

Contributions of Saudi Universities in Promoting the Culture of Volunteerism Work in Light of Saudi Vision 2030.

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Abstract:

In order to develop societies, higher education institutions extend beyond academic education to include the cultivation of human and societal values. Volunteerism represents a significant party of these values, enhancing students' sense and awareness of community spirit. The current study seeks to explore the role of universities in embedding volunteerism culture by analyzing university implemented programs and initiative's, with a particular focusing on notable successful experiences in Saudi Arabia. Findings reveal that Saudi universities are instrumental in instilling volunteerism among students by providing support, guidance, and initiative activities that inspire community engagement.

Keywords: University, Volunteerism, Saudi Arabia Kingdom

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1- INTRODUCTION:

Historically, universities served as epicenters for the cultivation and dissemination of knowledge and science, functioning as primary contributors to the intellectual, cultural, administrative, and political elites. It considered as a wellspring of enlightenment and influence in every facet of national and societal affairs through scientific and research endeavors activities conducted by their researchers, students.

In another regard, volunteerism culture emerges as a cornerstone pillar of advanced societies, representing the spirit of humanity, cooperation, and social solidarity. This culture fosters positive value as generosity and contributes to welfare of others without any benefit, thereby enhancing more cohesive and sustainable society.

Additionally, volunteerism is not merely a temporary activity; it represents lifestyle that reflects an individual's commitment to their community and their efforts to generating a positive impact. Various societal institutions, including families, schools, universities, and civil society organizations, occupies a crucial role in instilling this culture through awareness, encouragement, and offering suitable volunteering opportunities. As a result of societal and economic challenges, fostering volunteerism culture has become an indispensable necessity to actively participate in the identification and resolution of societal problems and support sustainable development.

Research Problem :

Based on the increasing need to establish a culture of volunteerism as a fundamental element in building aware and responsible communities, universities emerge as educational institutions with a significant influence in this area. This paper presents a central issue : **What role do universities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia play in promoting a culture of volunteerism, and how do university programs and initiatives contribute to entrenching this culture within society ?**

Significance of the Study :

The importance of this study lies in the fundamental role that the culture of volunteerism plays in enhancing social cohesion and building a more aware and responsible society. With the rise of developmental and social challenges, there is an urgent need to activate the role of educational institutions, particularly universities, in instilling this culture among youth. The study also highlights the contributions of Saudi universities in this field by analyzing the volunteer programs and initiatives they implement and exploring their impact on shaping community awareness and enhancing national belonging in line with the Kingdom's Vision 2030, which aims to build an active and responsible society.

Objectives of the Study :

This study aims to achieve several objectives, summarized as follows:

- providing a theoretical framework for higher education institutions and volunteerism.
- analyzing the role of universities in promoting a culture of volunteerism within society by reviewing the policies and programs adopted by educational institutions in this area.
- documenting the most prominent volunteer initiatives and projects launched by universities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and study their impact on students and the local community in alignment with national objectives and Vision 2030.

- enhancing awareness of the importance of volunteerism as part of the social responsibility of universities and its role in preparing a generation of youth capable of effective contribution to sustainable development.

Previous Studies :

Based on the growing interest in the role of universities in fostering a culture of volunteerism, several previous studies have addressed this topic from various perspectives to shed light on university practices and their impact on enhancing the culture of volunteerism among students. Notable studies include:

- Study of Al-Sabti (2023) titled as: Volunteering and Its Relationship to Youth Social Capital Development: Study of University Students in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

This study aimed to reveal differences between volunteers and non-volunteers among university students regarding social capital levels and its dimensions (social relations, participation, trust, tolerance, cooperation). The researcher utilized a questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 272 students from King Saud University. Data were analyzed using SPSS 23, revealing statistically significant differences favoring volunteers, indicating a positive correlation between volunteering and increased social capital. The study recommended enhancing volunteerism among students for its effective role in social capital development

-Study of Alshammari, Thomran, & Alshebami (2023) titled as: Integration of Service-Learning Theory and Social Capital Theory in Volunteering Work for Sustainable Development: A Study of the Role of Education Curricula in Saudi Arabia

This study aimed to explore the role of educational curricula in motivating students to engage in volunteer work for sustainable development in Saudi Arabia, based on service-learning theory and social capital theory. The study employed an electronic questionnaire, with 251 valid responses analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) to test causal relationships. The results revealed that social capital factors—such as norms, values, and social support exerted a strong, positive influence on volunteer work, whereas service-learning components showed no significant impact. The study recommended formulating policies focused on providing rewarding volunteer experiences grounded in values and social support. It also proposed a new framework for knowledge management in volunteer work to enhance its role in sustainable development.

-Study of Basharaf & Abbasi (2021) titled as: University's Role in Promoting Voluntary Work

This study sought to highlight the role of Saudi universities in promoting volunteer work by examining practical, real-world initiatives. Adopting a qualitative descriptive methodology, the study utilized interviews and secondary data collection, sampling seven Saudi universities out of 42. Findings indicated that universities play multifaceted roles in fostering volunteerism, including mandating volunteer work, collaborating with community institutions, and organizing conferences and training programs. The study recommended strengthening universities' roles by expanding volunteer opportunities, disseminating a culture of volunteerism, and encouraging further research on successful initiatives within Arab universities.

-Study of Almarae (2016) titled as: The University and the Voluntary Work Culture: Reality and Perspective.

This study aimed to investigate the current role of Saudi universities in promoting a culture of volunteer work, with a focus on Najran University. Employing a descriptive methodology, the researcher collected data via a questionnaire distributed to a sample of university students and faculty members (802 students and 121 professors). The findings demonstrated that the university's role in disseminating a culture of volunteer work remains limited, though both students and faculty members exhibited consensus regarding the conceptual understanding of this culture.

2- The Conceptual framework of Higher Education Institutions:

Higher education is regarded as an educational catalyst for both economic and social progress, functioning as a critical investment in human capital; it significantly contributes in fostering economic growth of nations. Currently, higher education serves a pathway entry for countries to achieve the shift towards knowledge- based economies, particularly via its contributions in teaching and scientific research. Consequently, it occupies an instrumental role to produce, assimilate, and disseminate knowledge.

2-1- Definition of Higher Education Institutions:

Higher Education Institutions defined as the educational system that attracts exceptional outputs from general education after secondary school level. It assumes the responsibility for workforce training of employees, and providing the supply of appropriate human resources for the labor market across various sectors (Abu Adama, 2001, p. 220). It is also defined: An educational system focuses on guiding, orienting, and refining student's talents and knowledge, building their character, enhancing their abilities, and enabling them to express and applying their full potential for innovation and development. (Al- tartouri and jweiha, 2009, p. 135). Higher education represents educational level provided by state-accredited institution which follows the secondary degree, functioning -in the first consideration- in teaching, research, and community service.

Based on the aforementioned, the distinctive characteristics and attributes, as previously outlined, can be succinctly summarized as follows:

- It is a stage of education that follows secondary education
- An exclusive accessible for successfully students who completed secondary education.
- It is offered by both public and private universities, as well as state- accredited higher education institution or specialized educational establishments.
- A variety of educational programs are available, covering a various scientific discipline.
- Higher educational is intrinsically associated with the notion of specialization, aiming to fulfill societal needs and enables the effective and efficient adaptation to current and future changes across all sectors.

Higher education institutions, as defined, include all universities, colleges, and accredited higher institutes that offer degree beyond the secondary level. (Mohamed Zaki, 2008, p. 12). It is a worth noting that the names of educational institutions differ from one country to another (university, college, academy, institute, etc.).

2-2- Importance of Higher Education:

In the 1990s, the expansion of higher education systems gained momentum as nations recognized their crucial role in fostering national progress. Empirical evidence underscore that educated societies achieve higher developmental rates across various fields and addressing complex challenges effectively. This recognition has positioned science, knowledge, and their practical applications as central factor to development strategies. Consequently, governments worldwide responded by establishing diverse higher education institutions, public and private, and enhancing the quality of its processes and outputs to support living standards and socio- economic growth. (Jreyou, 2001, p.19)

Higher education is integral to socioeconomic development, it occupies a pivotal role for knowledge production, creativity, innovation, and equipping human capital for dynamic labor markets, which considered the cornerstone of economic development. Higher education is one of the pillars to the knowledge- based economy, by enhancing national competitiveness, reports, such as the World Bank's, which emphasize the synergy between higher education and competitive advantage in a knowledge- driven world. The 2013 Global Arab Competitiveness Report also ensuring the integral role of higher education institutions in improving economic growth.

Extending beyond economic aspects, higher education institutions are integral to societal advancement, their impact broadens to include the reinforcement of societal values, strengthen national identity, the cultivation of citizenship, and the activation of community engagement. These institutions act as a pillar for comprehensive development by equipping individuals with the skills needed to engage meaningfully in their communities. Thereby influencing societal overall quality of life, and shaping both individual and collective cultural orientations.

As globalization intensifies, the strategic importance of higher education has grown, particularly, higher education, across nations, it has become as a fundamental requirement for integrating societies into global economy. This integration transcends traditional economic flows (trade, capital, and labor), encompassing knowledge and intellectual exchanges. For developing nations, higher education provides a strategic pathway to capitalize globalizations' opportunities and compete globally. As a result of the widening knowledge gap between developed and developing nations, the recognition of this gap underscores the critical role of expanded higher education access in mitigating global inequalities (Mehiriq, 2016, p, 65).

To sum up, higher education is indispensable element for fostering individuals' skills and competencies, advancing societal innovation, and generating knowledge critical to enhance a country's global competitiveness and societal development. Its supports knowledge production, scientific research, technological advancement, and innovation. It underpins the shift toward knowledge- driven economies. In this aspect, higher education institutions serve as key enablers of individual and societal empowerment to face the challenges of sustainable development effectively.

2-3- Functions of higher education institutions:

The functions of higher education institutions encompass three core dimensions: education, scientific research, and community service. This summary explores these functions in detail as follows:

2-3-1- Education and Human Capital Development:

Education is the primary function of higher education institutions, aimed at cultivating human capital through diverse academic and vocational programs. These programs prepare students for professional integration, fostering their transition into innovative, productive members of the workforce. Higher education serves as a critical driver of societal development by transforming raw potential into dynamic capabilities.

It is essential to emphasize that student training must be holistic training, encompassing scientific, technical, intellectual, and cultural dimensions, is imperative to meet the demands of modern society. Furthermore, sustainable professional development is essential to enhance resource utilization and foster societal progress. To fulfill this role effectively, higher education must abandon traditional memorization-based learning

models in favor of approaches that cultivate critical thinking, problem-solving, reflection, inference, research and experimentation (Farhoud, 2012).

2-3-2- Scientific Research:

In its modern conceptualization, higher education is firmly rooted in scientific research and knowledge production. Research is defined as a systematic intellectual process conducted by scholars to investigate facts about specific issues or problems using organized scientific methodologies, aiming to derive applicable solutions and generalizable findings (Boughraf, 2017, p. 339).

Key research objectives in higher education include:

- advancing and contributing to science and technology
- align research efforts with local societal challenges
- promoting interdisciplinary studies to resolve complex, interconnected problems
- Building global international research collaborations
- Training students and the faculty teaching members in advanced research methods and techniques.

Scientific research is a cornerstone for societal advancement, as discoveries and innovations results from research deep and proof-reading analysis, and by keeping in track of events and ideas to improve them. Many of the greatest innovations are just creative ideas from talented teachers, students, and researchers.

2-3-3- The Function of community service:

The function of community service refers to all activities and service undertaken by higher education institutions that are directed primarily towards addressing the needs of society. (Al_ senbel & Abd Al- jawad, 1993, p. 47). These needs are fulfilled through the efforts of higher education institutions, which must perform this role by disseminating knowledge and raising public awareness about developments within the field of education, both in theory and practice. Furthermore, universities must actively engage in applying knowledge to solve societal issues (Murad & Shastri, 2010, p. 10). Historically, universities in the Middle Ages were predominantly concerned with discipline such as theology and philosophy, placing less emphasis on economic development. However, following the industrial revolutions, universities began to gradually adapt to societal needs, by the 19th century, they started offering education in disciplines necessitated by the emergence of new professions, such as sciences, engineering, and accounting. This adaptation continued into the 20th century, as universities expanded their focus to include almost all disciplines demanded

by modern society, including social sciences and other fields (forest & altbach, 2007, p. 195). The role of community service also entails identifying the needs of individuals and institutions within society and developing programs to address those needs of individuals and institutions and proposing solutions to societal issues and challenges.

3- The Concept of Volunteering:

Scholars have long debated to precise a comprehensive definition of volunteering with many striving to encapsulate its multifaceted natures. Despite the diversity in perspectives, a shared understanding regarding the core essence exists: volunteering fundamentally involves individuals contributing, whether acting individually or collectively, their time, efforts, or resources to enhance individual and societal well-being. Such contributions may range from addressing immediate challenges to fostering long-term community development, guided by the norms of civil society and under institutional oversight (Al-Shahrani, 2017, p. 15).

Other definitions have been also described volunteering as; “an efforts made by an individual for the benefit of their community, an organization, or a specific group, without expecting monetary compensation. Such efforts may involve time, resources, or finances, offered willingly to enhance the well-being of others” (Al-Bakar, Al-Nabelsi, Al-Adailia, 2017). Furthermore, professional associations, such as the national association of social workers, emphasize the role of skilled volunteers in enhancing service delivery to promote holistic welfare at individual and community levels. (Khaldi, 2023, p. 146)

3-1- The importance of volunteering:

Volunteering holds significant importance within societies, reflected in numerous international initiatives promoting and activating volunteerism, particularly among younger generations, its prominence in developed societies underscores its role in building autonomous civil communities amidst dynamic social, political, and economic landscapes. Volunteering bridges gaps in public service delivery, addressing areas where governmental efforts may be insufficient. (Al-Nabelsi, 2009, p134)

Moreover, volunteer activities are characterized by their flexibility and agility, enabling them to deliver services more efficiently and effectively compared to government institutions

The importance of volunteering amplifies in tandem with societal progress and the increasing complexity of social interactions. Economics, cultural, and social shifts, coupled with modern life's demands, have shifted volunteering from individuals, traditional practices to well-organized collective efforts through modern associations and institutions. These activities address various fields aligned with community service and development needs. The significance of volunteering lies in its three primary societal functions:

- Supplementing governmental work by enhancing and expanding services
- Providing new services those governmental entities may find challenging to offer, given the flexibility and efficiency of volunteer institutions.
- Fulfilling services beyond the state's capacity, establishing volunteering as a community-driven force that mobilizes local resources and promotes self-reliance and utilizing local resources to reach societal needs and advance development.

Thus, volunteering's greatest value lies in engaging citizens in addressing societal challenges and linking public and private efforts to advance society. Furthermore, it positively

influences youth by instilling as a sense of social responsibility and reducing the risks of social ills and deviant behavior by involving individuals in meaningful purposeful activities that foster a sense of belonging. This collective engagement empowers communities to enhance their resilience and self- sufficiency through voluntary acts.

3-2- Objectives of Volunteering:

Volunteering objectives can be divided into two main categories (Zoqqari & Maatouq, 2016, p. 29):

3-2-1- General Objectives of Volunteering:

These include:

- Reducing and alleviating the problems faced by society;
- Addressing the shortage of professionals through volunteer efforts;
- Fostering a spirit of participation within the community and combating negativity and apathy
- Accelerating development and compensating for underdevelopment;
- Encouraging community members to engage in voluntary activities, which lead to mutual understanding and agreement on desirable societal goals. This, in turn, reduces the likelihood of their involvement in activities that might threaten societal progress and cohesion.

3-2-2- Specific Objectives of Volunteering:

These can be summarized as follows:

- Providing volunteers with a sense of accomplishment by engaging in work that others value;
- Gaining better social standing within the community;
- Building friendships and connections;
- Satisfying the need for belonging and fostering a sense of security and collective identity;
- Achieving self-fulfillment;
- Compensating for workforce shortages faced by many voluntary organizations; - Raising awareness of their voluntary organizations among local communities, ensuring continuous moral, material, and social support, as these organizations cannot operate in isolation from the communities they serve.

3-3- Fields of Volunteering :

Volunteering encompasses a wide range of fields, including the following (Al-Hazmi, 2018, p. 526):

3-3-1- Social Field :

This includes:

- Childcare;
- Women's care;

- Rehabilitation of drug addicts;
- Elderly care;
- Orphan care;
- Supporting poor families, among others.

3-3-2- Educational and Academic Field:

This includes:

- Literacy programs;
- Continuing education;
- Learning difficulty programs;
- Providing home education for students lagging academically, among others.

3-3-3- Health Field :

This includes:

- Healthcare services;
- Assisting and entertaining patients;
- Providing psychological and health counseling;
- Home-based physical therapy;
- Assisting individuals with special needs, among others.

3-3-4- Environmental Field :

This includes:

- Environmental awareness campaigns;
- Forest conservation and combating desertification;
- Beach and park maintenance;
- Pollution prevention, among others.

3-3-5- Civil Defense Field :

This includes:

- Participating in relief efforts;
- Assisting paramedics;
- Contributing during natural disasters

4- The role of higher education institutions in cultivating volunteerism :

The university stands as one of the most prominent educational institutions, bearing significant responsibilities in serving society and disseminating a scientifically grounded culture. It plays a crucial role in instilling the concepts of voluntary work among university students and promoting its culture through various programs, methods, and mechanisms that bring about substantial positive change in educating the community about this culture. This is evident in numerous global universities that have made programs promoting the culture of

voluntary work mandatory for their students. University students represent the creative energies and innovative forces upon which society relies politically, socially, and economically. Hence, the role of the university has become to invest in these human resources to their fullest potential and to fulfill its duty in fostering and entrenching voluntary work among students, enabling them to shoulder responsibilities (Abd El-Moati & Farghaly, 2020). If we consider the university as an important platform and a leading institution aimed at driving societal development through awareness programs it outlines throughout the academic year, and which incorporates numerous objectives into its developmental policies—such as educating students on the importance of voluntary work, generating new and creative volunteer ideas that align with the university's needs, involving students in various events and activities organized by the university, assisting charitable organizations in organizing events by providing them with volunteers, and activating collaborative partnerships with governmental and private charitable entities to unify efforts—all these objectives converge towards achieving what is known as the principle of voluntarism. By activating this principle, the university becomes a supportive hand and a suitable environment for serving and elevating society. Through the programs outlined by the university, which seek to continuously monitor societal needs for the purpose of social and cultural interaction with the community, aiming to productively marry these needs with the capabilities of university students, it has become imperative to focus on this segment upon which the nation relies. This is achieved by directing the intellectual, scientific, and artistic energies of youth to contribute to community service through purposeful activities, and by establishing scientific and cultural clubs that allow students to refine their skills, enhance their experiences, and instill a spirit of cooperation and responsibility, thereby connecting them to societal issues that promote solidarity and enrich their personalities. To fulfill the university's role and objectives in entrenching a culture of voluntarism among students and linking them to their external environment, the topic of voluntary work should also be embodied as a specialized subject included in the curriculum. This would enable students to form a comprehensive understanding of this subject and familiarize themselves with the conditions that must be met by a volunteer, such as eligibility. A volunteer must be qualified to perform the assigned tasks, and thus eligibility is tied to the process of matching the volunteer's capabilities with suitable volunteer opportunities. Additionally, among the most important conditions that must be met by a volunteer is trustworthiness and a commitment to fulfilling obligations, i.e., the moral integrity of the volunteer, most notably chastity and selflessness. Among the key conditions that university students should also be aware of commitment, cooperation, initiative, respect for team spirit, and working within a group. By taking this step, the university would have made significant strides towards achieving societal advancement and progress across various levels and fields (Menadi, 2024).

Universities assume a vital role in cultivating a culture of volunteerism and mobilizing communities toward sustainable development. This effort is realized through the following key strategies:

- **Raising awareness and promoting participation:** universities enhance awareness among students and faculty regarding the importance and benefits of volunteerism, motivating them to actively engagement.
- **Providing Volunteer Opportunities:** Universities offer students and faculty members opportunities to participate in diverse volunteer programs and projects both within the university and in the local community. These initiatives aim to engage individuals in meaningful activities that contribute to personal development, community service, and the promotion of social responsibility. By facilitating access to such opportunities, universities

play a pivotal role in fostering a culture of voluntarism and enabling participants to apply their skills and knowledge in real-world contexts, thereby strengthening the bond between academic institutions and society

- **Organizing events and campaigns:** universities offer diverse opportunities for students and faculty to participate in volunteer programs and community projects

- **Collaborating with governmental and community institutions:** partnerships with governmental and societal organizations amplify the impact of these initiatives.

- **Research and development:** universities conduct research to improve volunteer programs, policies, and practices, maximizing their benefits.

- **Promoting social values:** volunteerism fosters values like cooperation, solidarity, and social responsibility, contributing to societal development.

- **Integrating volunteerism into curricula:** this includes incorporating volunteer culture into academic courses and curricula.

5- A Review of the Experiences of Some Saudi Universities in Developing the Culture of Voluntary Work:

Given the significant importance of voluntary work, many countries have sought to instill and encourage a culture of voluntarism among their populations. The importance of youth participation in voluntary work stems from strengthening their sense of belonging to their homeland, developing their intellectual, artistic, scientific, and practical skills, and providing them with broad opportunities to express their opinions on issues that concern their communities. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has followed this path, making substantial efforts to promote and develop a culture of voluntary work within society. This is evident through the initiatives undertaken by various Saudi universities in this field.

5-1- The Experience of King Saud University:

King Saud University is committed to organizing and implementing numerous voluntary activities for various segments of society, given the significant benefits these activities offer to individuals and institutions alike. Some of the university's units voluntarily train groups of students to help them enhance their capabilities and refine their skills to meet the demands of the job market. Additionally, the university offers a number of developmental courses for trainees and employees related to various specialized fields. Furthermore, the university has ensured that a clause is included in all contracts signed through its institutes with governmental and private institutions, focusing on training and qualifying university students through the consultancy projects carried out by the university. The university has also designated a day in the academic year called "Voluntary Work Day" to promote the culture of voluntarism among faculty members. Moreover, the university organizes free medical caravans to areas with limited medical services and publishes a range of awareness brochures on various topics, such as healthy nutrition and disease prevention. To encourage the concept of voluntary work and charitable services, the university established the Abdul Rahman bin Saleh Al-Rajhi and Family Chair for the Development of Charitable Work. This research chair specializes in improving the performance of charitable organizations and raising societal awareness of the culture of charitable work through conducting specialized

studies, transferring international knowledge and experiences, and focusing on developing a general framework for structuring charitable organizations. This framework includes the main functions of charitable organizations and establishes performance indicators for their employees (King Saud University and Community Service - Voluntary Work, 2024).

Inspired by Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which seeks to encourage volunteerism and cultivate a culture of volunteer work with the ambitious target of reaching one million volunteers, King Saud University, represented by the Deanship of Student Affairs, and has spearheaded a distinctive initiative to promote the culture of volunteerism. This initiative seeks to cultivate a deep- rooted sense of volunteerism among student and staff, and shedding light on the significant contributions of university entities, such as the Deanship of Student Affairs, in fostering volunteer work. By doing so, it seeks to instill values of national pride and humanitarian solidarity across the community, ensuring that volunteerism serves as a conduit for realizing the goals of Saudi Arabia's vision 2030 agenda in the realm of social engagement.

The initiative was implemented in two stages under the supervision of the Dean of Student Affairs' Agency for Development and Quality. The first stage was designed for students and staff within the university, whereas the second stage extended its scope to members of the wider community outside the university. The first stage began with the organization of six workshops, structured around key themes such as the development of community- based initiative, familiarizing volunteers with their volunteers with their rights and duties in voluntary work through the Volunteer Ethical Character, and introducing them to various levels and fields of volunteering available at the university. These workshops were conducted by distinguished faculty teaching staff specializing in volunteering; these workshops attracted approximately 2500 participants, achieving a satisfaction rate exceeding 95%. Additionally, the workshops included a completion among student clubs for the most outstanding volunteer project at the university level. This competition sought to enhance students' sense of social responsibility while motivating creativity and innovation in volunteer activities. In the second stage of the initiative, an awareness seminar on environmental volunteering and sustainable development was held at Al-Arid Palace. The seminar aimed to emphasize the significance of volunteering in environmental responsibility. It also sought to raise awareness about environmental issues and instill a sense of responsibility for environmental sustainability and instill a stronger sense of accountability for preserving natural resources. This seminar, delivered by environmental experts from King Saud University, left a significant positive impression on the 100 community members who attended, with a satisfaction rate of 93% regarding the concept and importance of environmental volunteering (King Saud University, 2024).

Under the banner of Saudi Vision 2030, which emphasize volunteerism as a cornerstone for national development, a three- day exhibition titled: "Towards One Million Volunteers" Was held at Granada Mall. The event sought to instill a culture of volunteerism among community members, and showcase the collaborative role of the university and society in striving to achieve the vision's goals across social, environmental, and economic dimensions. Key stakeholders from various sectors including healthcare, services, environmental organizations, economics, policies, and procedures guide were introduced, providing a structured framework for volunteer efforts within the university. The exhibition left a lasting impression on approximately 3,000 attendees, achieving a satisfaction rate of 91%. In alignment with Vision 2030, King Saudi University has prioritized, volunteerism as a strategic pillar, aiming to cultivate a proactive and socially responsible generation. This endeavor underscores the university's mission to enhance volunteer practices and amplify

their positive impact on societal well-being, contributing to the realization of sustainable social development through volunteer engagement, thereby advancing the core objectives of Vision 2030.

In order to enhance the culture of volunteerism, the initiative by King Saud University is characterized by several strength points that reflect its maturity and diversity in implementation. The target groups have varied to include university students, staff, and members of the external community, thereby enhancing the overall societal impact and reflecting a comprehensive vision. Moreover, the initiative is distinguished by its diverse activities, such as workshops, seminars, exhibitions, and competitions, which provide varied opportunities for participation and learning

The initiative employed a specialized training approach, with workshops led by faculty members using professional educational tools, such as a code of ethics for volunteering, contributing to the delivery of rich and high-quality content. Another positive aspect is the measurement of participant satisfaction, which showed high satisfaction rates (93–95%), reflecting the effectiveness of implementation and its alignment with the expectations and needs of beneficiaries. These efforts are linked to the university's strategic plan, indicating institutional and structural support that enhances the sustainability of volunteer work within the university's objectives.

Despite these positives, several challenges may affect the initiative's effectiveness and sustainability. Its implementation has been limited to two specific time periods, without reference to continuous volunteer programs throughout the year, which may reduce the continuity of impact. There has also been significant reliance on seasonal events, such as "Volunteer Work Day," without integrating volunteerism as a permanent component within academic curricula. Furthermore, the implementation of certain activities has been restricted to specific locations, such as Al-Arid Palace and Granada Complex, potentially limiting the geographical spread of the initiative and reducing access for various community segments.

Additionally, there are no clear indicators of long-term community partnerships with civil or governmental institutions, which are essential for ensuring the initiative's sustainability and expanding its scope. Lastly, precise evaluation mechanisms to measure the long-term impact of the initiative on student behavior and the community are lacking, which limits the ability to assess the actual transformation in the culture of volunteerism resulting from these efforts.

5-2- The Experience of King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM):

In 2010, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM) established its Volunteer Club. On International Volunteer Day, the club launched the first volunteer festival at the level of universities and governmental entities across the Kingdom, with 1,500 students promoting the culture of volunteerism across 17 entities both within and outside the university. Over the years, the Volunteer Club has continued organizing the festival, resulting in the implementation of more than 300 volunteer projects across various fields and the completion of over 15,000 volunteer hours dedicated to serving the community. Recently, the university was selected by the Ministry of Labor and Community Service to lead all volunteer teams across the Kingdom's regions during the celebration of International Volunteer Day, with the participation of 1,000 volunteers. This initiative underscores the collaborative role of universities and societal institutions in fostering volunteerism. In 2013, the university, in partnership with the Mohamed and Abdullah Al Subeaei Foundation, launched the Edama

project, aimed at establishing volunteer work units in private universities. This initiative allowed the university to engage academically and scientifically with global expertise to develop scientific frameworks for creating sustainable volunteer work units. The program was subsequently refined based on specific standards and was later adopted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development as a national benchmark for volunteer management units in organizations. In 2019, the university signed an agreement with the Ministry of Labor and Social Development to establish 250 volunteer work units within governmental and non-profit entities, based on the Edama standards (Al-Sharaf & Al-Abbasi, 2021, p. 234).

King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals has demonstrated remarkable effectiveness in instilling a culture of volunteerism through the establishment of a volunteer club and the organization of volunteer festivals, involving thousands of students who executed hundreds of projects across various fields. The university has also played a leading role at the national level in organizing volunteer teams, reflecting its profound community and institutional impact.

Despite these positives, several challenges may limit the effectiveness of these initiatives. One notable issue is the significant focus on major seasonal events, without the presence of sustainable volunteer programs integrated into the daily university life. Additionally, there is a lack of data regarding the extent of participation across all student demographics in these activities, as well as the absence of clear mechanisms to measure the long-term transformative impact on volunteer behavior.

Moreover, the reliance on centralized initiatives may reduce opportunities for self-empowerment among volunteer units within colleges or academic departments. This situation necessitates the enhancement of decentralization in managing volunteer work within the university.

5-3- The Experience of King Abdulaziz University:

The Volunteer Work Unit at King Abdulaziz University (KAU) was inaugurated in 2012. By 2015, the Volunteer Work Administration became affiliated with the Deanship of Student Affairs. This administration provides introductory lectures on the principles of volunteerism and volunteers' rights to all colleges and departments across the university. Additionally, it organizes training courses focusing on three key aspects: forming volunteer teams and initiatives, fostering the personal development of volunteers, and specialized courses in volunteer first aid. The administration has also organized several conferences, including the Sanad (1) conference, which in its first year focused on a competition for volunteer work and the challenges it faces, in collaboration with schools and universities in Jeddah. In its second year, the Sanad (2) conference evolved into a competition among internal university colleges, encouraging submissions of volunteer work research and initiatives. Students participating in volunteer work are evaluated using an assessment tool developed by a Japanese university. Volunteer hours are recorded in students' skill records but are not mandatory (Alsharaf & Al-Abbasi, 2021, p. 232)

In alignment with its belief in the transformative power of community and volunteer work, King Abdulaziz University has launched the "Ata'a" platform, an all-encompassing electronic system aimed at effectively managing community and volunteer initiatives under a unified framework. This initiative is designed to meet the following strategic objectives (King Abdulaziz University, 2024):

- Supporting Saudi Vision 2030 by promoting social initiatives to achieve the national target of one million volunteers.

- Advancing the university's commitment to social responsibility, as outlined in its third strategic plan "Enhancement 2020" and the vision of its founder.
- Aligning with the vision of the Advisor to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Governor of Makkah Province, through the program "How to Be an Exemplary Role Model".
- Centralizing and organizing community and volunteer activities both within and beyond the university under a single umbrella; - Adhering to the national higher education standards for community service set by the Education Authority; - Promoting civic engagement among citizens while addressing societal indifference and negative attitudes.
- Mitigating the impact of social challenges across various sectors.
- Addressing labor shortages in numerous organizations by mobilizing and deploying volunteers with diverse expertise and professional skills. By fostering a cohesive framework for volunteerism, this platform bridges the gap between community needs and the available human capital, thereby aligning with broader economic and developmental goals.

The initiative launched by King Abdulaziz University in the field of volunteerism represents an important step toward enhancing the culture of community service among students and members of society. Through introductory lectures, training courses, and the organization of conferences such as the "Sanad Conference," which promotes volunteer initiatives, the university has successfully disseminated and reinforced concepts of volunteerism. Additionally, the university launched the "Itaa" electronic platform, which contributes to coordinating volunteer initiatives both within and outside the university, reflecting a distinctive effort to support the Kingdom's Vision 2030.

However, there are several challenges that may limit the effectiveness of this initiative. First, the non-mandatory nature of volunteer hours may reduce motivation for some students to participate consistently. Second, although the "Itaa" platform aids in organizing volunteer activities, its success relies on continuous engagement from all target groups, which may face implementation challenges. Third, the system lacks a robust mechanism for evaluating the long-term impact of volunteer initiatives on student behavior and the community.

6- Conclusion:

Institutions of higher education hold a prominent role in cultivating and promoting a culture of volunteerism within communities. As hubs of urban knowledge and personal development, they are uniquely positioned to provide an equip students with a nuanced understanding of local social and environmental needs, by the integration of civic engagement into academic curricula and the provision of the practical hand-on opportunities for involvement in volunteer activities. These institutions not only deepen student's connection to their communities but also empower them to drive meaningful and lasting change. In doing so, universities and colleges act as joint agents in building a more integrated and forward-thinking society, where collective responsibility and active participation in the public good

are fundamental principles. The mission has been, actively pursued by Saudi universities, which have worked to develop leading and innovative models of volunteerism and to promote a culture of social entrepreneurship among their participants. These endeavors have laid the groundwork for adopting approaches that prioritize public welfare and community development. Nonetheless, volunteerism is often hindered by its unpaid nature, deterring many individuals due to personal or external constraints. Despite these challenges, with the growing influence of technology and the pivotal role of information and communication technology (ICT) in amplifying and promoting this culture.

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