

National volunteers play a significant role in VSO Nigeria's projects and programmes and contribute to outcomes for individuals and communities. From the study, five categories of volunteering models are evident. Volunteers recruited through the NYSC structure, graduate volunteers recruited by VSO and partners, volunteers who serve in the International Citizen Service with their UK youth volunteers, community volunteers who are recruited from and serve in their own communities and a limited number of highly skilled professional volunteers. Not all models are used in every project or intervention.

National volunteering comes with very distinct characteristics according to participants and partners. A key distinctiveness reported is the local context knowledge and understanding volunteers bring to their placements, which is further enhanced through their volunteering experience. This ensures that volunteers increase their sense of ownership and responsibility for themselves and their community and continue to take action towards community development and nation building.

The study found from interaction with partners and volunteers (including those from Ikorodu and Kwara and from Kaduna, Zamfara, Kano and Nasarawa), that volunteers undertake a range of capacity building activities for VSO and partners' target groups. Training, coaching and mentoring are key volunteering activities. Volunteers also deliver direct services to primary actors and communities such as teaching pupils, mobilising and sensitising community members. They also undertake other actions in communities that support broader community development. It was evident that volunteers work as a network in project locations around VSO's objectives and project outcomes.

In the Ikorodu governance programme, volunteers perform different but complementary roles towards promoting the empowerment of marginalised groups - children and young people through the inclusive neighbourhood spaces. They also sensitising communities and facilitating engagement with local community structures to improve governance and participation.

Volunteers in Kwara State education intervention teach in rural secondary schools and also undertake community development activities in the communities in which they are placed. Here volunteers are engaged in service delivery and help to fill teacher deployment gaps in rural communities, a challenge created as a result of the free secondary education policy.

The study revealed that national volunteering models in Nigeria offer many benefits largely to the volunteers themselves and to wider community. Stakeholders agree volunteering offers opportunities for young people to develop relevant skills and increases their understanding of local communities, developmental challenges, national strategies and polices and community issues. Volunteering contributes to nation building and supports the development of local communities. It exposes young people to other cultures and promotes their connection to local communities which enhances ownership and active citizenship.

There were some challenges reported for national volunteering; some affecting volunteers in their placements and others relating to volunteering practice in Nigeria. The perceived lack of

understanding of volunteering was a major challenge reported by stakeholders. It has been shown that communities do not understand volunteering and there exists a lack of clarity on expectations of volunteering for both volunteers and community members at large. Again a lack of national policy and support for volunteers from communities and state agencies are challenges identified by volunteers and other stakeholders. There were concerns about the length of some placements, language barriers and inadequate material and financial support from partners.

While stakeholders talked about a lack of understanding of national volunteering, there exists a national agency mandated to recruit and place graduates in mandatory national service. This would appear to be a recognition of the value of harnessing local human capital in pursuit of specific development agendas. The study highlights the important question and tension inherent in the practice of mandatory national service as volunteering since this model contributes a significant number of volunteers in VSO Nigeria's interventions. There is a need to explore this tension and clarify further the place and role of mandatory national service schemes in VSO Nigeria's volunteering models.

6.1 Impact and effectiveness of national volunteering models
Evidence of outcomes reported by stakeholders indicate that volunteering impacts on individual volunteers and communities. There are significant personal development benefits and outcomes from volunteering reported by volunteers and other participants in the study. Volunteering has been shown to contribute to enhancing knowledge and skills of volunteers in different areas, developing their personal capacities, attributes and values in addition to widening their perspective and understanding of the challenges in rural communities. Volunteers consider these personal outcomes invaluable for them because the skills and knowledge gained stays with them for life. Community volunteers enable communities to build relevant skills and knowledge and help in sustaining these.

It has also been evidenced that volunteering offers space and opportunity for individuals to contribute to nation building. This together with other factors fosters active citizenship and encourages volunteering from other young people. For VSO Nigeria's youth centred strategy, these outcomes represent key achievements - developing young people as agents of change. From the study, it is clear that volunteers really feel the impact of volunteering on them.

There is some evidence of impact of national volunteering models on communities and other individuals. Based on outcomes reported by stakeholders, different models have been shown to contribute to different outcomes for communities, young people, children and farmers as a result of activities of volunteers. NYSC corpers and graduate volunteers serving as volunteer teachers are reported to have contributed to improving teaching and learning in secondary schools and as a result improved performance of students in Kwara State. Stakeholders and school principals have highlighted improved performance of schools but it was difficult to verify improvements over time in examinations scores/pass rates due to unavailable data and limited time for fieldwork. Although the study could also not establish other contributory factors to improved performance in schools, evidence reported by community stakeholders point to a positive contribution of volunteers teachers in improving the academic performance of students in the intervention schools. Evidence reported from ultimate beneficiaries, students in Kwara, on the other hand also indicate an attitudinal shift in students due to motivational talks and mentoring from volunteers as well as a better understanding of subjects due to extra-curricular activities and creative teaching methods used by volunteers. These

may be argued are important contributors to improving teaching and learning and hence students' performance.

These is some evidence of increased enrolment and attendance in schools where VSO volunteer teachers are placed in Kwara state, according community stakeholders but enrolment data from the State Education Management Information System does not support increased school enrolment figures between 2014 and 2015 in the majority of schools including VSO intervention schools.

It is difficult within the context of the study to attribute these reported outcomes solely to volunteering interventions in the absence of an assessment of other contributory factors. It is also difficult to establish the scale of these outcomes and ultimate impact on primary actors due to insufficient data.

In Ikorodu, volunteering models have been shown to contribute to the empowerment of children through the inclusive neighbourhood spaces and changing attitudes of community members on the needs and importance children and their education. Children are reported to have increased recognition and voice in their communities. There appears to be limited impact of youth parliaments on young people. However, there is evidence of adaptive programming where VSO Nigeria changed their strategy to focus on children rather than youths in the inclusive neighbourhood spaces. Young community volunteers continue to support the children's parliaments as community citizen governance volunteers.

The evidence from engagement with community volunteers working as extension agents shows that community volunteering impacts positively on the CAEVs and other farmers, in improving agricultural practices and leading to increased yields and income in Nasarawa and Kaduna States. From the stakeholders' perspectives, there are positive outcomes for farmers and women in particular in these communities. Increases in livelihood assets such as farm machinery and additional farming plots were also reported by community stakeholders. Improvements in the health and nutritional status of families and better education of children as indications of improved well-being were reported due to the services of community volunteers. It was not possible to establish the scale of reported impact for wider communities.

Improvements in partners' capacities and service delivery were the main outcomes produced for partners through their partnership with VSO. Volunteering models have shown the potential to extend the reach of partners to marginalised groups and communities. Some partners are even beginning to incorporate volunteering models into their own programming.

These reported changes indicate that volunteering models contribute to outcomes for individuals and communities and hence produce some impact for them though the scale of community level impact was not established through this study.

6.2 Relevance and sustainability of national volunteering models
From the study, it is evident that national volunteering is relevant in the context of VSO Nigeria's strategy and interventions. National volunteers play significant roles in all projects, from project management and coordination, mobilisation and empowerment of marginalised groups to delivering services directly to partners and primary actors.

National graduate and professional volunteers build capacities of partners and other volunteers. Some graduate volunteers coordinate activities in local council development areas or in schools. Volunteers also mobilise communities, youths and children and establish inclusive spaces for them. They facilitate and guide meetings, train and mentor children and teach them useful skills. Volunteers from the ICS, NYSC and NGV models teach children and students directly in rural schools. They serve as the primary capacity development resource for VSO's targets in the locations visited, building critical skills and capacities in children, young people and communities. Through these roles, volunteers have contributed to producing some outcomes for themselves and others in communities. To some extent, these outcomes fit within VSO Nigeria's programme objectives.

From the study, it was evident that the different models work together as a network of volunteers in each project. Also different models have been shown to contribute to outcomes achieved based on their relative strengths and weaknesses.

Factors which affect the relevance and sustainability of the volunteering models evident from the study: level of community integration of volunteers; the length of placement; level of experience of the volunteer; type of placement whether individual or team and level of support for volunteer activities. Another ingredient is the quality of the partnership. This affects community ownership and sustainability of the volunteering models.

Community sustainability and ownership
The study found that where volunteers are based in or close to their own communities there is an increased potential for interventions owned and changes to be sustained but only with community support. It was shown from stakeholders' perspectives that community volunteers who are recruited from and serve within their communities offer the greatest potential for sustained ongoing community ownership and sustainability of volunteering interventions. It was evident that community agricultural extension volunteers in Nasarawas, Kaduna and Zamfara recruited from communities often work in or close to their own communities play an important role in sustaining activities in communities. They retain skills and capacities in their communities, contribute to building knowledge and skills of other farmers and bridge the gap between other models that work in the same localities such as graduate volunteers and NYSC corpers. In the case of Ikorodu, community volunteers (CCSVs and CCGVs) support children through the inclusive spaces. It has been shown that by their closeness and integration in communities, they are able to work more closely with community structures to improve governance and participation of vulnerable groups.

National graduate and professional volunteers also have a high potential of fostering local ownership and sustainability where they work in partnership with local community structures and in strong partnerships with effective systems for monitoring and support. However, graduate volunteers do not necessarily come from communities in which they serve, they are not always replaced and this can pose a threat to the sustainability of activities and outcomes.

Volunteers recruited through NYSC and ICS usually serve in communities other than their own. They are seen as further removed from communities although they do live in the community for the duration of their placement. Additionally, the short term nature of ICS placements does not foster community ownership and sustainability as there are usually gaps between cycles. NYSC corpers however are placed to overlap so that one set is always advanced in the placement to support the new person's induction. Having said that, not all NYSC corpers achieve this transition for instance,

those placed in schools as volunteer teachers may not teach in the same subject areas handled by previous volunteers.

In addition, there is evidence that the models have the potential to deliver the desired outcomes if community/stakeholder support and the quality of the partnership is strong. Where community support is lacking and the partnership is weak, it was reported that volunteers feel demotivated and activities are not delivered as planned. There were a number of challenges reported on the partnership in Kwara with the State agency which according to volunteers prevents the model from achieving maximum results. There were no issues reported in regards to the partnership with NGO partners which justifies the inclusion of an NGO partner in supporting programming and monitoring the volunteering intervention in Kwara State.

The study found that community volunteers deliver outcomes for community members. They help expand services to marginalised groups and communities. CAEVs have been shown to contribute to improving farming practices that lead to increased yields and income for farmers. Community volunteers in the governance programme have also contributed to changing attitudes and behaviours of community members, motivating them and giving a voice to young people and children.

> *"Volunteerism is needed in communities because government services and products cannot reach everywhere. Volunteers are the natural resource – vehicles to take these messages to communities"* [Community Stakeholder].

There is also evidence that for specialised and highly technical capacity development needs, targeted placements of professional and graduate volunteers have the potential to produce the results expected. They have more experience than volunteers in other models and can serve full time in placements. For broad based community awareness raising, behaviour change outcomes and the introduction of new ideas and perspectives, team-based models of ICS national volunteers and NYSC corpers appear more suitable. The major strength of the ICS model highlighted is its team working creative individuals with energy to be innovative - ICS volunteers are considered creative.

Inclusion of volunteering models
The volunteering models have shown different levels of accessibility to individuals and marginalised groups. Again, the study found that community volunteering models are the most inclusive model of volunteering in Nigeria as they do not require educational attainment like other models. Community volunteers are usually recruited from and live within their communities and hence any community member with the right motivation and interest can volunteer. They also often do not require specific recruitment criteria e.g. CCGVs were selected through informal channels. They are flexible and may be part time such as CAEVs and CCGVs.

Despite the fact that community volunteers from the study are more inclusive and have a higher potential to foster ownership and sustainability, the evidence shows that they are the least supported. Community stakeholders including parents raised concerns about the continuity and sustainability of the work of such community volunteers if support appears to be only from external sources and deemed inadequate.

ICS volunteers equally do not need qualifications. Although they may not come from same locality, they live within the communities in which they volunteer. They include both international and national

citizens and are also considered more inclusive than NYSC, graduate and professional volunteers who are restricted to those who have educational attainment, expertise and experience. ICS volunteers are recruited through a more formal process. National professional volunteers require a minimum of 5 years' experience and so the criteria for volunteering is very restrictive.

The challenges reported by stakeholders show that some of the models are not being employed to maximum effect. In Kwara, volunteers are being deployed to fill gaps in education service provision in rural schools. Though volunteers may have contributed to improving the quality of teaching and learning, the inability of the State education department to retain them after their placements have ended does not ensure the sustainability of outcomes produced. Community stakeholders felt therefore that there was need for volunteer placements to continue in their schools and this dependence on VSO placements in absence of a longer term solution raised questions for the sustainability of the models in Kwara. Volunteer service delivery, it may be argued, is replacing government service provision in this instance.

Similarly, there were reports that volunteer teachers are not replaced in some schools and where volunteers are posted to the same schools, they do not necessarily continue to teach the same subjects handled by previous volunteers. This affects continuity and the quality of service delivered by the volunteers. Coupled with inadequate materials and financial support, volunteers are found to be not as effective as they would have liked. Community support is key for volunteers. For this reason, some volunteers felt that VSO could achieve an improved quality of teaching and learning in secondary schools and enhance the performance of students, through a focused and consistent support to fewer schools and cohorts of students over time. The outcome of such an approach could then be to advocate for the retention of volunteer teachers. In that way, the volunteers' contribution would also become more visible.

The lack of effective monitoring mechanisms for tracking change, documenting results and understanding the impact and scale of national volunteers' contributions means that VSO is not able to evidence the impact of the volunteers in their placement.

"VSO does not know what the volunteers have achieved and they do not ask" [Partner]

6.3   National volunteering in fragile and insecure environments
Partners see a role for national volunteers in fragile and insecure environments. They suggested that volunteers could serve in their own communities to reduce radicalisation, facilitate peace building among youths, support and extend medical outreach as well as support the education of children and girls in particular. It was noted that some partners use national volunteers in their programmes in fragile environments particularly in Northern Nigeria, where community volunteers are already playing a roles. There was a strong view that volunteers could act as role models in insecure states.

Other participants felt that national volunteering is a more feasible approach than using international volunteers in such high risk environments. They however noted the need for thorough risk analysis in programming if national volunteer were to be involved in these areas.

6.4   Role of partnerships in delivering national volunteering

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As central to VSO's work, VSO Nigeria is working with some strategic partners to deliver national volunteering models like the NYSC. VSO also partners with other state level institutions and NGO partners for delivering the graduate volunteering model. There was evidence that where the partnership is not strong, this impacts negatively on the volunteering intervention, effectiveness of the model and morale of volunteers. VSO's capacity building of partners and volunteers is also valued but where these have not been delivered timely, volunteers have been dissatisfied.

6.5   Role of VSO in Policy formulation

VSO's role in national volunteering policy development does not appear to be strong. Stakeholders felt there is a role for VSO in policy development such as catalysing the work of the National Volunteering Thematic Group and advocating for increases in resources from the state in support of youth volunteering initiatives.

Summary of Findings on Key Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions	Summary response
How appropriate and relevant are the different NV models in relation to NV programmes and VSO programming?	In Ikorodu NV models respond to the needs of children and young people in the community. In Kwara NV models are being channelled largely to fill gaps and deliver mandatory services required of state institutions.
What has been the contribution of national volunteering approaches/models to achieving VSON programmes, project objectives and outcomes?	A broad range of stakeholders have reported outcomes from different volunteering models which fit with VSO programmes and project objectives. Reported outcomes are not well documented.
What role has the quality of partnerships with key institutions like NYSC played towards achieving and sustaining results produced through NV approaches?	There was evidence that the quality of the partnership with NYSC appears strong especially at a national level. Other partner relationships vary. Where the quality of the partnership is weak, it affects the ability to achieve and sustain results.
What is the impact on active citizenship, personal development of youth and impact in the community?	There is evidence that national volunteering models are promoting active citizenship in young people. National volunteers reported positive impacts on their own personal development. Evidence from stakeholders also points to national volunteer models impacting on communities where the volunteers are engaged.
What is VSO Nigeria's contribution to national volunteering and in what ways is NV effective in delivering the desired outcomes? What factors inhibited or accelerated the effectiveness of these models?	There is evidence that models have the potential to deliver the desired outcomes if community support is strong and where the quality of the partnership is also strong. Effective systems need to be in place to measure outcomes. The different models are intertwined and difficult to delineate what is coming out of a particular model. There is some evidence of outcomes from various models as contributing to VSON project objectives. The distinct characteristics of the each model shows which programme results they are more suitable for. E.g. for community level changes, there is a strong argument that the community volunteers are more suitable.
How do the different national volunteering approaches lead to long term sustainable changes for target beneficiaries and communities?	There is no strong evidence beyond reported outcomes produced by participants for volunteers and communities concerning the contribution of the different models to long term changes for primary actors. Where volunteers are based in or close to their own communities there is an increased potential for changes to be sustained but only with community support.

What are the best practices from these models and what could VSON do to improve its NV modelling to deliver greater impact?	Evidence suggests that community based models deliver the strongest practice but they are least supported. Resources need to be available to support volunteer activities in communities. Monitoring systems need to be improved to measure volunteers' impact on primary actors
Do the models play a crucial role in ensuring local ownership and sustainability? Is this a more feasible option in fragile and insecure contexts?	NGVs and community volunteers have a higher potential of fostering local ownership and sustainability where they work in partnership with communities. In northern Nigeria some community volunteers are already playing a role where it would not be possible to place other volunteers. Some partners felt that there is role for volunteers to act as role models in insecure states and facilitate peace building and working with internally displaced persons.
How do various models contribute to the SDGs agenda and our future position, advocacy and potential volunteering for development framework for VSO in Nigeria?	Models are delivering outcomes which were aligned to the MDGs and now fit with SDGs. VSO does have a role to play for a potential volunteering for development framework.
What role can VSO play in policy drafting on volunteering in Nigeria?	There was an identified need for a national volunteering policy and a perceived role for VSO to play in reviving the policy already drafted, especially in the light of the recent change of administration.

7. Recommendations

A number of key learnings and recommendations emanating from the study are listed below:

1. A lack of robust monitoring data on the scale of national volunteering appears to be a major challenge found through this study. Stakeholders have also alluded to a lack of monitoring and reporting, inadequate feedback mechanisms and lack of systems for capturing outcomes. It is recommended that VSO Nigeria institutes a robust monitoring and evaluation system for documenting the contribution and impact of the work of national volunteers in its interventions and projects. Reporting and documentation mechanisms must be put in place to facilitate learning and understanding of the scale and impact of volunteering models within its programmes. Partners must be able to monitor volunteers in their programmes and demonstrate their contribution and impact. National volunteers should also be involved in providing feedback and contributing to the generation of evidence on their activities and impact of their work

2. Stakeholders have observed a number of challenges particularly with state institutions which affects the partners, the volunteers and the intervention itself. It is suggested that VSO Nigeria puts processes in place to address the challenges in the partnership with state level institutions. Clarity around expectations, roles and responsibilities, effective coordination and communication would strengthen the partnership and boost the morale of volunteers.

3. It has been shown that national volunteering models have the potential to contribute to the delivery of key projects and programme outcomes but they require clarity and focus around interventions and support from stakeholders, including communities. Re-focusing interventions in pursuit of the desired outcomes and impact is needed. When volunteering models are used as an approach or tool to engage and empower marginalised groups, it must be clearly stated. Where models are used to support service delivery, there must be strategies for sustaining activities or embedding practices within communities to offer better potentials for ownership and continuity. It may be worth reviewing the volunteering practices that appear to be gap filling rather than providing capacities for partners to deliver quality services for primary actors.

4. It has been illustrated that volunteering models closer to communities offer a higher potential to sustain outcomes and foster ownership and sustainability. It is recommended that VSO Nigeria takes steps to ensure that volunteers work as close to their localities as possible. This would be more applicable to community, graduate, ICS and professional volunteers.

5. Volunteers have lamented about a lack of space and processes for engagement, feedback and involvement in programming. It is recommended that VSO takes steps to develop volunteering processes for learning and sharing. In addition, feedback mechanisms must be provided to harness volunteers' insights to inform future programme development.

6. Partners would appreciate more involvement in programme design and application of volunteering models in programme delivery. Periodic review platform have been mentioned as more effective processes for engagement rather than the annual partnership forum and review processes which they see as focusing on responding to VSO's global data requirements.

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Quarterly planning and review sessions, project reflection and learning meetings, periodic assessments of performance with partners are some examples of processes that can deepen engagement and relationships with partners.

7. It has been found that a key contributor of volunteers to national volunteering interventions is the NYSC corpers. The highlight of this model is its placement of school leavers in mandatory national service. These corpers are considered volunteers in VSO's projects. It is recommended that VSO Nigeria explores further the place and role of NYSC corpers in its interventions.

8. Volunteers have appreciated the pre-placement orientation and training provided by VSO. Further training to support their activities were highly valued and where these have not been delivered timely, volunteers often felt demotivated. It is recommended that VSO Nigeria project teams deliver the training modules in a timely manner to get the best value from volunteers.

9. It has been observed by volunteers that VSO does not understand communities and their needs fully before placing volunteers such as teachers. It is recommended that VSO Nigeria undertakes deeper community analysis to identify needs, resources, processes and structures within communities that can help sustain volunteering interventions and outcomes. For instance working with community level education governance structures such as school management boards would ensure that volunteers are supported and activities are embedded within communities. School based children parliaments are suggested to be established within the communities in which schools are based, to ensure there is continuity.

10. VSO's role in policy formulation has not been clear for stakeholders. From their perspective, VSO should consider facilitating the national volunteering policy development process by activating the National Volunteering Thematic Working Group in collaboration with other stakeholders.

Annex 1 – Evaluation framework

Evaluation framework

Day workshop with key VSON staff

The purpose of this workshop is to verify the data already reviewed and explore the national volunteering landscape, models of national volunteering, aspects of partnership and policy. A proposed outlined for this workshop is given below.

Evidence ● Verify and reflect on the data captured through the literature review ● Confirm data gaps ● Establish any additional evidence of achievement against objectives/barriers to achieving objectives	9.00 - 10.30
National volunteering landscape ● Explore the distinct characteristics of national volunteering ● What are the benefits of national volunteering? ● Identify any specific challenges for national volunteering and how these can be overcome ● Explore how national volunteers contribute to identified needs and at what level (community, regional, national) ● Explore how national volunteers contribute to outcomes for individuals and communities	10.45 – 11.45
Different models of volunteering ● Consider each of the models of national volunteering referenced in the ToR against its objectives ● Discuss strengths and weaknesses of each model and possible areas for improvement/enhancement ● What factors accelerate or inhibit the effectiveness of these models? ● Explore views on the relevance of each model for VSON strategy ● Explore the relationships and connections between national volunteering models across VSO programmes	11.45 - 13.00
Partnerships ● How does VSO's partner relationships effect the ability to deliver national volunteering ● Explore the strengths and weaknesses of relationships with partners in delivering national volunteering programmes	14.00 – 15.00

Policy context ● What role does national volunteering play in the VSON country strategy? Is the balance right? Should it be more or less prominent? ● How do various models contribute to the SDG agenda, VSO's future position, advocacy and potential volunteering for development framework for VSO in Nigeria ● What is the national policy context on national volunteering and what role can VSO play in informing and influencing policy ● What role can national volunteering play in insecure or fragile environments?	15.00 - 16.00

Strategic stakeholders interview framework
Will depend on the stakeholder as to which models they can talk about in depth – in some cases it will be one model
● What are the distinct characteristics of national volunteering?
● What are the benefits of national volunteering?
● Identify any specific challenges for national volunteering and how these can be overcome
● How do national volunteers contribute to identified needs and at what level (community, regional, national)?
● How do national volunteers contribute to outcomes for individuals and communities? (check for verifiable evidence)
● How does national volunteering contribute to outcomes for volunteers? (check for verifiable evidence)
● Discuss strengths and weaknesses of models of national volunteering and possible areas for improvement/enhancement
● What factors accelerate or inhibit the effectiveness of these models?
● Explore views on the relevance of each model as appropriate?
● Can models play a role in ensuring local ownership? If so how?
● How do various models contribute to the SDG agenda, advocacy and potential volunteering for development frameworks in Nigeria
● What is the national policy context on national volunteering and what role can VSO play in informing and influencing policy?
● What role can national volunteering play in insecure or fragile environments?

Interviews/focus groups discussion framework with staff at partner organisations
Suggestion to focus on NGVP, ICS, NPV, NEV and CAEV – the rationale behind not focusing on NYSC is that this is a compulsory national service programme.

Questions are based on the assumptions that each partner will focus on one model of national volunteering – if not they would be asked for each model they are working with.

● What are the distinct characteristics of national volunteering?
● What are the benefits of national volunteering?

- Identify any specific challenges for national volunteering and how these can be overcome
- Context – how is the partner using this model of national volunteering and at what scale?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the model?
- How does this model compare with other potential models for national volunteering?
- Why was this model selected?
- Does the model play a role in ensuring local ownership? If so, how?
- How do national volunteers contribute to outcomes for individuals and communities? (check for verifiable evidence)
- How do national volunteers contribute to outcomes for the volunteers? (check for verifiable evidence)
- How does the partnership relationship with VSON affect the ability to deliver national volunteering?
- What does each partner bring to the partnership that supports the delivery of national volunteering?
- How do various models contribute to the SDG agenda, advocacy and potential volunteering for development framework in Nigeria?
- What is the national policy context on national volunteering and what role can VSO play in informing and influencing policy?
- What role can national volunteering play in insecure or fragile environments?

Interviews/focus groups with national volunteers
Assumed that if a focus group is used, that focus group will include national volunteers from one single model i.e. all ICS

- What are the benefits of national volunteering?
- Identify any specific challenges for you as a national volunteer and how these could these be overcome
- What were the needs of the community that you were working in as a national volunteer?
- Were you able to support these needs in your role? If so, how? (give examples)
- Were you able to contribute to outcomes for individuals and communities? If so, how?
- What if anything did you gain from your experience of as a national volunteer?
- Have you used any learning, skills or knowledge from your volunteering experience in your own community, or for your own personal development? If so, who has benefited from this and how?

May also want to consider exploring some of these issues using the ripples of change exercise outlined below.

Ripples of change

Activity	Objective	Time	Resources needed

Ripples of change	To understand the impact of the placement	First session 1 hour 15 mins to allow for 15 min discussion on active citizenship. Other sessions should be 1 hour.	Paper/pens/ flipchart/voice recorder

Description of activity

Ask participants to work in two groups and think about changes that happened during and since their placement. The facilitator will draw 3 concentric circles on a flip chart.
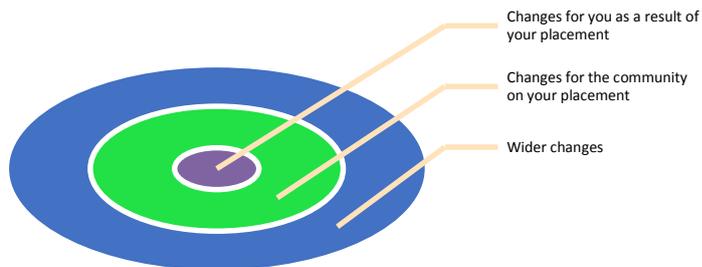
The inner circle represents change for the RVs at an individual level as a result of their placement (knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, skills). The middle circle represents change in the community that they were working as volunteers and the third circle represents any wider change that has happened beyond this which has come about because of the placement. This might include change that has happened since their placement, change with other communities, change at a regional or national level or change within their own networks/families/friends.

The groups will draw their own diagram with the three circles. They should then add changes that they have identified at each level into the circles. The two groups should then share their diagrams with each other. When the groups are feeding back, explore if there are any connections between the changes in the two inner circles and the changes that are described as being in the outer circle.

Annex 2 – Current national volunteer survey

VSO Nigeria National Volunteer Evaluation Survey (current volunteers)

VSO Nigeria is carrying out an evaluation which aims to understand more about the different models of national volunteering in Nigeria. The results from this evaluation will help VSO Nigeria to think about how to maximise the impact of different models.

We want to hear more about your experience and any information you give will be very helpful. It will take about 10 minutes to complete the survey and the information you give is anonymous and will remain confidential.

Thank you!

Your application to volunteer
Q1. What were you doing at the time you applied to volunteer? (Select all that apply)

- ❍ Studying full time
- ❍ Studying part time
- ❍ Training
- ❍ Working full time
- ❍ Working part time
- ❍ Unemployed – actively looking for work
- ❍ Unemployed – not actively looking for work
- ❍ Volunteering
- ❍ Other (please specify) (10) _____

Q2. What were your main motivations for becoming a volunteer? (Select up to 3 of the following options)

- ❑ Gain new skills
- ❑ Personal development (e.g. improved confidence)
- ❑ To improve my own community
- ❑ To gain knowledge of other cultures within my country
- ❑ Meet new people
- ❑ To get involved in community development
- ❑ Gain a better understanding of poverty and/or international development
- ❑ Inspiration in identifying new life goal(s)
- ❑ Work experience for developing a career in international development
- ❑ Get away from problems at home
- ❑ To have fun
- ❑ Other (please specify) (12) _____

Benefits of national volunteering

Q3. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with following statements?

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither agree or disagree(3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
As a national volunteer I feel that I understand the local environment	○	○	○	○	○
Through national volunteering I have increased knowledge of development strategies and processes	○	○	○	○	○
Improving situations in my own country has given me a greater ownership of problems in my community	○	○	○	○	○
Improving situations in my own country has given me a greater ownership of solutions for my community	○	○	○	○	○
I am well placed to monitor the impact of my volunteering contribution	○	○	○	○	○
I am well placed to continue working with the community in which I am placed after my placement	○	○	○	○	○
I have learnt from exposure to poverty	○	○	○	○	○
I have learnt from exposure to other cultures in the country	○	○	○	○	○
I feel more connected to my community as a result of volunteering	○	○	○	○	○
Building skills of national volunteers can empower the nation	○	○	○	○	○
Volunteering has provided learning development opportunities for me	○	○	○	○	○
As a national volunteer I can volunteer flexibly (for short periods of a few hours each week)	○	○	○	○	○
Volunteering has helped me find paid work	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)
There is government support for national volunteering	○	○	○	○	○
National volunteering contributes to national development	○	○	○	○	○

Challenges of national volunteering

Q4. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with following statements?

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)
The community where I volunteer does not understand volunteering	○	○	○	○	○
My friends and family do not understand volunteering	○	○	○	○	○
Lack of understanding of volunteering from others is demotivating	○	○	○	○	○
Lack of resources for projects limits what I can achieve	○	○	○	○	○
Language barriers have been affected what I can achieve as volunteer	○	○	○	○	○
My ability to volunteer is affected by pressure to find paid work	○	○	○	○	○
Not all volunteers receive the same level of support	○	○	○	○	○
The community places less value on national volunteers compared to international volunteers	○	○	○	○	○
I have conflicting demands on my time which affect my ability to volunteer	○	○	○	○	○
The length of my volunteer placement is too short	○	○	○	○	○
Young volunteers are seen as enthusiastic but not always taken seriously	○	○	○	○	○

Q5. Please indicate if you feel your experience of volunteering has contributed to any of the following changes for you?

	A great deal (1)	Some (2)	A little (3)	Not very much (4)	Not at all (5)
Increased self confidence	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased self esteem	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased awareness of challenges of those living in poor communities	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increase awareness of the value and benefits of national volunteering	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Improved skills (e.g. team work, communication, mentoring, influencing)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased sense of community	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased sense of responsibility for self	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased sense of responsibility for others	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Greater understanding of needs of groups within the community (e.g. children, young people, people with disabilities)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased understanding of how to effect change	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased ability to innovate	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased commitment to community development	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
More open to change	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
More open to be challenged by others	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased tolerance	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
More self-challenging	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased independence	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased awareness of diversity	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased awareness of other cultures	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q6. Has your experience of volunteering contributed to any negative changes for you? If so, please describe.

Q7. What one word best describes your experience of volunteering?

Q8. What do you see as the most significant difference between national and international volunteers?

About You

Q9. Are you?

❍ Female
❍ Male

Q10. How old are you?

❍ Under 16
❍ 16-17
❍ 18-21
❍ 22-25
❍ 26-35
❍ 36-45
❍ 46 or over

Q11. Which type of volunteer are you?

❍ National ICS
❍ National Government Volunteering Programme
❍ NYSC
❍ CCGV
❍ CC
❍ CAEV

Q12. Which part of Nigeria is your permanent home?

❍ **North Central States:** Kogi, Niger, Benue, Kwara, Plateau, Nassarawa and the Federal Capital Territory. (1)

❍ **North-Eastern States:** Taraba, Borno, Bauchi, Adamawa, Gombe and Yobe State. (2)

❍ **North-Western States:** Kaduna, Kebbi, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kano, Jigawa and Katsina State. (3)

❍ **South-Eastern States:** Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Abia and Anambra State. (4)

❍ **South-Southern States:** Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Edo, Cross River, Rivers and Delta State. (5)

❍ **South-Western States:** Oyo, Ogun, Lagos, Ondo and Osun State. (6)

Q13. Which part of Nigeria are you volunteering in?

❍ **North Central States:** Kogi, Niger, Benue, Kwara, Plateau, Nassarawa and the Federal Capital Territory. (1)

❍ **North-Eastern States:** Taraba, Borno, Bauchi, Adamawa, Gombe and Yobe State. (2)

❍ **North-Western States:** Kaduna, Kebbi, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kano, Jigawa and Katsina State. (3)

❍ **South-Eastern States:** Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Abia and Anambra State. (4)

❍ **South-Southern States:** Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Edo, Cross River, Rivers and Delta State. (5)

❍ **South-Western States:** Oyo, Ogun, Lagos, Ondo and Osun State. (6)

Q14. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

❍ No (1)
❍ Yes (2)

Q15. When did you start to volunteer?

Month

Year

Q16. Do you have any other comments?

Many thanks for your time.

VSO Nigeria National Volunteer Evaluation Survey (returned volunteers)

VSO Nigeria are carrying out an evaluation which aims to understand more about the different models of national volunteering in Nigeria. The results from this evaluation will help VSO Nigeria to think about how to maximise the impact of different models.

We want to hear more about your experience and any information you give will be very helpful. It will take about 10 minutes to complete the survey and the information you give is anonymous and will remain confidential.

Thank you!

Your application to volunteer

Q1. What were you doing at the time you applied to volunteer? (Select all that apply)

- ❍ Studying full time (1)
- ❍ Studying part time (2)
- ❍ Training (3)
- ❍ Working full time (4)
- ❍ Working part time (5)
- ❍ Unemployed – actively looking for work (6)
- ❍ Unemployed – not actively looking for work (7)
- ❍ Volunteering (9)
- ❍ Other (please specify) (10) _____

Q2. What were your main motivations for becoming a volunteer? (Select up to 3 of the following options):

- ❑ Gain new skills (1)
- ❑ Personal development (e.g. improved confidence) (2)
- ❑ To improve my own community (3)
- ❑ To gain knowledge of other cultures within my country (4)
- ❑ Meet new people   (5)
- ❑ To get involved in community development   (6)
- ❑ Gain a better understanding of poverty and/or international development (7)
- ❑ Inspiration in identifying new life goal(s) (8)
- ❑ Work experience for developing a career in international development (9)
- ❑ Get away from problems at home (10)
- ❑ To have fun (11)
- ❑ Other (please specify)   (12) _____

Benefits of national volunteering

Q3. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with following statements?

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither agree or disagree(3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
As a national volunteer I feel that I understand the local environment	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Through national volunteering I have increased knowledge of development strategies and processes	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Improving situations in my own country has given me a greater ownership of problems in my community	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Improving situations in my own country has given me a greater ownership of solutions for my community	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am well placed to monitor the impact of my volunteering contribution	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am well placed to continue working with the community in which I am placed after my placement	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have learnt from exposure to poverty	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have learnt from exposure to other cultures in the country	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I feel more connected to my community as a result of volunteering	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Building skills of national volunteers can empower the nation	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Volunteering has provided learning development opportunities for me	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
As a national volunteer I can volunteer flexibly (for short periods of for a few hours each week)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Volunteering has helped me find paid work	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
There is government support for national volunteering	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
National volunteering contributes to national development	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Challenges of national volunteering

Q4. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with following statements?

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)
The community where I volunteered did not understand volunteering	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My friends and family do not understand volunteering	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Lack of understanding of volunteering from others is demotivating	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Lack of resources for projects limits what I can achieve	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Language barriers have affected what I can achieve as volunteer	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My ability to volunteer is affected by pressure to find paid work	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Not all volunteers receive the same level of support	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The community places less value on national volunteers compared to international volunteers	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have conflicting demands on my time which affects my ability to volunteer	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The length of my volunteer placement is too short	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Young volunteers are seen as enthusiastic but not always taken seriously	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q5. Please indicate if you feel your experience of volunteering has contributed to any of the following changes for you?

	A great deal (1)	Some (2)	A little (3)	Not very much (4)	Not at all (5)
Increased self confidence	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased self esteem	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased awareness of challenges of those living in poor communities	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increase awareness of the value and benefits of national volunteering	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Improved skills (e.g. team work, communication, mentoring, influencing)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased sense of community	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased sense of responsibility for self	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased sense of responsibility for others	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Greater understanding of the needs of groups within the community (e.g. children, young people, people with disabilities)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased understanding how to affect change	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased ability to innovate	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased commitment to community development	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
More open to change	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
More open to be challenged by others	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased tolerance	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
More self-challenging	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased independence	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased awareness of diversity	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increased awareness of other cultures	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q6. Has your experience of volunteering contributed to any negative changes for you? If so, please describe.

Q7. What one word best describes your experience of volunteering?

Q8. What to you see at the most significant difference between national and international volunteers?

Q9. Please tell us about your experience of volunteering and other forms of social action **before and after your placement**

	Did this before I volunteered for VSO (1)	Have done this since I volunteered (2)
Have you volunteered for a group, club or organisation in your local community?	○	○
Have you provided unpaid help or support to someone in your local community?	○	○
Have you voted in local/national elections?	○	○
Have you met with or contacted a local/national politician to discuss an issue you are concerned about?	○	○
Have you taken part in a public demonstration or rally to highlight an issue you are concerned about?	○	○
Have you completed a questionnaire or signed a petition to highlight an issue you are concerned about?	○	○
Have you attended a public meeting to discuss an issue you are concerned about?	○	○
Have you donated to charities/NGOs working on local/national issues?	○	○
Have you donated to charities/NGOs working on international development issues?	○	○
Have you attended an event to raise funds for charity?	○	○
When you buy things, is it important to you that products/services are ethically sourced?	○	○
In your daily life, is it important to you to make ethical or green choices e.g. recycling/using public transport wherever possible?	○	○

About You

Q10. Are you?

❍ Female
❍ Male

Q11. How old are you?

❍ Under 16
❍ 16-17
❍ 18-21
❍ 22-25
❍ 26-35
❍ 36-45
❍ 46 or over

Q12. Which type of volunteer are you?

❍ National ICS
❍ National Government Volunteering Programme
❍   NYSC
❍ CCGV
❍ CC
❍ CAEV

Q13. Which part of Nigeria is your permanent home?

❍ **North Central States:** Kogi, Niger, Benue, Kwara, Plateau, Nassarawa and the Federal Capital Territory. (1)

❍ **North-Eastern States:** Taraba, Borno, Bauchi, Adamawa, Gombe and Yobe State. (2)

❍ **North-Western States:** Kaduna, Kebbi, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kano, Jigawa and Katsina State. (3)

❍ **South-Eastern States:** Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Abia and Anambra State. (4)

❍ **South-Southern States:** Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Edo, Cross River, Rivers and Delta State. (5)

❍ **South-Western States:** Oyo, Ogun, Lagos, Ondo and Osun State. (6)

Q14. Which part of the Nigeria did you volunteer in?

❍ **North Central States:** Kogi, Niger, Benue, Kwara, Plateau, Nassarawa and the Federal Capital Territory. (1)

❍ **North-Eastern States:** Taraba, Borno, Bauchi, Adamawa, Gombe and Yobe State. (2)

❍ **North-Western States:** Kaduna, Kebbi, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kano, Jigawa and Katsina State. (3)

❍ **South-Eastern States:** Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Abia and Anambra State. (4)

❍ **South-Southern States:** Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Edo, Cross River, Rivers and Delta State. (5)

❍ **South-Western States:** Oyo, Ogun, Lagos, Ondo and Osun State. (6)

Q15. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

❍ No (1)
❍ Yes (2)

Q16. When did you start to volunteer?

Month

Year

Q17. How long was your placement?

❍ Up to 3 months
❍ 3 - 6 months
❍ 6 moths – 1 year
❍ 1 year – 2 years
❍ Over 2 years

Q18. Do you have any other comments?

Many thanks for your time.

Annex 4 – Demographic profile of the respondents for the current national volunteers survey
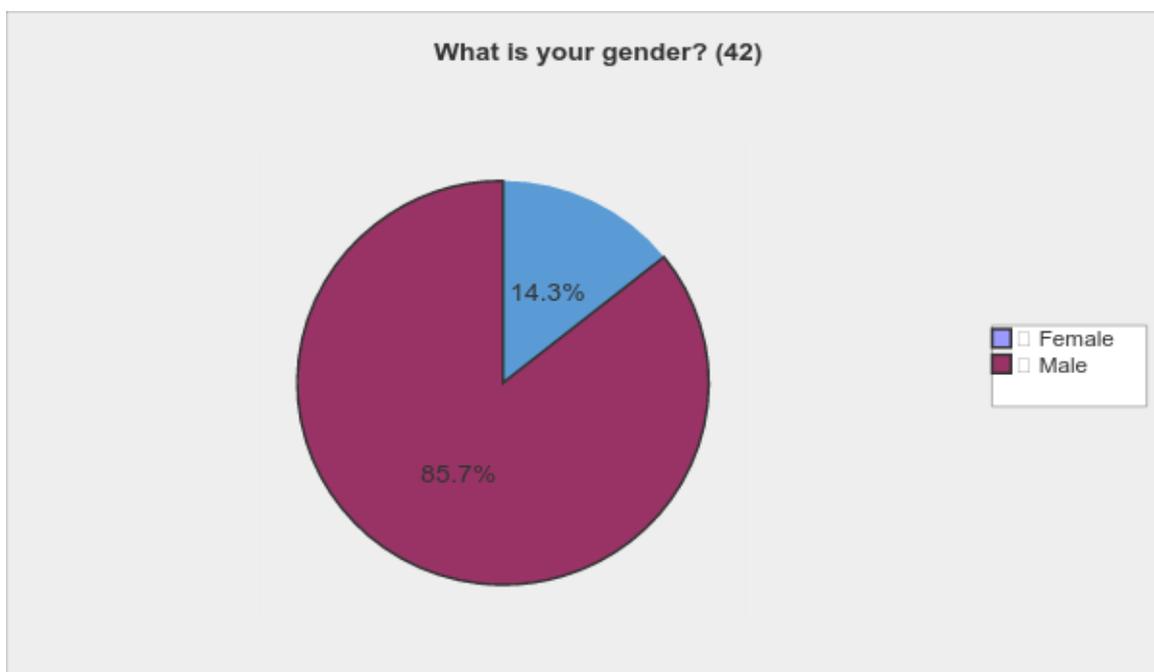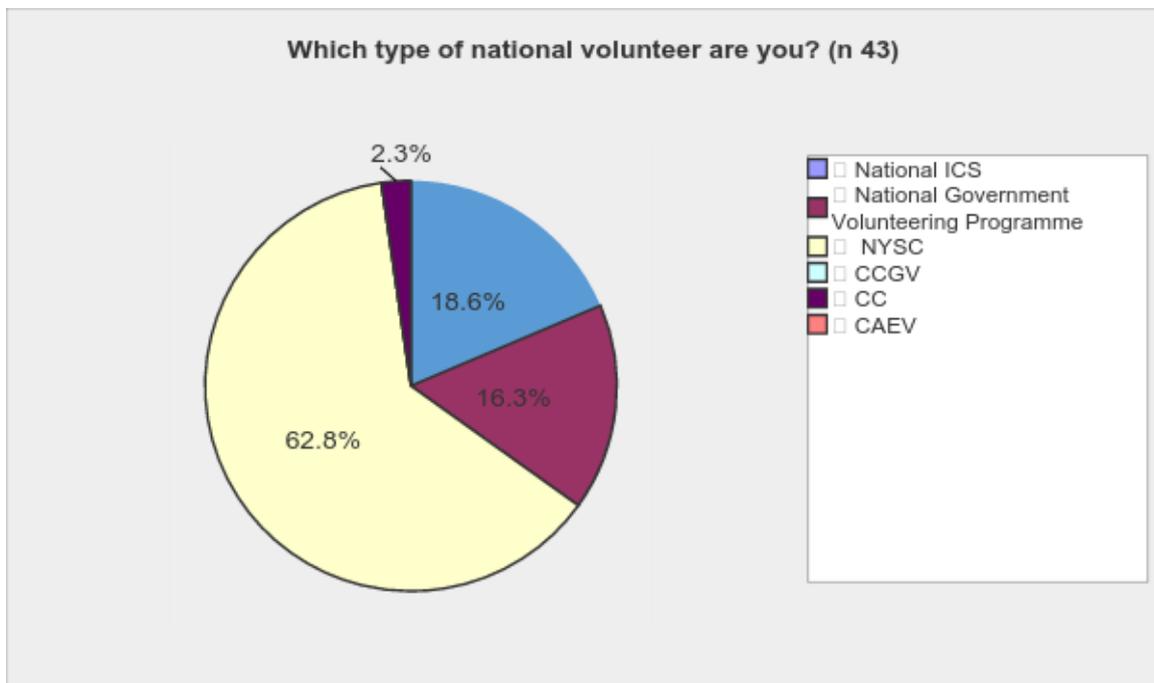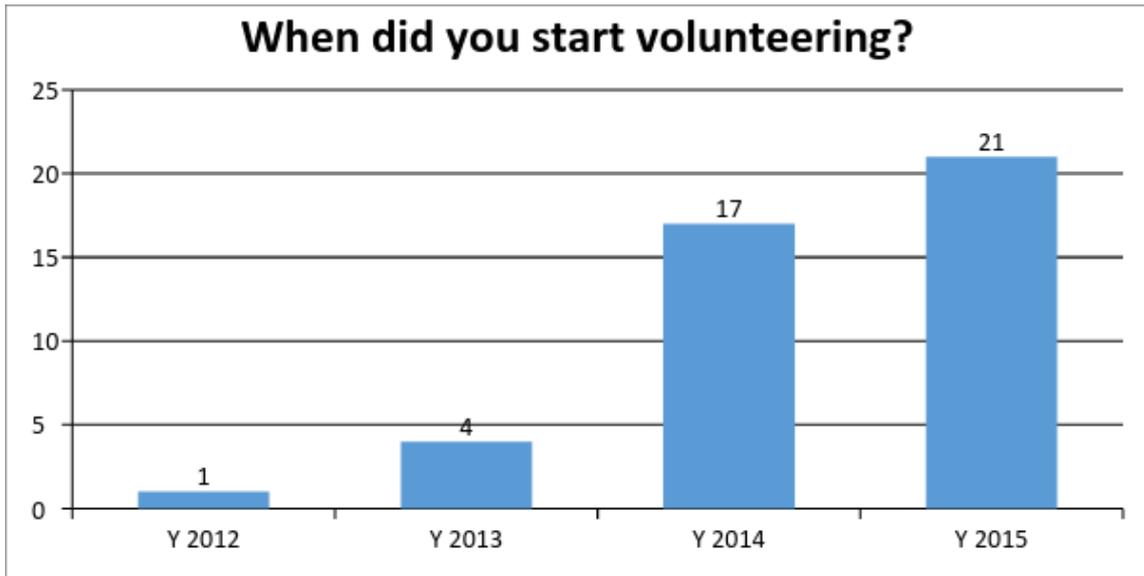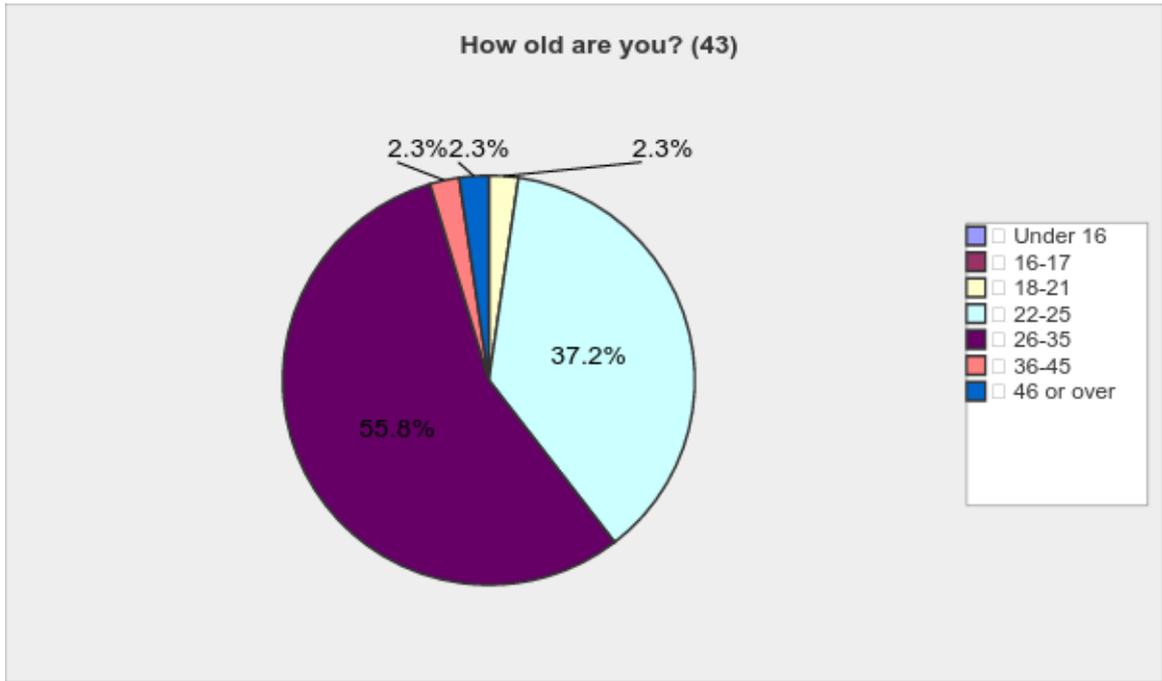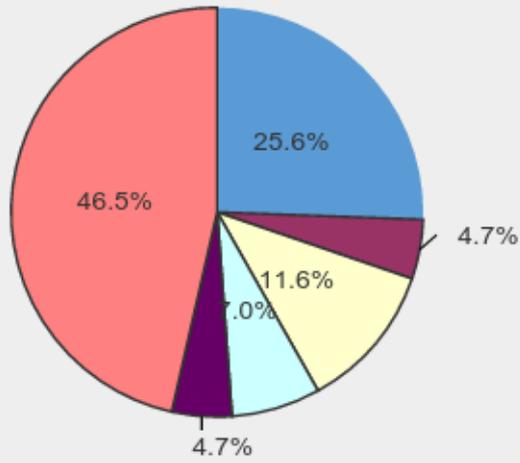
Which type of national volunteer are you? (n 43)

- National ICS
- National Government Volunteering Programme
- NYSC
- CCGV
- CC
- CAEV

2.3%
18.6%
16.3%
62.8%

What is your gender? (42)

- Female
- Male

14.3%
85.7%

How old are you? (43)

2.3% 2.3% 2.3%

37.2%

55.8%

- ☐ Under 16
- ☐ 16-17
- ☐ 18-21
- ☐ 22-25
- ☐ 26-35
- ☐ 36-45
- ☐ 46 or over

When did you start volunteering?

	Y 2012	Y 2013	Y 2014	Y 2015
	1	4	17	21

Which part of Nigeria is your permanent home? (n 43)

Pie chart showing:
- 25.6%
- 4.7%
- 11.6%
- 7.0%
- 4.7%
- 46.5%

Legend:
- North Central States: Kogi, Niger, Benue, Kwara, Plateau, Nassarawa and the Federal Capital Territory.
- North-Eastern States: Taraba, Borno, Bauchi, Adamawa, Gombe and Yobe State.
- North-Western States: Kaduna, Kebbi, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kano, Jigawa and Katsina State.
- South-Eastern States: Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Abia and Anambra State.
- South-Southern States: Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Edo, Cross River, Rivers and Delta State.
- South-Western States: Oyo, Ogun, Lagos, Ondo and Osun State.

Annex 5 – Demographic profile of the respondents for the returned national volunteers survey

Which type of national volunteer placment have you done with VSO? (tick all that apply) (n38)

What is your gender? (n36)

- Female
- Male

52.8% / 47.2%

How old are you? (n37)

5.4%
27.0%
27.0%
40.5%

- Under 16
- 16-17
- 18-21
- 22-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46 or over

When did you start volunteering? (n37)

Year	Count
Y 2007	1
Y 2008	
Y 2009	3
Y 2010	3
Y 2011	2
Y 2012	9
Y 2013	10
Y 2014	5
Y 2015	4
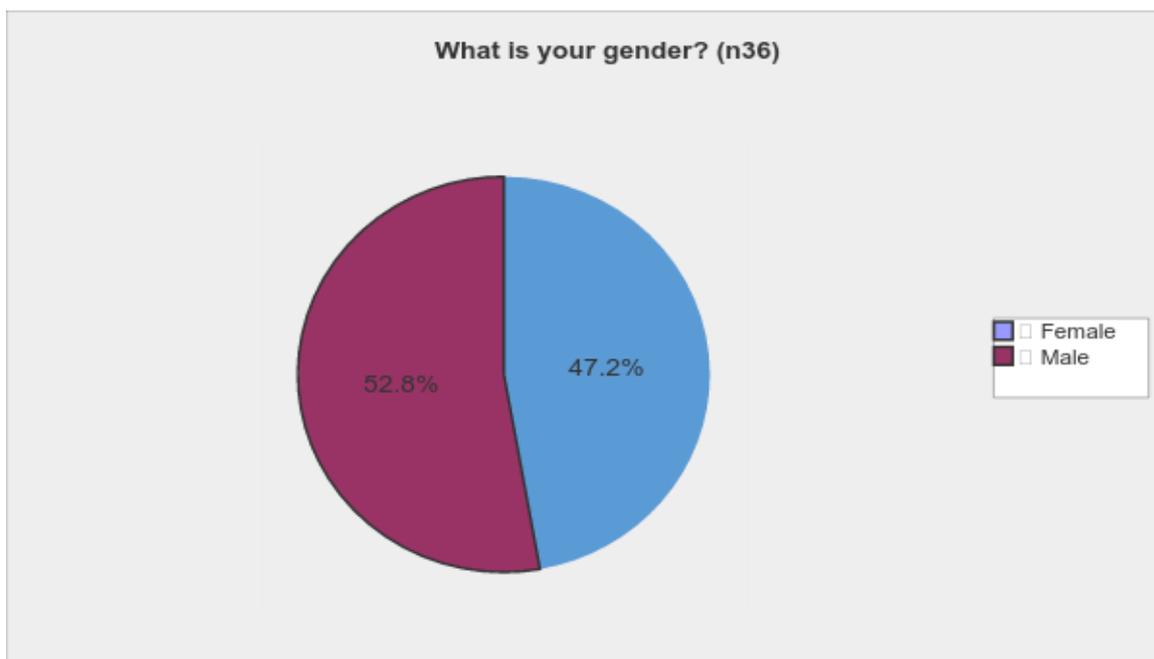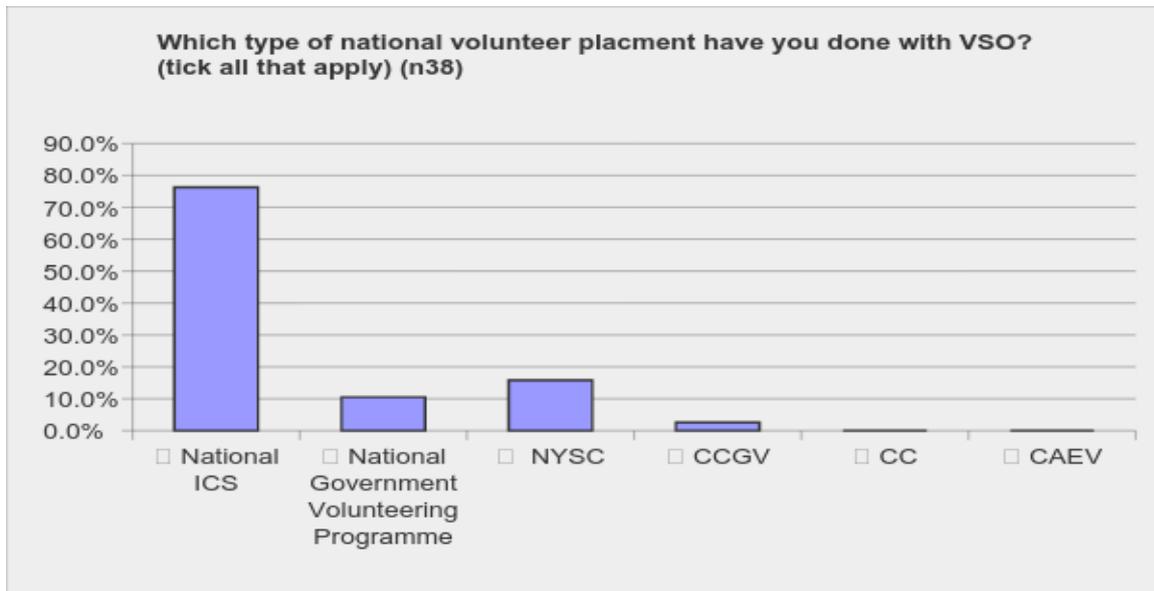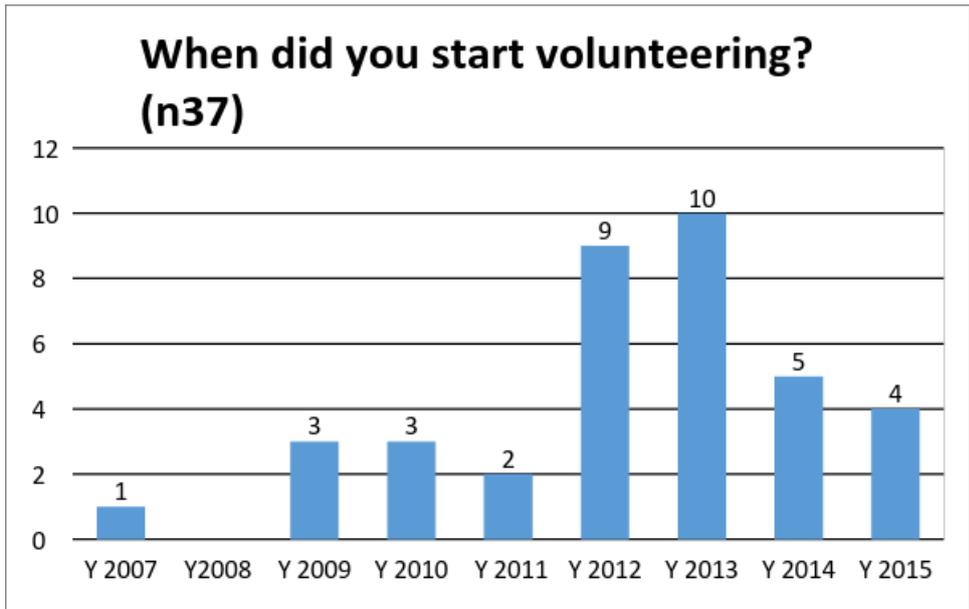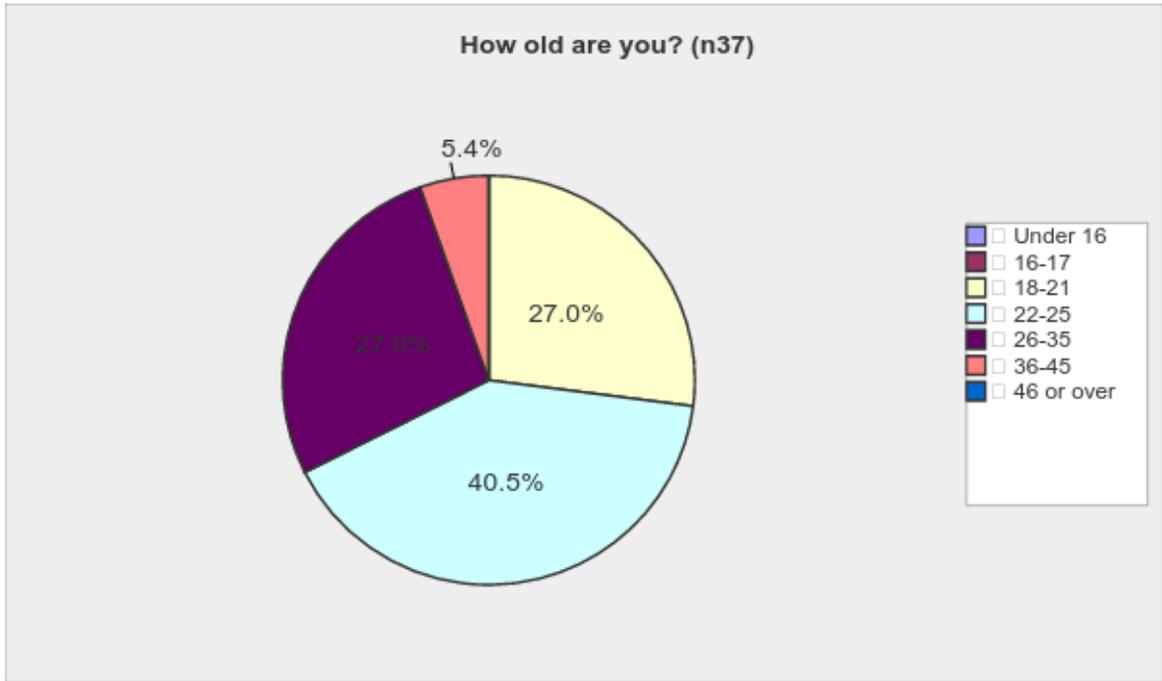
Which part of Nigeria is your permanent home? (n3

- □ North Central States: Kogi, Niger, Benue, Kwara, Plateau, Nassarawa and the Federal Capital Territory.
- □ North-Eastern States: Taraba, Borno, Bauchi, Adamawa, Gombe and Yobe State.
- □ North-Western States: Kaduna, Kebbi, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kano, Jigawa and Katsina State.
- □ South-Eastern States: Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Abia and Anambra State.
- □ South-Southern States: Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Edo, Cross River, Rivers and Delta State.
- □ South-Western States: Oyo, Ogun, Lagos, Ondo and Osun State.

30.6%

41.7%

11.1% 11.1%

5.6%

Annex 6 – Ikorodu Case Study

Case study 1

Children and Youth Parliaments in Ikorodu Local Government Area, Lagos State

1   Programme aims and delivery within the context of VSO Nigeria's Strategy

VSO's work with partners in Ikorodu Local Government Area (LGA) falls under its South West programming Cluster[15]. The Youth Participation for Governance Project is one of four projects implemented in this cluster towards reducing poverty and vulnerability of young people in Nigeria. The overall aim of this project is to increase the participation of youths in Ikorodu LGA in governance and the political economy. The objectives of the project are:

- To provide a space for youths to have a voice and jointly contribute to the addressing of issues in their community that affect them and other citizens.
- To build necessary community development skills in youths from all walks of life, including leadership, advocacy and community organising and networking skills.
- To encourage active participation by the youths in governance.
- To build the capacity of partners and partner organisations to sustain this program through training and support.

VSO also implements the ICS programme in Ikorodu. The VSO ICS programme aims at mobilising young people to create demand for services and enhance accountability of local government (LGAs) through the use of youth parliaments. Outcomes from the Ikorodu ICS Youth Participation in Governance Programme are:

- increased awareness/understanding of poverty, equality and development by young people; increase confidence and skills;
- cross-cultural understanding and networking as well as inspiration and motivation of young people to make a difference;
- changes in awareness, practices and attitude of communities towards young people such as active citizenship;
- active involvement in political processes and advocacy.

The project promotes the establishment of youth and children parliaments as *inclusive neighbourhood spaces* (INS) to give voices to them and empower them to demand improved governance in their communities. It also aimed at increasing active citizenship of the youths and children; developing them as leaders to take active part in analysing community problems and finding solutions by engaging with local authorities and structures. Human rights education, life skills and 21st century skills are integral to the development of the spaces.

Focus group meetings with various volunteers groups, community members and interviews with partners, key stakeholders and local officials were the main methods used. The team visited one community to observe a children's parliament in session and to interact with some children and community leaders. Below is summary of volunteer types delivering within this local government system, reported outcomes for volunteers and communities and sustainability of the models in practice.

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[15] The South West Cluster consist of seven states located in the south western part of Nigeria namely- Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti and Kwara. VSON currently has active partnerships in Kwara, Lagos and Oyo/Osun states (VSO Program plan 2014-2015)

2. Programme delivery and activities

VSO introduced the concept of neighbourhood and children's parliaments as a governance mechanism in the Ikorodu LGA in 2015. The youth neighbourhood parliament was first piloted and later focus shifted to working with children. Through activities of ICS Volunteers, NGVs and NYSC Corp members, youth and children's parliaments were established in different communities in the Ikorodu Local Government Area. The youth parliaments are spaces created for young people aged 18-25, to meet and discuss issues affecting them and others in their communities, share ideas and take action towards addressing them. The spaces focus on discussing community issues, such as environmental sanitation problems, drainage problems, education and broader community development problems. The spaces work in collaboration with Community Development Associations. Interviews with youth parliamentarians and volunteers indicate that there were four youth parliaments created in different neighbourhoods but at the time of the study, only two were active - the Aga and Igbolu youth parliaments. It was not possible to establish the exact numbers of young people who constitute the youth parliaments but information from NGVs who act as coordinators of VSO's activities in the communities indicate there were about 20 - 40 members. In one community, Aga, 23 members were reported by youth parliamentarians.

Youth parliamentarians also work as community volunteers (CCGVs) with children's parliaments, which are spaces are created for children aged 7 – 17 years, split into two age categories 7 - 12 and 13 - 17. It was reported that there were around 500 children involved in the children's' parliaments in the entire LGA. Some of the children's parliaments are established in schools while others are neighbourhood-based. There are 29 children's parliaments in schools and 20 in neighbourhoods in Ikorodu LGA according to reports by volunteers.

Both youth and children's parliaments in addition to discussing issues affecting them and their communities are also reported to engage with the Community Development Associations (CDA) and seek to promote the active involvement of youths in community decision making. Awareness raising activities on different topical issues such as elections, education, drug abuse and child abuse are organised by volunteers with the involvement of young people.

3. Volunteering models and governance structures in Ikorodu

Ikorodu Local Government Area is one of twenty LGAs in Lagos State of Nigeria. The LGA is zoned into Local Council Development Areas and each area is constituted by a number of neighbourhood associations called Community Development Areas. There are four LCDAs in the LGA. Representations from a number of CDAs in a particular area form the Community Development Committee which is a cluster for VSO activities (Fig. 2). Ikorodu township's closeness to Lagos city makes it one of the fastest growing localities. It has extended to greater Ikorodu with the creation of Ikorodu West and Ikorodu North Local Council Development Areas, now covering major towns such as Imota, Ijede, Igbogbo, with their respective traditional rulers (Obas).

Fig. 1: Local government structures in Ikorodu LGA
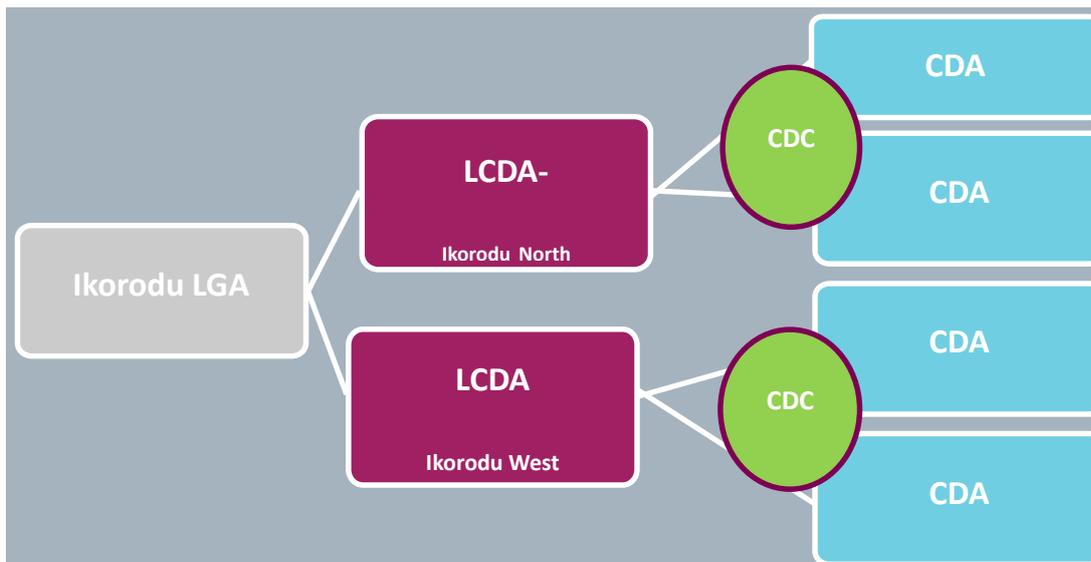
The main volunteering models facilitating participation and governance in this local government structure are:

- **National Graduate Volunteers (NGVs)** – these are graduate community volunteers recruited, placed and managed by VSO. They coordinate activities of other graduate volunteers placed within communities as cluster leads, facilitators or animators of the activities of the children's and youth parliaments (also called Inclusive Neighbourhood Spaces).In Ikorodu LGA, there are 2 clusters – north and south, managed by two NGV cluster coordinators. Each cluster has a number of CDAs coordinated by a lead NGV working together with other volunteer models described below. There were four NGV coordinators for the four LCDAs in Ikorodu LGA.

- **National Youth Service Corps** - are volunteers recruited and placed through the NYSC structure to serve in their one year mandatory national service. They work in VSO projects as their primary placement. They have worked with NGVs and ICS volunteers in supporting the children and youth parliaments in the communities.

- **Community Citizen Governance Volunteers (CCGVs**) –are community volunteers selected from the community or neighbourhoods where youth parliaments have been established. These volunteers have also been part of the youth parliaments, either as leaders or active members and they now facilitate the children's parliaments established in schools or in their communities following a change in strategy to focus on the inclusive spaces on children.

- **Community Citizens Service Volunteers (CCSVs)** – are ex NYSC corp members recruited by VSO to support the children's parliaments in their communities for a period of three months. They are community volunteers who will be working from their own communities and in support of a specific education project for out of school children.

- **ICS National Volunteers** – national youth volunteers who work with UK youth volunteers in the International Citizen Service Programme and support youth and children's parliaments, communities and schools in Ikorodu LGA.

All these volunteer models work together with community structures and leaders such as the Community Development Associations, the Community Development Committees and sometimes the Local Government to support community changes. Fig 18 shows the interrelationship of volunteers in the Ikorodu LGA.

Fig. 2: Interrelationship of volunteering models
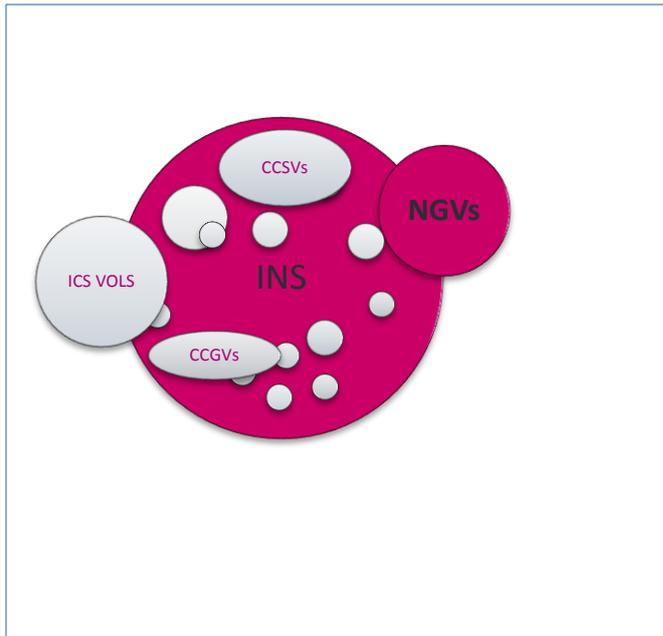
4. Examples of activities carried out by national volunteers

Interviews and focus groups with volunteers from the different models indicate that volunteers work within each cluster (Fig 2) in an interrelationship focusing on currently the inclusive neighbourhood spaces for children. Activities delivered by volunteers in one model builds on and is supported by activities from another model, all coordinated by the national community graduate volunteers. National Graduate Volunteers and NYSC Corp members are involved in grassroots mobilisation of youth and children. They also undertake community outreach and facilitate children and youth parliaments. ICS volunteers also facilitate children parliaments in schools and neighbourhoods in addition to teaching in primary schools and doing community development and active citizenship activities. Community Citizen Service Volunteers work directly with the children and spend time with them during their meetings, animating, guiding and mentoring them. Some other activities conducted by volunteers in Ikorodu include:

Group of volunteers in Ikorodu

- Mobilisation (talk to children, talk to parents, engage CDAs and CDCs to form INS)
- Support and facilitate the meetings of the youth and children's parliaments
- Providing training sessions for the parliaments (facilitation, child rights, negotiation, ICT, life skills, career planning, citizenship, decision making, local language)
- Leadership development (facilitating children taking on leadership roles within the parliament, acting as ministers, speakers and deputies)
- Cultural development and skills/talent development of children
- Mentoring in life skills and community problem solving. In one community, the volunteers introduced the mobile gardens concept to increase awareness of the children on the importance of agriculture.
- Guiding the meetings and facilitating decision-making and consensus building
- Facilitating the parliamentarians to undertake and mobilise community cleaning activities, distilling of drainage areas
- Animating children's parliaments
- Supporting in advocacy, by providing the link to the key decision making bodies in the LGA, helping to organise rallies and awareness raising events in the communities
- Organising study tours for children to other places

5. Reported outcomes produced for communities

To understand and evidence outcomes delivered from the different models of volunteering in Ikorodu towards VSON's objectives, the different participants were asked about the changes observed at three different levels: individual volunteers, individuals in the community – children and youth - and the wider community. Community stakeholders - CDA members, ICS host home parents, partner staff and children - were engaged in focus group discussions and interviews.

Reported changes indicate that the main outcomes achieved are improvements in communities' awareness about the needs and voices of children and young people and improvements in community responsiveness to issues that affect children and young people.

Increased awareness of needs and voice of children
Community stakeholders and the volunteers have reported that there is increased community awareness of the importance of children, of children's voices and needs, talents and potentials. Through focus groups with community members some of whom are parents of children engaged in the inclusive spaces, it was reported that there is increased parental awareness of the need to listen to children as well as improved appreciation of children's skills, talents and potential in their communities. This was validated by members of the children's parliament who were interviewed by the team. They also noted that parents now allow their children to attend the meetings and also to practice their talents and follow their career aspirations. Focus groups with volunteers from each model also validated these changes for community members.

"…if you let them (children) speak, they can have impact" [Volunteer]

NYSC volunteers and CCSVs (ex NYSC members) facilitating the children's parliament also reported that parents are giving more attention to the needs of their children at home due to improved awareness of community members. They have witnessed their communities becoming more responsive to supporting the needs of children. There were incidents reported of communities rallying support for children's needs. For example, one community raised funds and resources to support the children's parliament to participate in a competition outside their community.

Increased engagement with community structures and participation of youths

Volunteers and community stakeholders reported that children are directly engaging local community structures and demanding improved services and accountability from them. In one community visited, the CDA Chairman reported that the CDA was engaged by the children on their needs and requested to participate in CDA meetings. Letters written by children's parliaments have solicited response and action from community leaders. As a result, community leaders are also demanding better services and responses from local government authorities.

> *"Communities are much more challenging now. They ask why things are not in place"* [Local Government Inspector].

Although it was not possible to verify the scale of this engagement and responsiveness from local authorities, stakeholders consider this an important step towards enhancing the accountability of public officials through increasing the participation of children and young people in governance processes.

Youth participation in community activities and development processes is reported by CCSVs and CCGVs to have increased in areas where the youth parliaments are active. Youth in some communities now attend CDA meetings, play active roles in mobilising communities for clean-ups and other community services.

> *"NV is unique—seeing someone from your own community taking action is a motivation for others to also take action; This is encouraging active citizenship and interest in volunteering from other youths in the communities"* [Community Volunteer].

Increased political involvement of the youth in Ikorodu during the recent election was noted as a product of the awareness and sensitisation achieved by volunteers.

Change

In one community visited, families are reported to have been brought together fostering community unity. In others, volunteers noted there is improved environmental sanitation due to periodic clean-ups instituted through the work of the youth and children parliaments and the volunteers. Though other participants have also reported increased community responsibility towards the environment as a result of activities of the volunteers in the spaces and communities at large, the extent to which this contributes to cleaner communities in the Ikorodu LGA cannot be established beyond reported observations by community members.

Volunteers further reported that feedback from teachers suggest that children engaged in the spaces are becoming more responsible in school which in turn encourages other children to engage, attend meetings and participate in activities.

Community stakeholders noted that teachers are learning better ways to teach pupils in schools as a result of the creative methodologies introduced by ICS volunteers in schools and in the children parliaments. ICS volunteers and CCSVs reported the use of games, songs, drama and quizzes which are also adopted by other teachers.

Based on feedback received from others in the communities, CCGVs reported reductions in teenage delinquency and anti-social behaviour among young people in some communities. They also mentioned cases of decreased drug abuse within a community where ICS volunteers working together with the youth parliaments created

awareness on the effects of drug abuse. Volunteers are reported to have made the importance of education felt in this community.

> *"People now know who we are and what we are for"* [Youth Parliamentarian]

These reported changes show that the volunteering models have the potential to contribute to achieving some project outcomes for communities in the Ikorodu LGA.

6. Reported outcomes for children and young people

Through interviews with the members of the youth and children's parliament and other community stakeholders, it was evident that children and youths who are engaged through the spaces have grown in confidence, awareness, knowledge and skills as well as responsibility. Children are reported to have improved knowledge and skills in various areas as a result of training delivered by volunteers.

Children themselves have reported that they have gained knowledge and skills in ICT, HIV and AIDS and general knowledge about development, citizenship, facilitation and leadership. For young people, training in child rights, civic engagement, active citizenship, social inclusion among other areas have gone a long way to improve their knowledge in these areas.

Communication skills in children and young people have improved in particular for the leaders of the children and youth parliaments. Through training, mentoring and playing leadership roles as speaker, ministers, they have developed skills in how to communicate with others, manage meetings and facilitate discussions and public speaking.

> *"Before I become a volunteer, I was very shy but now I can speak, communicate effectively…"* [Youth Parliamentarian]

Children's and youth parliaments are reported to be getting results from their local authorities. For example, in one community the problems associated with roads were resolved by the CDA as a result of demands from children's parliaments.

Volunteers have reported increased awareness of basic rights particularly of children engaged in the children's parliaments. They also reported improved behaviours of children in school as a result of the life skills and training they received from the volunteers. Children are said to becoming more focused on their education and career paths. Through the work of ICS volunteers in school-based parliaments, they have a greater sense of direction and understand the importance of education to achieve goals. Volunteers also reported that feedback from parents and community members indicate a change in children's perspectives about life and attitudes towards school work and studies at home.

"My parents feel that being part of the parliament is good. They now allow me to go; they don't delay me (when it's time for meetings)" [Member of Children's Parliament].

"My mother allows me to practice my talent which is singing and dancing unlike before" [President of a Children's Parliament].

Parents and community members have reported that children are now interacting with other children outside their neighbourhoods, some studying together out of school and others are reported to have engaged other children to become more active as they do in their parliaments. Children also reported to become more open at home to issues even when their parents have different view on issues. Community stakeholders noted that they have witnessed improvements in school performance of children engaged in the neighbourhood spaces. Volunteers have also confirmed that feedback from teachers in schools with INS show that pupils who are active in the spaces have shown improved attitude to studies and do perform better in class.

"…volunteers have impacted positively on children's education through the activities they introduced and the training and mentoring they provide to children at their meetings. Children who participate in school-based parliaments receive additional support from ICS volunteers who introduce extra-curricular activities that enhance children's learning skills" [Community Stakeholder].

Community stakeholders noted increased responsibility in children as a result of the training received and participation in the INS. This they noted could go a long way to improve participation of young people in governance processes.

7. Sustainability

The sustainability of the volunteering models is a key area of interest to all stakeholders and participants in Ikorodu. The volunteering models are seen as major contributors to success of VSO's interventions in the communities. Some of the models are seen as more sustainable than others and the factors participants have identified as contributing to this include:

- Closeness of the volunteer to the community or home locality
- Duration of the placement
- Availability of material and financial resources to support volunteer activities
- Mechanisms for collaborative/team working
- Support from the community and school in which volunteers are placed

Under the Youth Participation for Governance Programme in Ikorodu, the volunteering models are seen to be working closely together and with communities. Both national graduate volunteers and other community volunteers – CCSV and CCGV - are working in their communities and support youth and children's parliaments in these communities. ICS and NYSC volunteers do not necessarily come from the communities in which the serve. However, they work with other volunteers in Ikorodu as a network around children's and youth parliaments.

Partners reported that there are mechanisms and processes to foster continuity from one set of volunteer placements to another in the case of NYSC volunteers. Each NYSC cycle overlaps with the preceding cycle for a number of months to ensure transition and hand over. Also, the community volunteering models have been developed to bridge the gap between the NYSC volunteers and ICS volunteers. From the volunteer's perspective, it is the community volunteers who provide the strongest chance of sustainability to volunteering interventions in Ikorodu.

> *"While in Ikorodu, graduate volunteers coordinate and harmonise the activities of ICS and NYSC volunteers in each local Community Development Association, it is the CCSVs and CCVGs who are in-situ resource, based within the communities, understand what communities need, open doors to the communities and are keys to mobilising children and young people for the establishment of the INS. They have easy access to CDA structure, to parents and children" [Graduate Volunteer].*

> *"I stayed in the community so it was easy to approach the CDA chairman in creating the space" [CCSV].*

While the community volunteers in Ikorodu are seen as having passion and motivation developed through previous volunteering experiences or through participation in youth parliaments and the willingness and commitment for change, they also have other aspirations. They are not full time and at best only volunteer for short periods so are not available at all times to support the activities in the spaces.

Again, because CCGVs are selected through informal channels, there are no formal mechanisms for incentivising and recognising them like other volunteer models. There is also little support for their activities unlike the support given to ICS volunteers.

Adult community members also expressed the importance of sustainability and concerns about how the activities would be sustained after the programme has finished or once the volunteers move away. They expressed a strong desire for the programme and the work of the volunteers to continue. Leaders appreciate the efforts of the volunteers (NYSCs) and request for more volunteers to continue the work with the children's spaces. They observed however, that the volunteering models appear to be linked to specific projects and activities. They have expressed concern about short term placements such as ICS and wondered how such short term placements can be sustained in the absence of VSO.

It was mentioned that volunteer activities are led and supported by VSO with little or no community support. Although some communities and CDAs are able to support activities of the children in particular by donating canopies, chairs and sometimes refreshments for meetings, volunteers reported there is little financial support from communities to implement projects identified by the children and youth parliamentarians. Additionally, in schools volunteers reported limited time and resources for activities which affects the space and the volunteers' plans.

Other community stakeholders expressed the desire to see youth parliaments continue without the presence of VSO volunteers. They see a role for national graduate volunteers in the communities in sustaining spaces through the better coordination of the activities with the CDA. This they noted will improve the visibility of the inclusive spaces in the communities and help to sustain them.

Children felt that they could self-organise and manage the activities of the groups without the help of volunteers. This is because they felt they had received enough training in the areas necessary to

manage their own affairs. However, volunteers felt that VSO needs to support and incentivise the community volunteers in order to sustain the inclusive spaces.

Some community members suggested that volunteers work with the public schools to have spaces and activities integrated with school activities. Others want the capacity of teachers developed to support the children's parliaments. Since many of the youths targeted for the youth parliament are in school, they also suggested that youth parliaments could be established in secondary schools to avoid the situation where they become inactive once members go back to school.

Annex 7 – Kwara Case Study

Case study 2

Enhancing Quality of Secondary Education in Kwara State

1.   Programme Context and Aims

Kwara State is another of the seven states in which VSO is delivering education and livelihoods programmes in its South West Cluster. Under its education objective, VSO is partnering with stakeholders to improve capacity of civil society and government education partners and stakeholders to deliver and make quality, inclusive education accessible for children and youths. The specific project involved in the study aims at improving the quality of teaching and learning, specifically in 56 secondary schools in two Local Government Areas of Ifelodun and Moro in Kwara State. The key objectives for this project are:

> · To improve access to a quality secondary school education in the two local government areas in Kwara State
> · To improve the quality of teaching and learning leading to better school performance of students in the selected schools
> · To increase the number of skilled teachers in secondary schools in Kwara State
> · To enhance the employability of the national volunteers as community teachers

2.   Programme and delivery

Following a national policy to provide free secondary education to all, public secondary schools have been established in many communities in Nigeria. The main challenge however has been the lack of teachers to teach mainly in rural schools. Between 2007 and 2012, VSO in partnership with the Kwara State Ministry of Education recruited and placed national graduate volunteers in rural secondary schools to teach English, Maths and Science. This effort, which complemented government's efforts by providing teachers for a year, was to help establish a national volunteering initiative that provides opportunities for post-service graduates. It increases their employability and at the same time increases the number of skilled teachers in rural schools.
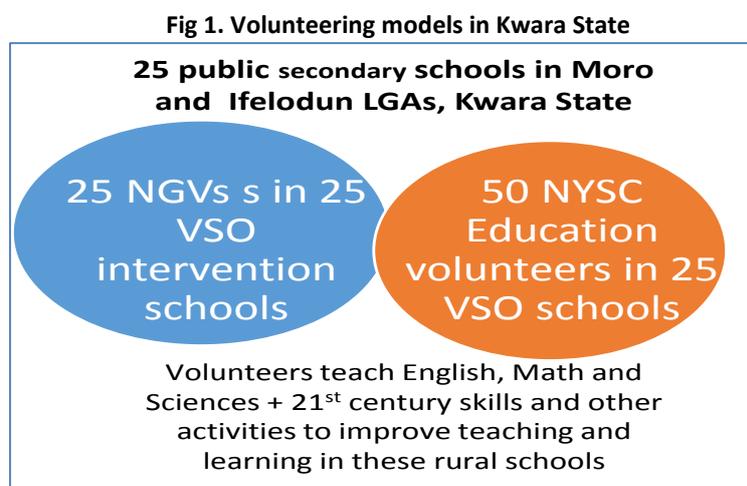
From 2013, this initiative was extended to include the placement of NYSC volunteers who are posted to the rural schools and serve as volunteer teachers in same subject areas. Serving National Service Youth Corps members now volunteer during their mandatory service for a year and are placed in VSO intervention schools. VSO works with the Ministry of Education and Olive Community Development Initiative (OCDI) to recruit, train and manage the volunteers in Kwara State. The civil society partner OCDI is being involved in the partnership to enhance project implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the volunteers' activities.

In this case, 25 NGVs and 50 NYSCs were placed in 25 state secondary schools across two local government areas in Kwara state. These volunteers teach English, Maths and Science subjects and 21st century skills - soft skills including ICT, communications among others. In addition, volunteers organise extra-curricular activities in their schools and communities as part of their community development service. VSO and partners provide training and capacity building to the volunteer teachers in teaching skills and lesson planning before placements. Volunteers also receive skills training in different areas to enhance their employability after volunteering.

3.   Volunteering models and school structures in Kwara State

Two main volunteering models were evident from Kwara State (Fig 1).

- **National Graduate Volunteers** – graduate volunteers recruited by VSO and partners – MOE and OCDI - to teach core subject areas in rural schools. They serve for 1 or 2 years and serve full time in the schools. NGVs work with their NYSC counterparts on extra-curricular activities in schools and communities in which they serve. They also take on the role of team leaders in the schools and provide feedback on their activities to VSO and partners. There were 25 NGVs serving in 25 VSO interventions schools in Kwara State. At the time of the study, most NGVs were not from the communities in which they were serving as volunteer teachers. Volunteers felt this intervention would be sustainable if graduate volunteers were recruited and serve within their own communities.

Fig 1. Volunteering models in Kwara State

25 public secondary schools in Moro and Ifelodun LGAs, Kwara State

25 NGVs s in 25 VSO intervention schools

50 NYSC Education volunteers in 25 VSO schools

Volunteers teach English, Math and Sciences + 21st century skills and other activities to improve teaching and learning in these rural schools

- **NYSC volunteers** (National Education Volunteers) – corp members recruited by NYSC and VSO to serve in VSO intervention schools as their primary placement. Like their graduate volunteers, they teach core subjects and also organise extra-curricular activities for students and communities in which they are placed. They serve in 1 year placements and are not usually from the communities in which they are placed. There were about 50 NYSC education volunteers in 25 schools in Kwara state.

4.   Examples of activities carried out by national volunteers

- **Te**aching is a primary activity for the volunteers – subjects taught included English, Maths, Science, Geography and Agriculture. It has been reported by some school head teachers that the volunteers provide quality teaching as a result of the training provided by VSO in preparing them for their placements. They are punctual and demonstrate enthusiasm to work in their placements serving as good examples for other teachers to emulate.

- The volunteers also undertake extra-curricular activities such as organising debating/quiz clubs, science clubs, reading and press clubs and sporting events. In one school, students in the press club produce newsletters and give regular broadcasts to the entire school periodically. Students have found these extra-curricular activities helpful and reported that they learn many things from these activities.
- Volunteers also raise awareness on issues such as health, sanitation and sexual and reproductive health, road safety and career planning for students and community members.
- Some volunteers were undertaking personal community development activities such as organising health testing for community members, building community bus stops and sheds, providing furniture for classes, and renovating school buildings. In all cases the volunteers raise funds for these activities from external sources. One volunteer raised funds to provide a classroom in one school.
- Promotion of sport in schools, mentoring girls, and sometimes organising extra lessons for students are other activities volunteers reported they undertake in schools and communities.

> One NYSC volunteer worked with the pupils to plant 300 moringa (food source high in vitamins which is inexpensive to produce) seedlings. They made use of local materials and the community provided the seeds. The aim was to encourage pupils to think about planting their own nursery. Small resources were need to protect the crop but these were not secured

5. Reported challenges of national volunteering in Kwara State

Focus groups with both sets of volunteers highlighted a number of challenges which have implications for the effectiveness of these placements in achieving the desired outcomes. Volunteers felt that VSO is not engaging communities and understanding community needs adequately in developing the intervention and their placements. They noted that more can be achieved from their placements if VSO and partners pursue a focused approach to the volunteering intervention based on a better understanding of community needs, structures and mechanisms that would lead to improving the performance of students.

> *"VSO goes into the rural communities without knowing what is going on in these communities. There are many more things that we can do if VSO understands the government and communities' priorities"* [Volunteer Teacher].

In addition, volunteers felt there were no formal linkages with community structures and this leads to lack of community support for their school's level and community activities.

Volunteers reported inadequate mechanisms for feedback and reporting on their placements and a lack of engagement from VSO and partners. Some mentioned placements could have performed better if feedback mechanisms were introduced to collect relevant information from the volunteers and stakeholders in the communities to inform programming. In addition volunteers also felt that there was a lack of contact from VSO and the partner (MOE) which resulted in isolation during their placements. While VSO jointly manages the volunteers, monitoring was the duty of the state partner and this was felt to be weak.

Training was thought to be very good but delivered too late to be useful. The volunteers were particular about the timeliness of the training so that pupils can benefit from the new skills. VSO staff also acknowledged some challenges with providing timely training to the cohort of volunteers interviewed.

Volunteers saw a lack of synergy in communication and logistical support between VSO and the Ministry of Education. This coupled with inadequate communication from VSO and the Ministry and the absence of a platform for volunteers to feedback, share learning and communicate challenges were seen as demotivating factors.

Inadequate community support was a major challenge affecting volunteers' work. Weak programme monitoring from VSO and partners was noted and the anticipation of the involvement of the NGO partners is seen as strategic. Improved documentation could also ensure more visible outcomes and impact the volunteers' work to community members. Similarly, others suggested a need to increase awareness of VSO programmes in the communities to increase transparency and accountability of partners.

NYSC volunteers from outside Kwara State were frustrated th**at** they cannot be recruited as NGVs to continue their volunteering service. They felt the recruitment process used by VSO and partners was not transparent and accessible. It was also clear that volunteers were not being retained or employed as permanent teachers as planned in the partnership. This is also affecting motivation and commitment levels of NGVs.

Volunteers also reported inadequate space and time for extra-curricular activities in schools that will enhance the learning abilities of children in some schools.

6.   Reported outcomes for communities in Kwara

Through focus groups with stakeholders, it was evident that the national volunteers are filling an important gap in rural schools in the state. It emerged that most rural schools are under staffed because teachers prefer to teach in urban centres. The VSO national education volunteering intervention is therefore considered a model that was to re-invigorate the Rural Volunteer Teacher initiative previously introduced by the Ministry of Education to respond to the teacher deployment challenge in the state. Volunteers are seen as "saviours" without which some schools would not have been able to cope under the Free Education Policy.

"Majority of our teachers prefer staying in urban areas. VSO NV programme of sending teachers to rural schools to teach English, maths and sciences -is a great relief for us. We want more volunteers to cover more schools and subject areas [MOE official]

School principals, teachers, community representatives and partner staff interviewed showed appreciation for the national education volunteer. Some stakeholders reported that some communities do not want the volunteers to leave after their service, which signalled that volunteers are considered to be delivering a valued service to rural communities.

Community stakeholders also reported that there is increased willingness and participation of students in extra-circular activities. Students are reported to have developed reading skills, debating and planning abilities, leadership and ICT skills. Some volunteers also mentioned that children who excel in extra-curricular activities also do well in class exercises. Teachers and school heads also reported that children are becoming more focused on education due to extra-curricular activities although the challenge is integrating this with regular school activities. They noted that club activities have a great impact on children's attitude and performance in class.

Through community sensitisation and health screening sessions, communities have increased awareness on health issues and sanitation. These activities were carried out as part of a community development service by the volunteers.

Some volunteers reported that communities in which they teach have an increased awareness of volunteering.

> "*Volunteering is seen as having positive impact in rural communities while everybody wants to move to the cities*" [volunteer]

> "*Being seen by other young people coming to work in their community is motivation for them to do the same.*"[Volunteer].

Community members are reported to have increased their understanding of the value of educating girls as a result of the work of the volunteers' mentoring and motivational talks which helped to change students' attitudes towards education. Community stakeholders confirmed that parents are more motivated to ensure children, particularly girls, receive secondary education in their own communities.

Other state level actors and partners interviewed felt that the VSO intervention schools are performing better than other schools in the state. They point to students from non-intervention schools transferring to intervention schools as evidence of this improvement. They also point to school examination records which indicate that intervention schools are performing better generally than non-intervention schools. School principals also indicate they have witnessed increased performance of their schools evidenced by an improvement in ranks attained in the final school examinations. There was a strong belief that the relative improvement in the overall placement of Kwara State from previous positions of between 26th and 30th among all states in the country, to 14th in the last academic year, is as a result of VSO's volunteer teachers. It was however difficult to verify this evidence with statistical data from the State Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education officials also reported increasing demand for VSO national volunteers by non-interventions schools and other local government areas, a sign that stakeholders perceive a positive contribution from these volunteers. Out of the 16 LGAs, VSO education volunteers are serving in only 2 LGAs although NYSC volunteers are placed in another 12 LGAs. These volunteers do not receive the same training and orientation like the VSO volunteers.

School heads and state officials again reported increased enrolment in some schools as a result of the volunteering intervention. Some head teachers reported greater numbers of students enrolling in schools. It is however not clear if this is a result of the volunteering intervention or a case of the Free

Education Policy. Data from the MoE also show that there has been a decrease in school enrolment generally for many schools in the state contrary to what was reported by the school heads.

7. Reported outcomes for children and young people

The following outcomes emerged from interviews and focus groups with community stakeholders, school principals, teachers and some students:

Increased confidence and self-belief in students

Teachers and school heads noted that they have witnessed an increase in confidence levels of students both at school and during their examinations. This they attributed to the approach and methods used by the volunteers in teaching, the extra-curricular activities as well as the way volunteers related to the students. Students also confirmed that due to their good inter-personal relationship with volunteers, they are able to ask questions in class. They further agreed that club activities e.g. debates, quizzes and press also helped to improve their reading abilities.

> *"I like the way he (volunteer) teaches – he encourages us with our studies" [Student].*
>
> *"Students have better understanding of life beyond their communities by interacting with them. They are more interested in their own lives and their future, which helps in their learning and performance" [Volunteer].*

Improved performance of students

School principals and community stakeholders interviewed reported improved student performance shown by improved pass rates in examination results in VSO intervention schools. In one school, it was reported that examination pass rates[16], improved from 30% to 50%. Other school heads also reported improved student performance and this they attribute to the work of the VSO volunteers. Although partner staff also confirmed these improvements, data was not available from the State education department to verify these reported changes. Also, school level information was not available to triangulate these reported outcomes. Officials of the Planning, Research and Statistical Department of the Education Ministry however noted that the overall ranking of Kwara State in the annual school's performance has improved and the performance of students increased generally in the core areas handled by VSO volunteers.

In one community, stakeholders reported that through the work of the volunteers, students' behaviour has improved. Counselling and mentoring sessions, HIV and AIDS awareness raising and motivational talks from the volunteers to girls in particular reported to have contributed to reduced teenage pregnancy.

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[16] The West Africa Examination Council and the Nigerian Examination Council are the two mandatory examinations at secondary level.

7.8 Sustainability

It has been shown that the education volunteering initiative is appreciated by all stakeholders in Kwara State. It is seen as serving a real need for rural teachers. State officials, community stakeholders, partner staff and volunteers expressed the need therefore to continue placing volunteers to teach in schools in order to improve teaching and learning and the performance of students. However, a number of issues were raised by different participants that have implications for the sustainability of this approach to delivering the outcomes desired through this VSO intervention.

It was evident that a major factor in sustaining this intervention is the continued placement of volunteers in rural schools. While state officials would appreciate a continuation of volunteer placements with the support of VSO, volunteers felt they needed to be retained and absorbed as volunteer teachers permanently into the teaching service to increase the teacher supply to rural schools. They proffered this as a more sustained solution to placing short term volunteers. They recognised the need to engage with the state government and relevant institutions for the necessary policy or approval for this to take effect. They noted that there is already buy-in from the state and part of the partnership agreement for the State to absorb these volunteers yet this hasn't taken effect.

State officials have confirmed that this was intended, but a major challenge highlighted was lack of adequate financial resources at the state level. Volunteers felt there is a role for VSO and the partner here:

> "*VSO should advocate for the state to retain volunteers after their placement. Volunteers should not just spend two years in their placement and leave without anyone there to continue.*" [Volunteer].

Officials and some partners felt that the training provided to volunteers can in turn be cascaded to other teachers as means of sustaining the activities in the schools. They also mentioned integrating the extra-curricular activities into the school calendar and encouraging volunteers to work with teachers.

Volunteers felt they are spread too thinly and VSO should focus on fewer schools over a longer period of time to see more sustainable results in improved student performance. Some volunteers suggested that this may prove more effective in improving performance. In this way, evidence of the contribution of the volunteers may become more visible.

Concerns were raised about how the work of the volunteers continues when the placement comes to an end.

> "*Volunteers are being moved without being replaced in some schools. This affects continuity. Too in some cases volunteers placed in the same schools do not necessarily continue with the same students handled by previous volunteers, nor teach same subject areas. This loss of momentum may erode the gains made by previous volunteers*" [Volunteer].

Good community engagement at an early stage would help to make the outcomes more sustainable. This was a key message from graduate and NYSC volunteers who felt there was limited community support for their work and for the development of the schools in which they serve. Although communities were supposed to provide some support to the volunteers such as accommodation and basic amenities, these were reported to not be the case. They suggested that VSO and partners engage communities to create awareness on the volunteering intervention and embed volunteers work more in the communities.

School heads felt that it was important to continue placing volunteers in the schools. The volunteers on the other hand thought that to sustain this intervention and achieve the desired outcomes, the State needs to retain volunteers as permanent teachers after their placements.