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Voluntary Work and Its Role in Enhancing Local Development : An Analytical and Applied Study on a Charitable Association

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Abstract:

This research paper aims to explore the extent to which voluntary work contributes to achieving local development. The study addresses the concept of voluntary work and its motivations, in addition to defining the concept of local development and its relationship with voluntary work. This descriptive and analytical study focused on a leading voluntary organization, the Kafil Al-Yateem Association in M'sila province. The research concluded with several key findings, the most significant being that voluntary work significantly contributes to community services and the advancement of development within the local community. However, it also faces various challenges, including personal, human, financial, and administrative obstacles.

Keywords: Voluntary Work, Local Community, Local Development, Charitable Associations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Amid the rapid changes and challenges facing the world today,

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nations are striving to maximize the utilization of all their resources, particularly human resources, to achieve social and economic progress. As the needs of communities continue to grow and become more complex, governments alone are no longer capable of fully meeting the demands of their citizens. This reality has led to an increasingly prominent role for the non-governmental sector, as well as for individual and collective initiatives, in bridging these gaps. Voluntary work has emerged as one of the most effective tools in promoting community development.

Charitable organizations and non-profit institutions have become key players in various fields, significantly contributing to the support of vulnerable groups and the enhancement of local development. Among these organizations, the Kafil Al-Yateem Association in the Wilaya of M'sila stands out as a leading model in the field of voluntary work. The association provides invaluable services to orphans and strives to improve their quality of life through diverse developmental programs.

In this context, the importance of this study lies in highlighting the critical role of charitable organizations not only from a social perspective but also from an economic one. These organizations work to strengthen social cohesion and create development opportunities for local communities, making them essential partners in achieving sustainable development.

Problem Statement: Based on the above, the following research question can be posed: **« What is the role of voluntary work in enhancing development within the local community? »**

Importance of the Study: The importance of this study is highlighted by examining the effective social and economic role of charitable organizations, with a particular focus on the Kafil Al-Yateem Association and its contribution to providing services for orphans.

Study Structure: To delve into this issue, the study is divided into two main sections:

- ✓ **Theoretical Framework:**
  - Examination of the concept of voluntary work and its significance.
  - Review of the motivations behind voluntary work.
  - Analysis of the concept of local development and its relationship with voluntary work.
- ✓ **Practical Study:**
  - Investigation of the actual role of voluntary work and humanitarian organizations.
  - Selection of the Kafil Al-Yateem Association in the Wilaya of M'sila as a case study.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of the Study

In this section, we will address and analyze the key concepts and fundamental aspects related to the study topic in order to provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning this research. Specifically, we will cover the following:

2.1 Concept of Voluntary Work

Voluntary work is defined as "social activity carried out by an individual or a group of individuals, either individually or collectively through associations or non-governmental organizations, without expecting any financial return, with the aim of meeting the needs of others [(1)]."

It is also described as "the contribution of an individual or a group in performing tasks outside their paid work that benefit and bring positive outcomes to their community, providing them with a sense of satisfaction, all done willingly, voluntarily, and spontaneously [(2)]."

(1) Fatima Mohammed Rufeida, **Voluntary Work and its Role in Community Development**, Journal of the Faculty of Arts, University of Blida 2, Issue 25, 2016, p192.

(2) **Nur al-Kharis**, The Concept of Volunteering : Its Practical and Theoretical Definition, Amman, Center for Social Studies and Research, 1990, p50.

Another perspective defines it from a religious viewpoint as "a financial, material, or intellectual contribution provided by a Muslim with consent and conviction driven by their faith, without any compensation, intended to contribute to legitimate interests as recognized by Islamic law, addressing the needs of a segment of the Muslim community [1]."

Based on the previous definitions, we can say that voluntary work is a social activity performed by individuals or groups willingly, either individually or collectively, through associations or non-profit organizations, without expecting any financial compensation. This activity aims to meet the needs of others and enhance community well-being.

2.2 Importance of Voluntary Work

Voluntary work holds significant and noble importance, positively impacting the lives of individuals, families, and communities. Among its benefits and effects are:

a) **Economic and Social Improvement**: Enhances economic status, social conditions, and living standards while preserving Islamic values.

b) **Social Solidarity and Optimal Use of Free Time**: Embodies the principle of social solidarity and makes the best use of free time [2].

c) **Community Engagement and Responsibility**: Encourages citizens to participate in community issues, positively influences individuals, and teaches a lifestyle based on social responsibility [3].

d) **Support for Government Work**: Bolsters government efforts by increasing efficiency and effectiveness, and provides new services that may be challenging for government agencies to deliver. Voluntary

(1) **Mohammed Arafa**, Volunteering and Security in the Arab World, Journal of Cooperation, Issue 53, p10.
(2) Lisakefourk Salukjian, **The Role of Voluntary Work in Community Development** (A Field Study in the City of Dehlab), Doctoral Dissertation, Faculty of Economics, University of Aleppo, 2016, p07.
(3) Ahmed Al-Areebi, Momena Mahad, **Voluntary Work in Desert Environments: An Exploratory Study of the Adrar Community (City of Adrar as a Model)**, Rufuuf Journal, Manuscript Laboratory, University of Adrar, Issue 01, 2023, p848.

organizations are known for their flexibility and ease in service delivery, filling gaps in social and welfare systems (1).

e) **Effective Crisis and Disaster Management**: Serves as an effective means for overcoming acute crises, disasters, and severe shocks through social solidarity and cooperation among various community groups (2).

2.3 Motivations for Voluntary Work

Voluntary work is driven by a variety of motivations that encourage individuals to dedicate their time and effort without expecting financial rewards. Understanding these motivations is essential for appreciating the depth and scope of voluntary work. The main motivations include (3):

a) **Religious Motivation**: The primary motivation for voluntary work is religious, driven by the desire to gain spiritual rewards and blessings in this life and the hereafter, as well as a love for doing good (4).

b) **National and Humanitarian Belonging**: Volunteers often feel that their sense of national and humanitarian belonging is best expressed through voluntary work done without financial compensation. Thus, the stronger an individual's sense of citizenship, the more they engage in voluntary work.

c) **Influence of Family Environment**: The impact of a family environment that values voluntary work and instills cooperative and

(1) Fatima Mohammed Rufeida, Op cit, p203.
(2) Mabrouk Sahli, **The Role of Voluntary Work in Achieving Development**, Journal of Social Sciences, University of Oum El Bouaghi, Volume 15, Issue 02, 2021, p34.
(3) Asem Mohammed Al-Bakkar, Lubna Mukhlid Al-Adaileh, Hanaa Husni Al-Nabulsi, **Obstacles to Voluntary Work among University Youth at the University of Jordan : A Sociological Study**, Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences, Volume 44, 2017, 99.
(4) Khalil Nazihah, **Obstacles to Voluntary Work in Civil Society: A Field Study of Charitable Associations in Biskra**, Doctoral Dissertation, Sociology Department, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mohamed Khider University, Biskra, 2015-2016, p79.

helping values in children means that volunteering starts within the family and extends to the community as a whole.

d) **Social and Psychological Needs**: Individuals may be motivated by the desire to fulfill their social and psychological needs, such as the need for security, a sense of belonging, social acceptance, recognition, personal prestige, and respect from others or the wish to gain popularity among peers.

e) **Pursuit of Personal Interests and Utilization of Free Time**: Some people volunteer to engage in activities that align with their personal interests and desires, which may not be addressed in their formal work. This helps to occupy their free time with productive activities that benefit both the individual and the community.

f) **Community Needs During Emergencies**: There is a need for voluntary work when emergencies, disasters, and unexpected crises arise, addressing the urgent needs of the community in such situations.

g) **Building a Caring and Cooperative Community**: Voluntary work contributes to building a caring, cooperative, and supportive community by fostering values of solidarity and mutual assistance among its members.

2.4 Concept of Local Development

Local development can be defined in its simplest terms as the process through which effective cooperation is achieved between popular efforts and governmental initiatives to enhance the economic, social, cultural, and civil levels of local communities and units. This is done from the perspective of improving the quality of life for the residents of these local communities at any level of local administration within a comprehensive and integrated system [(1)].

According to this definition, Dr. Abd al-Muttalib Abd al-Hamid emphasizes that local development focuses on two main elements. The first element is related to popular participation, which supports local

(1) Khenfari Khider, **Financing Local Development in Algeria: Reality and Prospects**, Doctoral Dissertation in Economic Analysis, Faculty of Economic, Commercial, and Management Sciences, University of Algiers 3, 2010-2011, p17.

development efforts. The second element involves providing various services and projects related to local development in a manner that encourages initiative, self-reliance, and active participation (1).

We can define local development as a cooperative process aimed at improving the quality of life in local communities through the integration of popular and governmental efforts. This process focuses on enhancing economic, social, cultural, and civil development at the local level by encouraging community participation and providing services and projects that support individual initiatives and promote self-reliance.

2.5 The Relationship Between Voluntary Work and Local Development

There is a strong connection between local development, its success in the community, and voluntary work. Development stems from people, who are its primary means, and it is widely accepted that development relies on human effort. This necessitates the presence of aware and capable individuals who can participate in the development process. The importance of voluntary work in local community development is evident in several areas, including(2):

a) **Social Security Field**: Volunteering plays a major role in building a cohesive and interconnected society through the network of social relationships formed by voluntary organizations, which are a key source of social capital. It also enhances the sense of social responsibility, leading to a reduction in crime rates within communities and helping to address social issues, thereby reducing the spread of crime, deviance, and social disintegration. This contributes to achieving comprehensive security and protecting society from social ills such as crime and drug abuse.

(1) Abdel Muttalib Abdel Hamid, **Local Financing and Local Development**, University House, Alexandria, Egypt, 2001, p13.

(2) Khaled Hamed, Snoussi Soumia, **Voluntary Group Work and Local Development in Algeria : A Field Study of Active Associations on Facebook in Tebessa Municipality as a Model**, Journal of Human Studies and Research, Volume 06, Issue 03, 2021, p263.

b) **Health Sector**: Voluntary work contributes to the development of the health sector by providing medical care and medicines to vulnerable groups who cannot afford them, particularly in rural and remote areas. This was notably evident during the recent COVID-19 pandemic, where civil society and government efforts were combined to combat the virus and assist those in need. Voluntary work played a crucial role in providing health assistance and guidance [(1)].

c) **Social Aspects**:

- Providing diverse and specialized human resources to develop and qualify the community.
- Fostering a spirit of love and solidarity among community members.
- Encouraging a spirit of competition among voluntary groups, reflecting in the quality of services.
- Addressing existing social issues such as poverty and illiteracy, as voluntary work enables the integration of women, youth, migrants, and marginalized groups in efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger.
- Many voluntary civil society organizations contribute to capacity building by offering vocational training activities, which are essential for acquiring skills and gaining employment opportunities. Voluntary work within institutional frameworks also provides easy access to credit, requiring young unemployed people to develop an understanding of how to obtain and manage credit and implement private projects [(2)].

d) **Economic Aspects**: The charitable sector, which includes non-profit organizations and NGOs, has become a significant factor in the economic equation in many industrialized countries. It acts as a third sector, complementing the role of governments and official organizations by providing higher-quality services at a lower economic

(1) Amal Boubaker, Abdel Salam Abdel Laoui, **The Importance of Popular Participation in Enhancing the Performance of Local Groups and Realizing Development in Algeria**, Journal of Development and Applied Economics, University of M'sila, Volume 15, Issue 04, 2020, p101.
(2) Mabrouk Sahli, Op cit, p33.

cost than if the government were to do so(1). Additionally, voluntary organizations are embedded within the local community, making them more aware of the community's needs ;

Voluntary work stimulates economic activity, including buying, selling, and renting, through the economic, commercial, health, and religious facilities it establishes. Many of these facilities and buildings become focal points for markets and commerce ;

Engaging community members in supporting, implementing, and monitoring development projects based on trust ensures that the ultimate goal of development is to meet their needs and requirements.

e) **Political Aspects**: Voluntary work provides opportunities for various community members to contribute to important decisions that benefit their community and participate in shaping national and local policies and plans by proposing alternatives, negotiating them, or influencing public policies to include these alternatives. This participation aims to achieve the principle of democracy and embody and reinforce decentralization in managing local bodies, which helps the emergence of new local leaders naturally through their involvement in activities and programs.

Voluntary work and the expansion of beneficiaries of social, health, and cultural services enhance opportunities for political and social stability, as issues like poverty and economic and social disparities lead to tension and instability.

3. Study of the Actual Role of Voluntary Work in Local Development

Through this section, we will attempt to analyze the current state of the associative movement and its developmental role in the Wilaya of M'Sila as a model. We will then conduct a case study on a leading

(1) Mohamed Ali Abdel Monem Murad, **The Role of Civil Society Institutions in Local Community Development : A Sociological Perspective**, Journal of Future Social Sciences, Issue 07, 2021, p57.

association in this field, Kafil Al-Yateem Association, focusing on its key activities and achievements in the community.

3.1 The Reality of the Associative Movement in the Wilaya of M'Sila

The national landscape has witnessed the establishment of a significant number of associations across Algerian cities, particularly after the 1989 Constitution, which introduced political pluralism and opened the door to greater freedoms and the creation of associations. This was followed by the introduction of various laws related to associations, the most recent being Law 12/06, dated January 12, 2012.

Like other regions in the country, the Wilaya of M'Sila experienced a noticeable awakening and unprecedented growth in the establishment of these civil associations. These associations strive to improve the living standards of the community and achieve cultural progress. According to data provided by the Wilaya's Office for Association Aid in M'Sila, the situation is as follows:

Table 1. Evolution of the Number of Associations Benefiting from Provincial Grants in the Wilaya of M'Sila (2017-2022)

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Sports Associations	**144**	**155**	**147**	**119**	**171**	**282**
Cultural Associations	**170**	**218**	**239**	**251**	**233**	**254**
Social Associations	**102**	**60**	**120**	**90**	**59**	**91**
Religious Associations	**69**	**64**	**74**	**64**	**79**	**80**
Number of Associations	485	497	580	524	542	707

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on data from the Wilaya Office for Association Aid.

The table above illustrates the continuous growth in the number of associations benefiting from financial grants provided by the Wilaya

from year to year. This increase can be attributed to the growing population density, which necessitates additional support, as well as the rising interest in associative work and the awareness of the importance of voluntary work and social responsibility. However, there is a noticeable decline in the number of associations during the years 2020 and 2021, primarily due to the health crisis and its subsequent economic impact on the country, which affected the state budget.

We also observe that sports associations are at the forefront with a percentage of 40.93%, followed by religious associations at 30.52%, cultural associations at 15.65%, and finally, social associations at the bottom with 12.89%. This is attributed to the demographic composition of these associations, the high number of young members inclined towards sports, and the religious and conservative nature of the community.

3.2 Statistical Study of the Kafil Al-Yateem Association in the Wilaya of M'sila

a. Introduction to the Association:

The association is a national civil organization with a social and humanitarian character. It was established under Law 90/11 on December 14, 1990, concerning associative life, and was accredited by the Ministry of Interior and Local Communities under number 340 on December 17, 2011. It was aligned with Law 12/06 issued on January 12, 2012, concerning associations under number 72/14 on October 16, 2014. The association aims to provide a decent and virtuous life for every orphan across the national territory, encompassing all life domains that concern orphans, including social, health, psychological, physical, cultural, and recreational aspects.

b. Association Projects:

- **Your Child, Your Project: An Algerian Initiative for Arab Child Care:** This project was proposed by student Khawla Allalsha from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Annaba, who is active in the Kafil Al-Yateem Association. It is part of an initiative that

participated in the international competition and television program of Dubai TV. This program aims to support female competencies, emerging initiatives, and enhance the role of women in entrepreneurship.

- **Who Buys a House in Paradise Project:** This is a developmental and investment project aimed at implementing projects that benefit widows and orphans, constructing scientific, cultural, sports, and recreational clubs, and providing all living conditions for this important segment of society.
- **National Reforestation Campaign:** A charitable developmental project aimed at replanting areas damaged by fires, improving living conditions for residents, especially in rural areas, and reviving the Green Dam.
- **Charitable Complex for Orphans Project.**
- **Social Development Reception Center for Orphans Project.**

The Wilaya of M'sila hosts five branches distributed across various regions as sectoral units. These include the local Kafil Al-Yateem Association in the Municipality of Barhoum, which supports over 200 families; the Kafil Association for the Care of Orphans and Widows in the Municipality of Bousaada, supporting 850 families; the Ihsan Association for the Care of Orphans in the Municipality of Hammam Dalaa, supporting 308 families; the Ihsan Association for Social Solidarity in Barhoum, supporting more than 300 families; and the newly established Orphan Association for Widows and the Needy in the Municipality of Ouled Derradj, initially supporting 100 families. All these associations operate under the umbrella of the Kafil Al-Yateem Association. They have contributed to numerous developmental activities during 2020 and 2021, especially amid the health crisis and exceptional circumstances, particularly the lockdown and its economic and social repercussions. These activities can be summarized as follows:

In 2020, the health sector received the most attention in terms of aid, particularly concerning the distribution of masks, protective clothing, and respirators. The associations distributed over 100,000 masks and 500 protective suits, in addition to providing free medical examinations in collaboration with general practitioners, specialists, pharmacies, and laboratories. The Kafil Association for the Care of Orphans and Widows in Bousaada treated 379 cases, purchased prescriptions for 68 cases, conducted X-rays for 30 cases, covered surgeries for 15 cases, performed medical analyses for 45 cases, provided physical therapy for 26 cases, and arranged transportation for patients outside the city for 30 cases. They also distributed various medical supplies like diapers, medical chairs, and crutches, and conducted numerous awareness campaigns on pandemic prevention.

Regarding educational activities, these associations continuously support orphans throughout their educational journey. They distributed over 1,000 equipped school bags, 211 school supplies, and provided support lessons through contracts or volunteer efforts from various teachers. They honored more than 55 orphans to encourage learning and knowledge.

The Kafil Association for the Care of Orphans and Widows in Bousaada paid university fees for 10 orphans. Additionally, the Ihsan Association for the Care of Orphans in the Municipality of Hammam Dalaa opened a special section for teaching the Soroban method, dedicated solely to orphans aged 10 to 15, with 160 students enrolled.

The social activities of the Kafil Al-Yateem Association, particularly during religious occasions and holidays, included the distribution of 4,125 food baskets containing essential foodstuffs and flour, in addition to over 85 sacrificial animals for Eid. They also provided various food supplies such as meat and chicken on a monthly basis, along with financial aid ranging from 5,000 DZD to 15,000 DZD, benefiting 365 widows. Orphans received aid between 2,000 DZD and 3,000 DZD, benefiting 50 orphans through the Kafil Association for the

Care of Orphans and Widows in Bousaada. Additionally, the Ihsan Association for the Care of Orphans in the Municipality of Hammam Dalaa provided a Zakat al-Fitr amounting to 233,500 DZD, along with 5,841 pieces of clothing and shoes, 283 pieces of fabric, and 936 blankets.

Besides these efforts, the associations organized various recreational, cultural, and religious activities, as well as training courses through their workshops or contracted partners. However, due to the health conditions in the country, many activities, especially holiday trips, were canceled. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ihsan Association for the Care of Orphans in Hammam Dalaa conducted two sewing courses for over 28 trainees, a Quran memorization course for 18 women, organized a craft competition, honored 13 widows, and distributed sewing supplies to 189 families. Complementary programs included constructing and renovating 16 homes, providing monthly rental assistance through volunteer donations, connecting two homes to gas and electricity networks, supplying 62 heaters and 31 water tanks, and furnishing three families with various cabinets, beds, and tables, as well as acquiring 24 household appliances like air conditioners, refrigerators, and fans.

The associations also supported individuals in transitioning to new life stages, such as forming new families. In 2020, they contributed to the wedding expenses and bridal preparations for 24 brides. However, the health conditions prevented the organization of the usual annual group weddings.

In 2021, there was a noticeable increase in the number of cases supported in various social, educational, health, and developmental activities, due to the waning health crisis and the easing of lockdown measures. A new branch was established in the Municipality of Ouled Derradj on April 5, 2021, with 12 members. This growth translated into an increase in medical cases handled, with 257 cases treated, 96

prescriptions purchased, 34 X-rays performed, 11 surgeries covered, 59 medical analyses conducted, and 290 patients transported within and outside the city. New health services included assistance with eyeglasses for over 86 cases, medical supplies for 103 cases, and 90 respiratory devices, along with over 20 new agreements with specialist doctors, surgeons, laboratories, radiology centers, and one clinic. A COVID-19 grant was introduced to assist those affected by the pandemic, providing 6,000 DZD for medication.

The educational sector also saw growth, with the distribution of over 1,113 school bags, honoring 117 orphans, and organizing recreational trips for orphans during holidays. The Ihsan Association for the Care of Orphans in Hammam Dalaa organized two trips to the forest and amusement park for 120 orphans. Women's activities increased, with 23 trainees in sewing courses and 17 in pastry courses. Additionally, 427 new families received financial aid ranging from 5,000 DZD to 20,000 DZD, and 9 orphans received grants between 2,000 DZD and 3,000 DZD, with a continuous increase. The number of sacrificial animals also increased by 35 additional animals.

In terms of developmental projects, 26 families were provided with city gas heaters and one family with a butane gas heater. Four homes were connected to electricity and gas networks by installing meters. The associations' relationship with public authorities was evident through participation in joint volunteer campaigns, such as the Ihsan Association for Social Solidarity in the Municipality of Barhoum's participation in an environmental cleanliness campaign at the invitation of the president of the municipal people's council. The associations also benefited from annual financial aid from the wilaya, based on their requests. The financial outcomes for these associations during 2020 and 2021 were as follows:

Table 1. Table title (this is an example of table 1)

		2020			
		Income		Expenses	
	Designation	Revenues	Expenses	Revenues	Expenses
Kafil Al-Yateem, Berhoum.	Opening Balance	294992.39	17411.57		
	Income	1313500			
	Total Income	1625903.36			
	Operating Costs and Invoices			4135.25	1295427.58
	Total Expenditures	1299562.83			
	Closing Balance			326340.53	
Kafil Al-Yateem, Boussada.	Opening Balance	130498.27			
	Income	229700.00			
	Total Income	360198.27			
	Operating Costs and Invoices			476.00	
	Total Expenditures	476.00			
	Closing Balance			359722.27	
Kafil Al-Yateem Hamam Dalaa.	Opening Balance	4177045.75	472100.10		
	Income	740700.00	4852090.0		
	Total Income	10241935.75			
	Operating Costs and Invoices			401190.0	4826220.37
	Total Expenditures	5227410.37			
	Closing Balance			5014525.38	

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on data from the Provincial Office for Association Aid.

From the table, we observe the importance of the financial resources obtained by these associations. This does not take into

account the cash revenues from philanthropists' donations, which far exceed these amounts. This highlights the significant role and contribution of charitable organizations and their impact on civil society.

4. CONCLUSION

Voluntary work has gained a significant position in various fields of life, leading to its increased importance today. From this study, we can conclude that an effective and influential partner in development work is essential. Such a partner would act as a link between central authorities and civil society, and this is the key role that voluntary associations play. They strive to solve daily problems and propose ideas and alternatives. However, their contributions remain limited, mainly focused on meeting social services and addressing the needs of vulnerable groups within society. Their efforts do not rise to the level of promoting development and prosperity of the gross domestic product (GDP) or addressing the economic problems the country faces, as they mainly operate within the framework of solidarity. This is due to their limited and unstable revenues, despite the state's efforts to provide annual grants, which remain small compared to their needs.

We also noted a significant gap between these associations and local authorities, largely due to bureaucratic practices and administrative hurdles, especially the excessive number of unnecessary documents required in the current era. Additionally, some illegal practices by certain associations have been observed, as they pursue their personal interests rather than contributing to development and promoting social solidarity.

In this context, we propose the following recommendations:

1. Pay more attention to associations that contribute to development by involving them in various meetings and committees and listening to their concerns.

2. Grant associations more freedom to operate and simplify administrative procedures through the use of digitization in management. This would facilitate oversight and encourage voluntary work.

3. It is essential that the state supports and finances associations, especially by providing them with their own premises. Most of the premises where they conduct their activities are rented or donated by philanthropists. Additionally, allow them to expand and diversify their sources of funding.

4. Encourage volunteers by honoring and motivating them to continue their service to the community.

5. Penalize those who exploit associations for personal gain, as this undermines the true purpose for which charitable associations were established.

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