



**HUAIROU COMMISSION**  
*Women, Homes & Community*

## **Compensation for Contributions**

# **Report on interviews with volunteer care-givers in six countries**

**Prepared for:  
Huirou Commission**

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## Introduction

In the first half of 2009, structured interviews were conducted with 1,366 volunteers providing care-giving in six African countries. The interviews were conducted as part of the “Compensations for Contributions: Creating an enabling policy framework for effective home-based care” initiative, a project supported by the UNDP-Japan Partnership Fund (WID/GAD).

The aims of the research were:

- to produce evidence of caregivers’ significant contribution to the health and development of their communities that can be used for an awareness and advocacy campaign that wins public recognition, support, and resources for caregivers and their work
- to support caregivers to organise themselves more effectively at regional, national and sub-national level.

The research was facilitated by the Huairou Commission, and the research was organised and coordinated by the Commission’s partners in each of the six countries. The country-based partner organisations that participated are:

- Ntankah Village Women Common Initiative Group, Cameroon
- GROOTS Kenya
- Coalition of Women Living with HIV/AIDS, Malawi
- International Women’s Communication Centre, Nigeria
- Land Access Movement of South Africa
- Uganda Community-Based Organisation for Child Welfare.

The Rural Women’s Movement of South Africa was also a partner organisation in the project but was, unfortunately, not able to submit the data from their interviews in time for analysis.

For the purposes of this research, volunteer care-givers were defined as people who do volunteer work providing assistance to members of other households, who do this through an organisation or group, but who are not on a long-term contract receiving a stipend, wage or salary. The following were thus excluded:

- permanent staff of organisations.
- volunteers who are not connected with any organisation or group.
- people caring only for members of their own household
- any work that volunteers do for their own household.

Most of the interviews were conducted by people who are themselves volunteer care-givers. More than 100 people participated as interviewers across the six countries.

All countries used the same questionnaire for the interviews, so that the findings can be more easily compared across countries. Partners agreed beforehand on the questionnaire, and advice was also received from an international reference group.

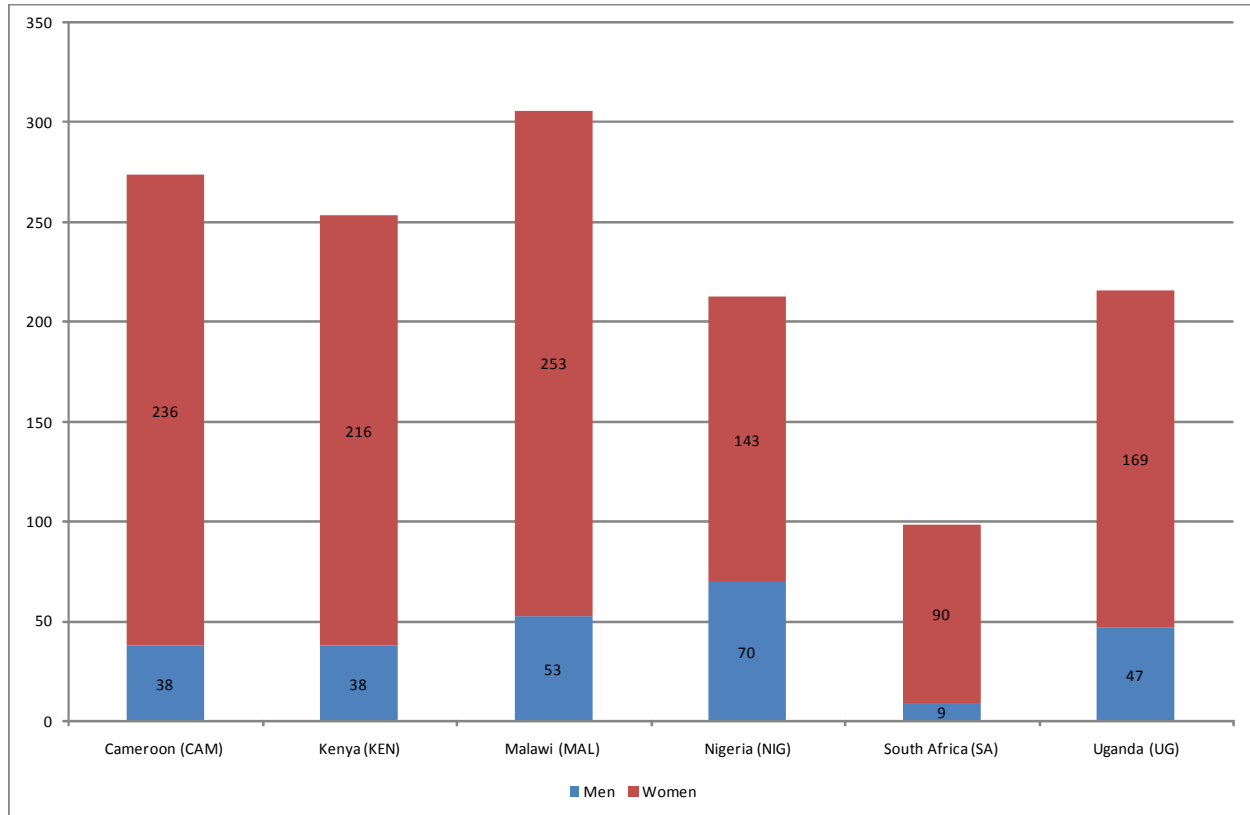
All partner organisations also conducted focus group discussions with volunteer care-givers using an agreed discussion schedule. In some countries, other role-players also participated in focus group discussions. Some partner organisations also did other research, such as in-depth

interviews with government officials, or asking volunteers to keep a weekly record of the expenses they incur in doing their care-giving. The findings of this other research are being written up in country-based reports.

The rest of this report presents the key cross-country findings from the 1,366 interviews. We thank all the volunteers who agreed to answer our questions, because without them we would not have been able to do this research.

## The findings

Figure 1. Men and women volunteers by country



A total of 1,366 volunteers were interviewed across the six countries. The number interviewed ranged from 100 in South Africa to 306 in Malawi.

Figure 1 shows the number of women and men interviewed in each country. (For four of the volunteers there was no information as to whether they were women or men. As in later figures in this report, volunteers for whom there is no information are excluded in the figure above.)

Overall 81% of all the volunteers are women i.e. 255 men volunteers were interviewed compared to 1,107 women. The percentage of women ranges from 67% in Nigeria to 90% in South Africa.

*Note: Figure 1 also explains the country abbreviations that are used in later figures and tables.*

**Figure 2. Volunteers by age group and country**

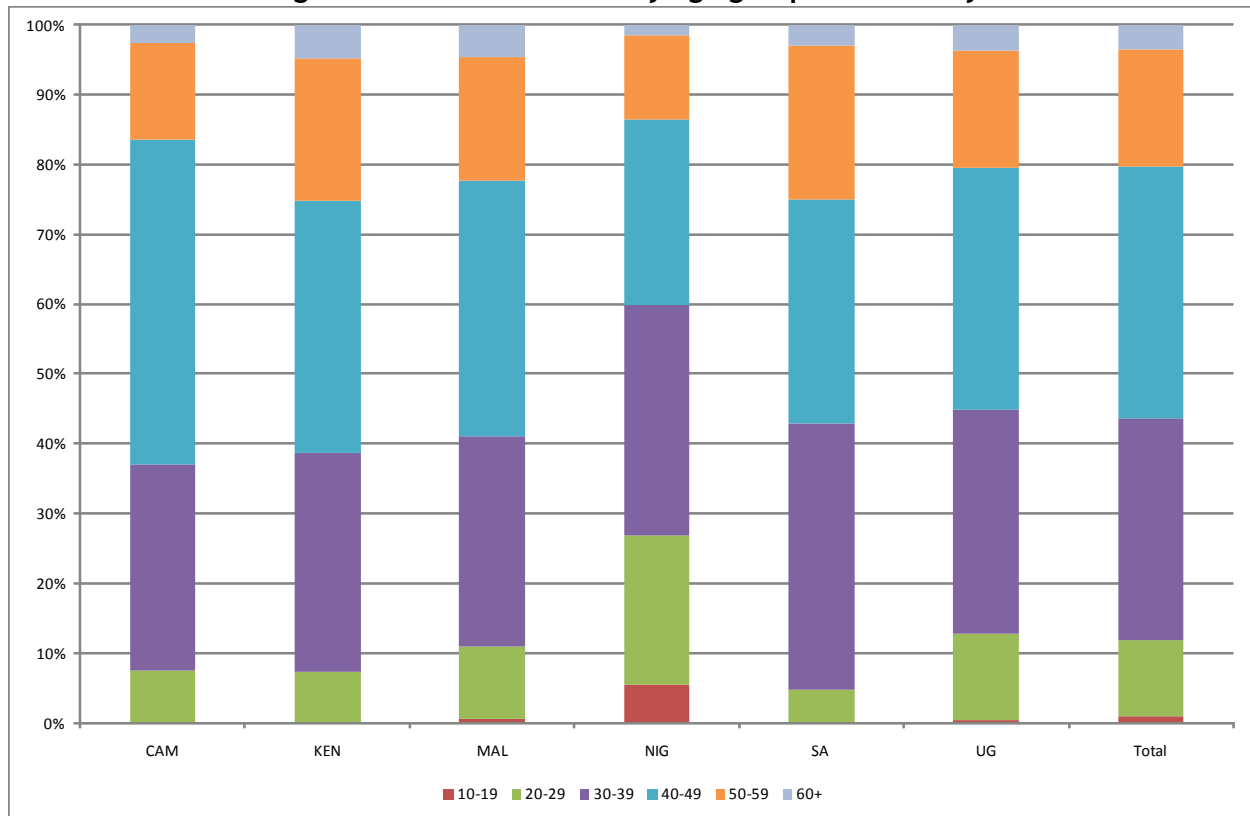


Figure 2 shows the age breakdown of the volunteers interviewed in the different countries.

All countries have some volunteers who are 60 years or older. Malawi, Nigeria and Uganda also have some volunteers who are under 20 years of age.

Across all countries, the majority of volunteers are between 30 and 49 years of age. Across the six countries, this age group accounts for more than two-third (68%) of volunteers.

This age group spans the time of a woman's life in which she usually has heavy responsibilities in terms of her children and family. As we shall see below, many of the volunteers are also engaged in income-earning work. So the volunteer work is done in addition to a lot of other work.

**Figure 3. Volunteers by marital status and country**

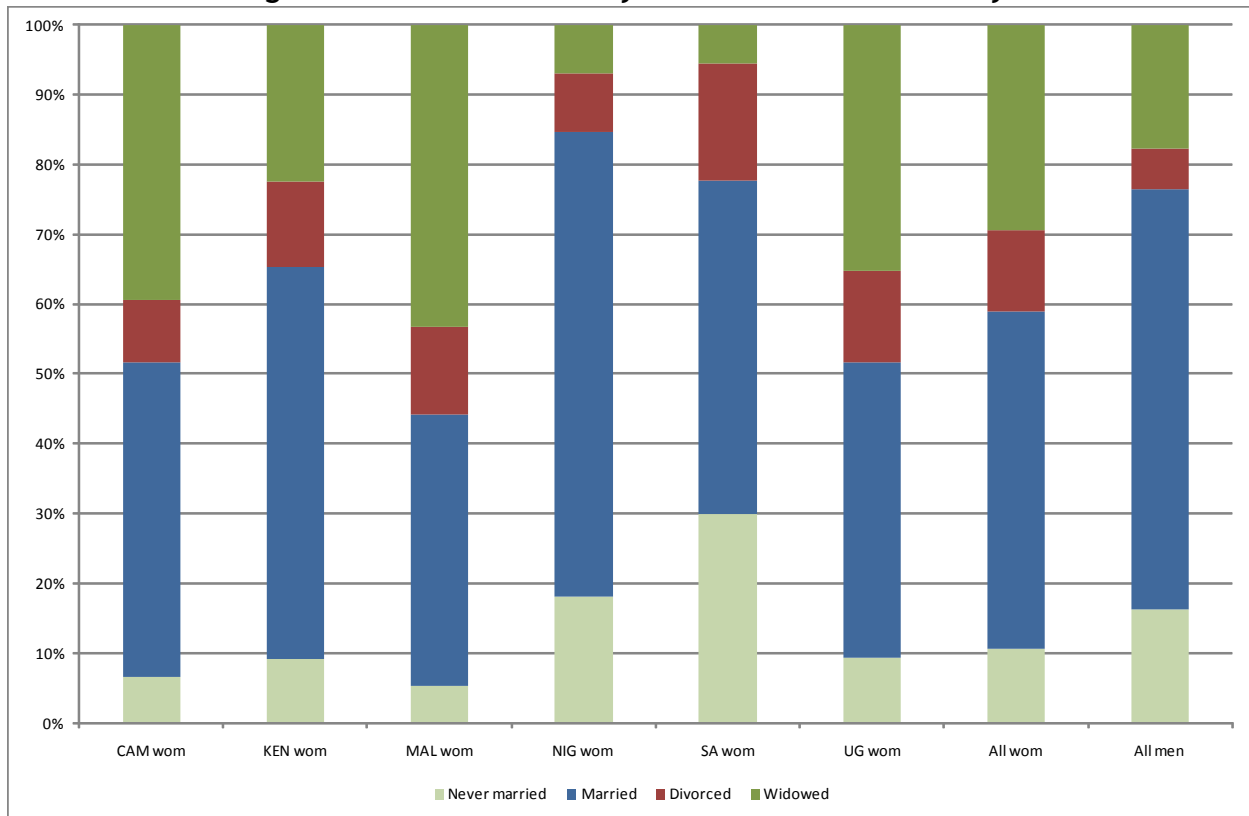


Figure 3 shows the marital status of women volunteers in each country, as well as of all the men volunteers. We do not present analysis of the men by country as the male samples are small for most countries.

Overall, 48% of the women volunteers and 60% of the men volunteers are married, while 29% of the women and 18% of the men are widowed. The relatively high percentage of widows and widowers probably reflects the fact that volunteers often say that they started doing this work after a loved one - who could have been their wife or husband - died.

The higher percentage of women widows reflects the fact that women tend to live longer than men and tend to marry men older than themselves, so there are usually more widows than widowers in the overall population.

The percentage of women widows is highest in Malawi, followed by Cameroon.

The percentage of never married women is highest in South Africa. This reflects the overall low rates of marriage in this country.

**Figure 4. Volunteers by education level and country**

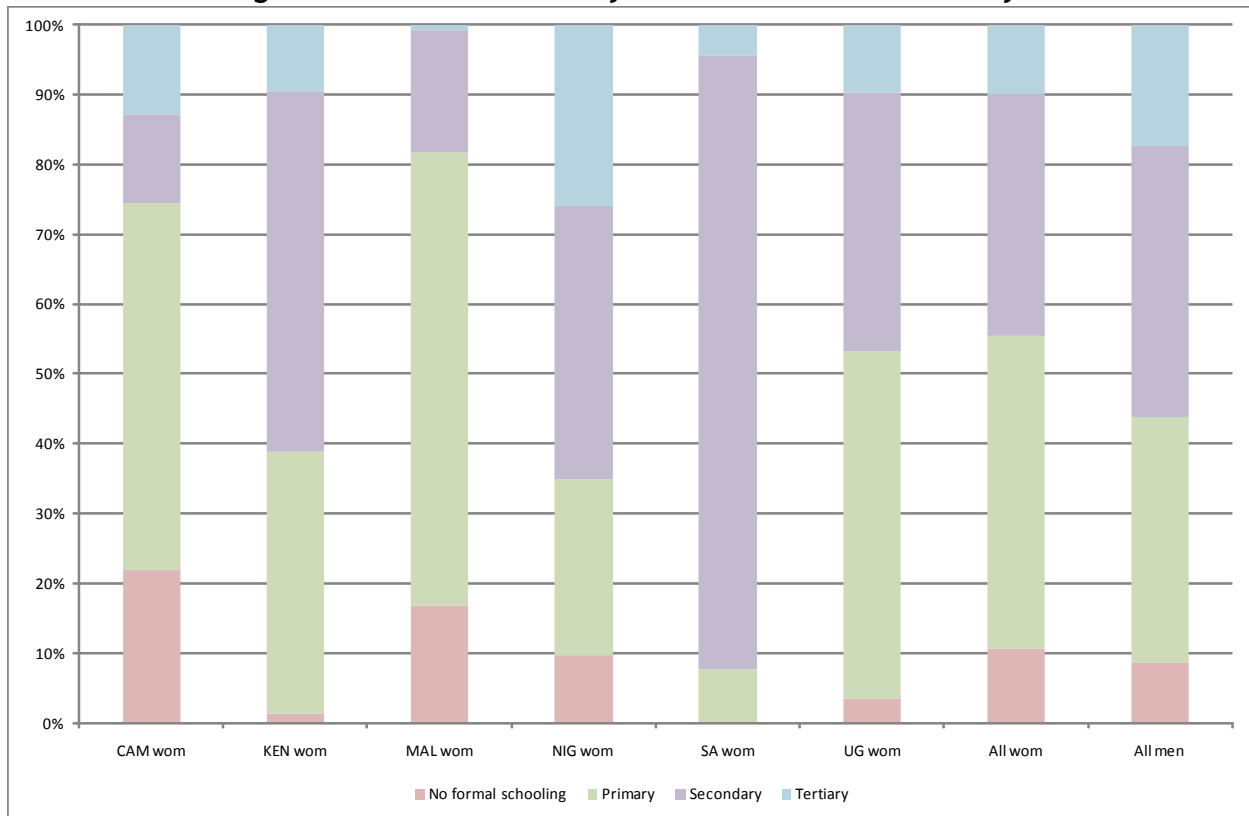


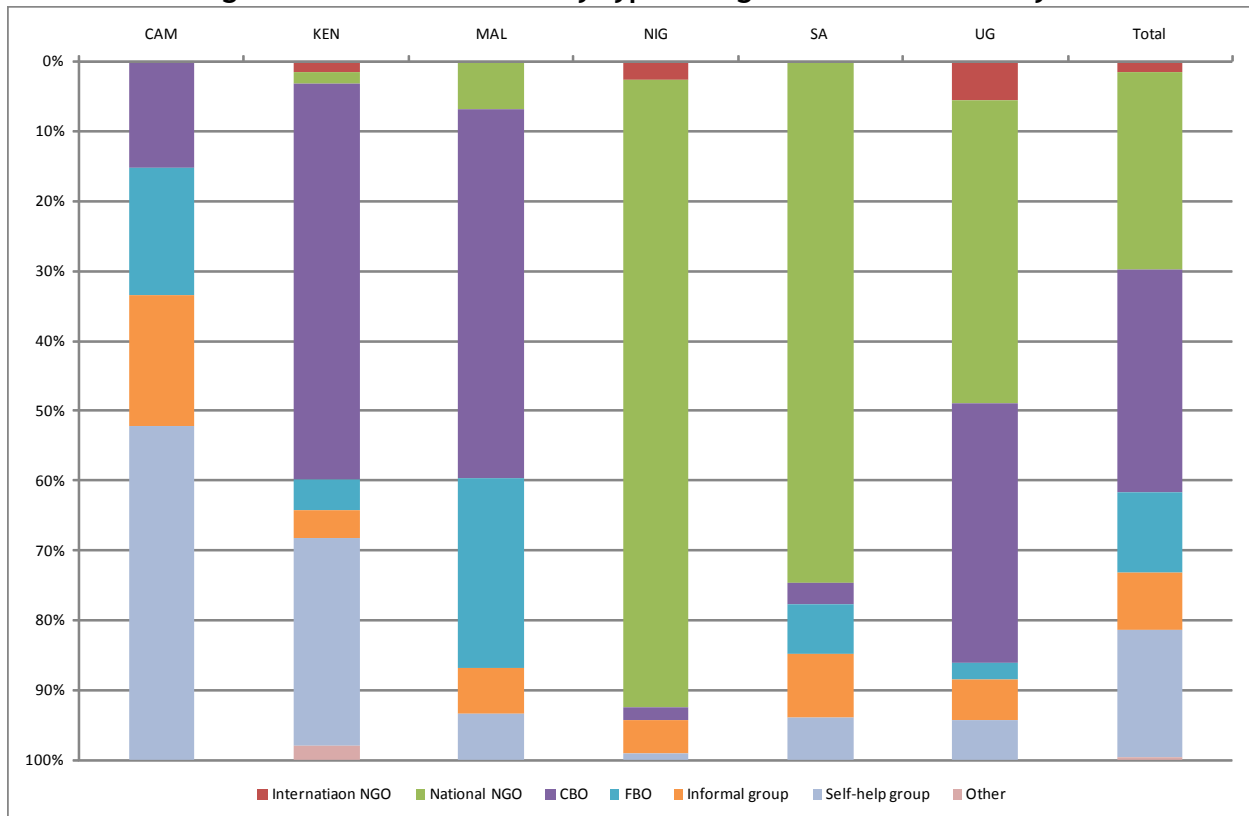
Figure 4 shows that about one-tenth of volunteers have no formal schooling. The percentage with no formal schooling is highest among Cameroon women volunteers, at 22%.

The largest grouping of volunteers has some or completed primary education, but no secondary education. 45% of women volunteers and 35% of men volunteers have this level of education. In Malawi, 65% of women volunteers have only primary education.

The next biggest grouping is those with some or completed secondary education. 35% of women and 39% of men have this level, and 88% of South African women volunteers are at this level of education.

Finally, 10% of women volunteers and 17% of men have some tertiary education. Over a quarter (26%) of Nigeria's women volunteers have tertiary education, but only 4% of South African women and 1% of Malawi's women.

**Figure 5. Volunteers by type of organisation and country**



We asked volunteers for the name of the main organisation or group with which they do volunteer work, as well as the type of organisation that this is.

Overall, about a third (32%) of volunteers said they work with a community-based organisation (CBO) and more than a quarter (28%) said that they work with a national or local non-governmental organisation (NGO). Self-help groups (18%) and faith-based organisations (FBOs, 12%) are also common.

Figure 5 shows noticeable differences in the spread of organisations across countries. Some of these differences may reflect differences in the way the different types are defined across countries.

More than half of the volunteers in Kenya and Malawi said that they work with CBOs, but only 2% in Nigeria. In contrast, 90% of Nigerian volunteers and 75% of South African volunteers said that they work with a national or local NGO.

Self-help groups are most common in Cameroon (48%) and Kenya (30%).

**Figure 6. Savings merry-go-rounds and income-generating projects by country**

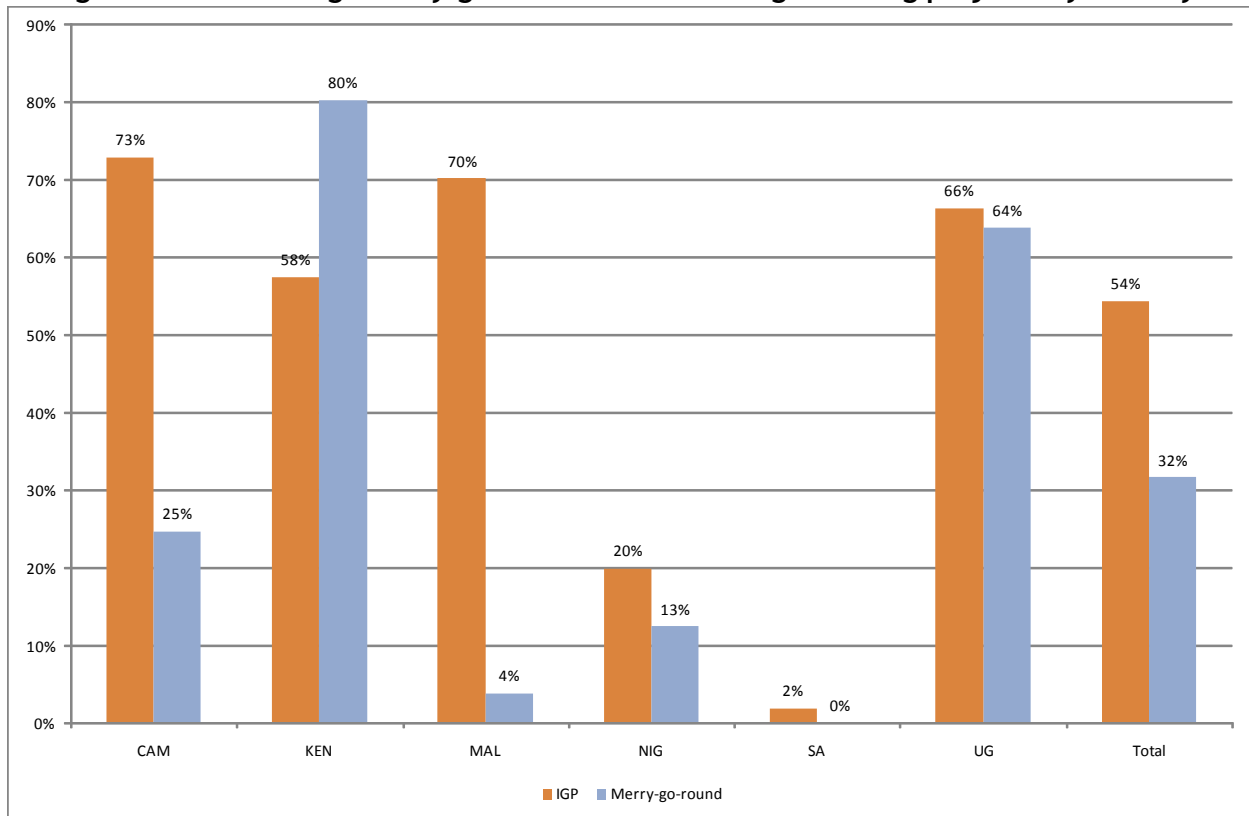
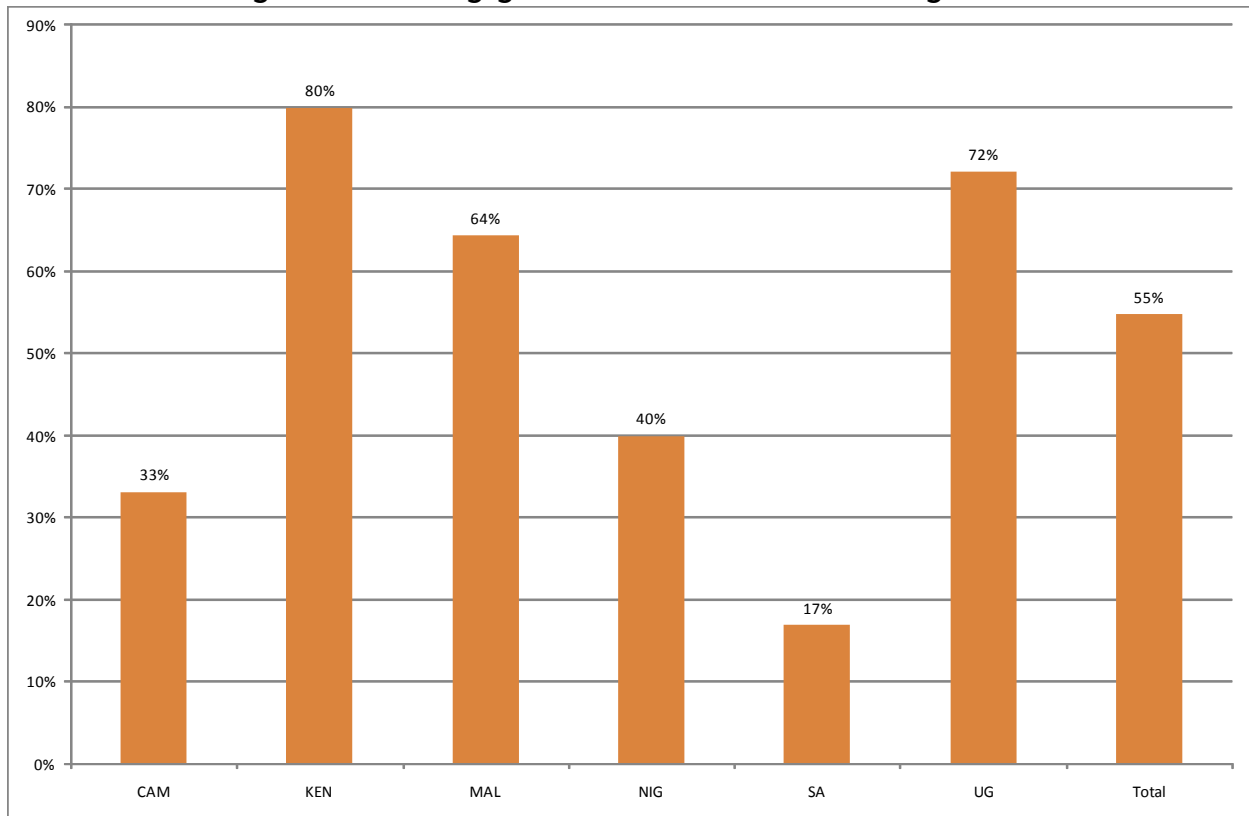


Figure 6 shows that, overall, 54% of the volunteers are members of savings merry-go-rounds and 32% are members of income-generating projects.

Income-generating projects are most common in Cameroon, Malawi and Uganda, but less common in Nigeria and South Africa.

Merry-go-rounds are most common in Kenya and Uganda, and least common in Nigeria and Malawi. In South Africa there are no volunteers who say that they belong to merry-go-rounds.

**Figure 7. Engagement in other income-earning work**



More than half (55%) of volunteers also do other work that earns them money. This percentage is the same for both women and men volunteers.

Engagement in other work is most common in Kenya, where 80% of volunteers also do other income-earning work, followed by Uganda (72%) and Malawi (64%).

Other work is least common in South Africa (17%).

At least 25% of those who described their other work are involved in some type of farming. At least a further 12% are involved in some sort of selling. About 2% are doing other health-related work in addition to their volunteer work.

**Figure 8. Volunteers who have received special training by country**

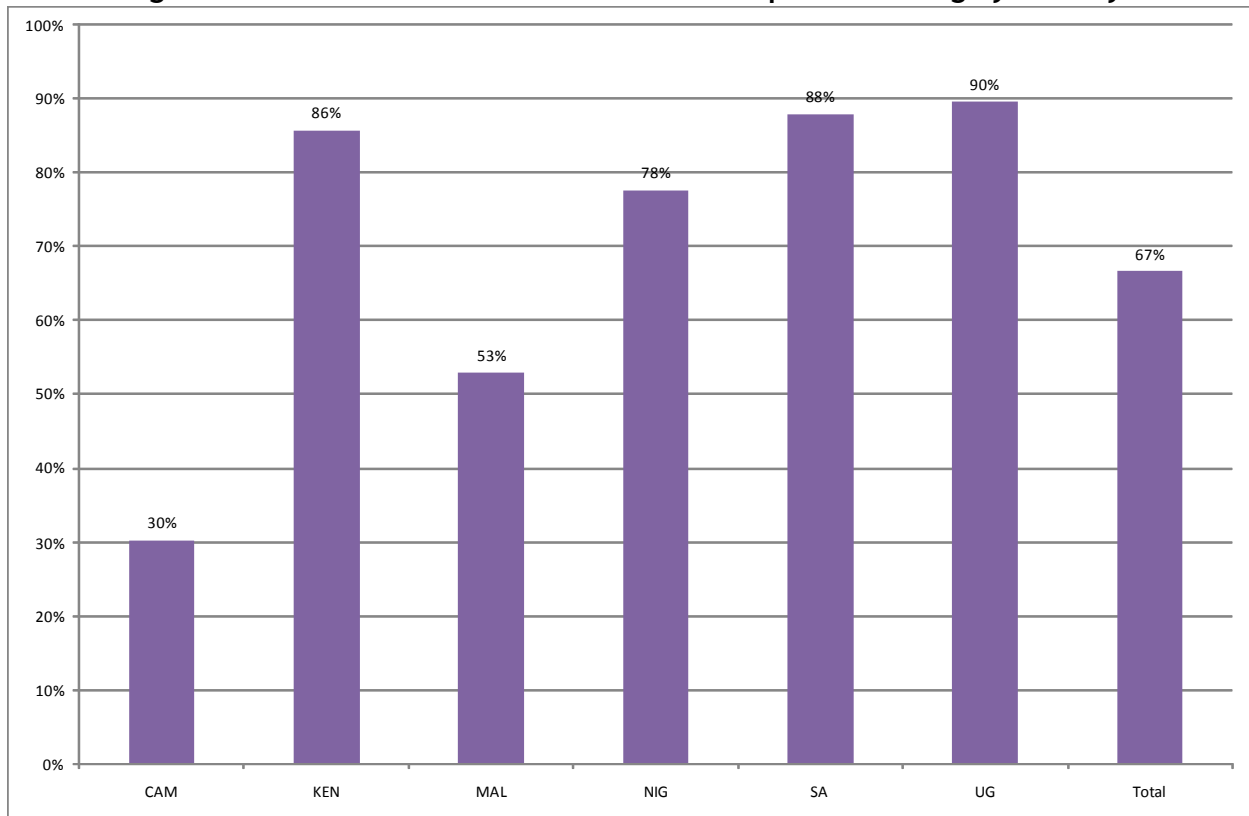


Figure 8 shows that two-thirds of the volunteers have received some special training related to the volunteer work. This leaves one-third who are doing the work without any special training.

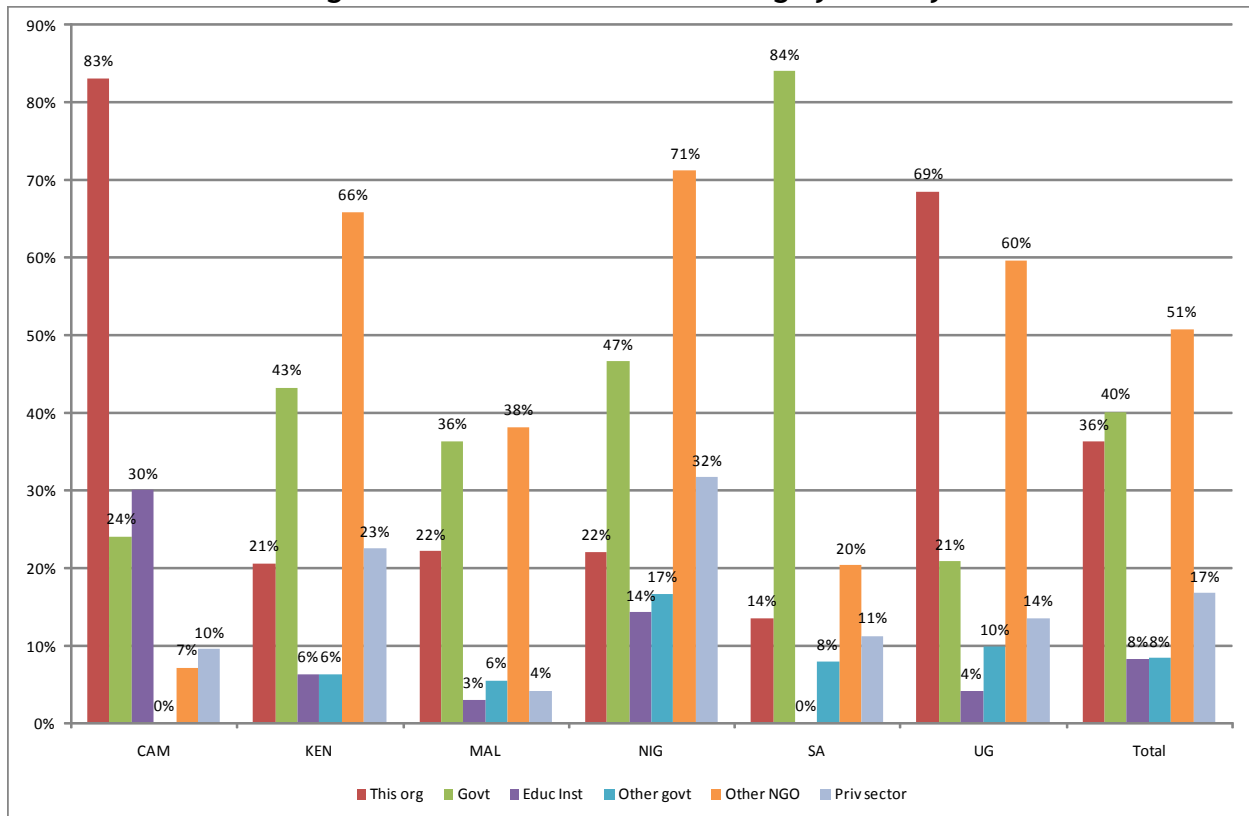
The percentage that have received such training ranges from a low of 30% in Cameroon to 86% or more in Kenya, South Africa and Uganda.

Of those who have received training, more than half (52%) received only once-off initial training before they started doing volunteer work. In contrast, 15% receive ongoing weekly training. In between are those who have been trained more than once, but receive training less regularly than once a week.

In Malawi, 94% of those who have received special training received only once-off initial training.

Cameroon has the highest percentage (46%), among those who have received training, of once-off weekly training. But, as noted above, only a small proportion of Cameroon volunteers have received any training.

**Figure 9. Providers of training by country**



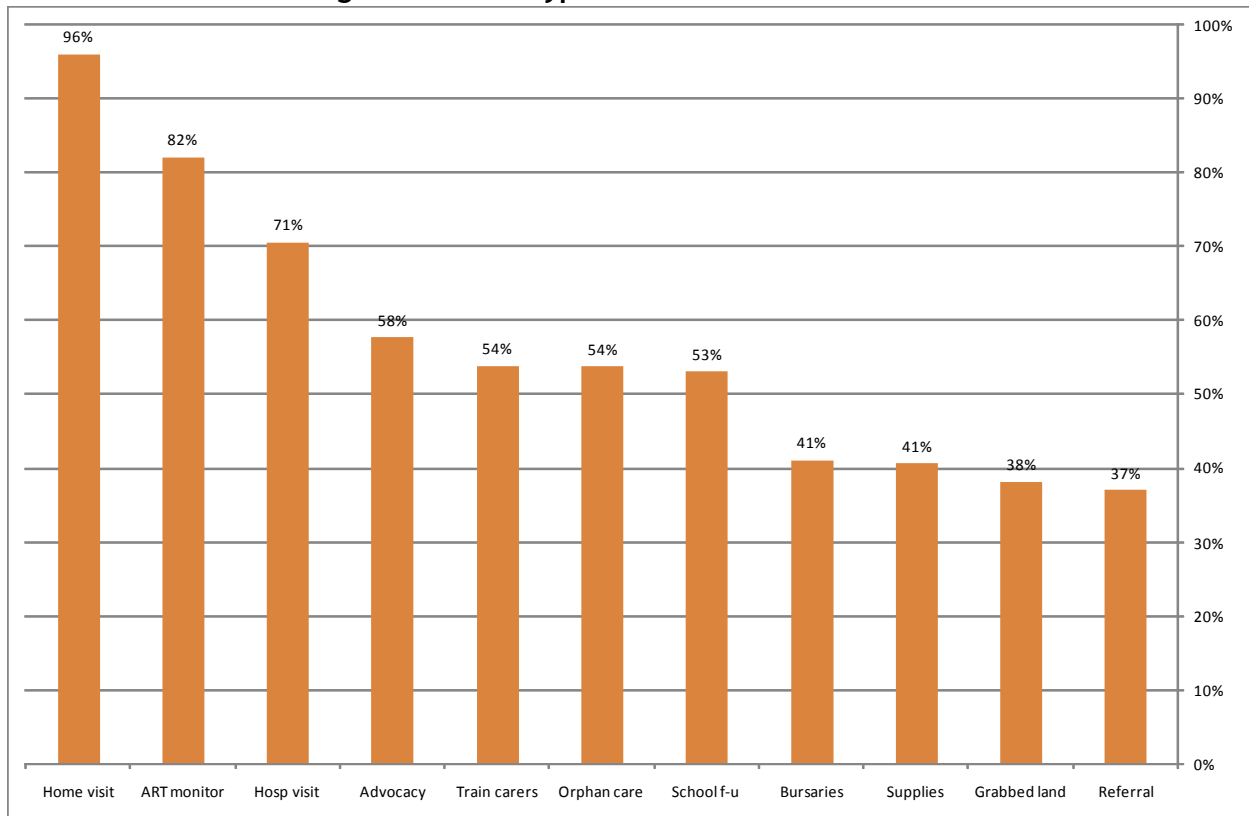
Over a third (36%) of all volunteers who were trained received some training from the organisation with which they volunteer. More than half (51%) received training from other NGOs, and 40% received training from the government health service.

Training by the organisation with which they volunteer is most common in Cameroon and least common in South Africa.

In complete contrast, training by the government health service was most common in South Africa, and least common in Cameroon.

Training from multiple sources is most common in Nigeria and least common in Malawi.

**Figure 10. Type of volunteer work done**



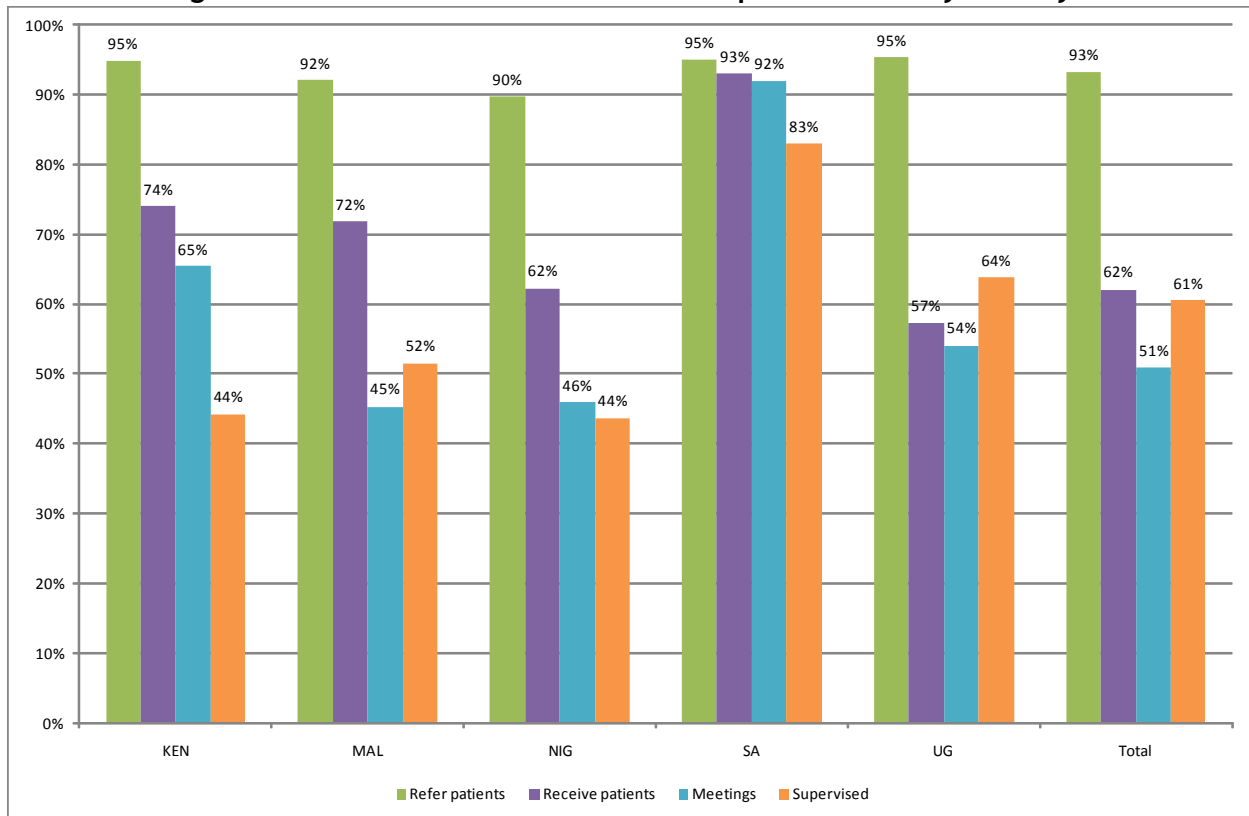
Volunteers do many different tasks. Almost all (96%) volunteers report that they undertake home visits, 82% do monitoring of anti-retrovirals and 74% visit patients in the clinic or hospital.

More than half of volunteers engage in advocacy in public forums, train household caregivers outside their homes, organise and mentor orphans who are not family members, and follow up on school performance of orphans.

Also common - although performed by less than half of carers - are the tasks of searching for bursaries and schools for orphans, distributing supplies from NGOs and government, pursuing grabbed land and properties for widows and orphans, and undertaking work for referral organisations.

Kenya and Malawi volunteer volunteers tend to report the widest range of tasks undertaken, while Nigeria's volunteers report a narrower range than in other countries. In particular, Nigeria's volunteers are less likely to report follow up on anti-retroviral therapy, perhaps because this therapy is less easily available in Nigeria.

**Figure 11. Collaboration with health professionals by country**



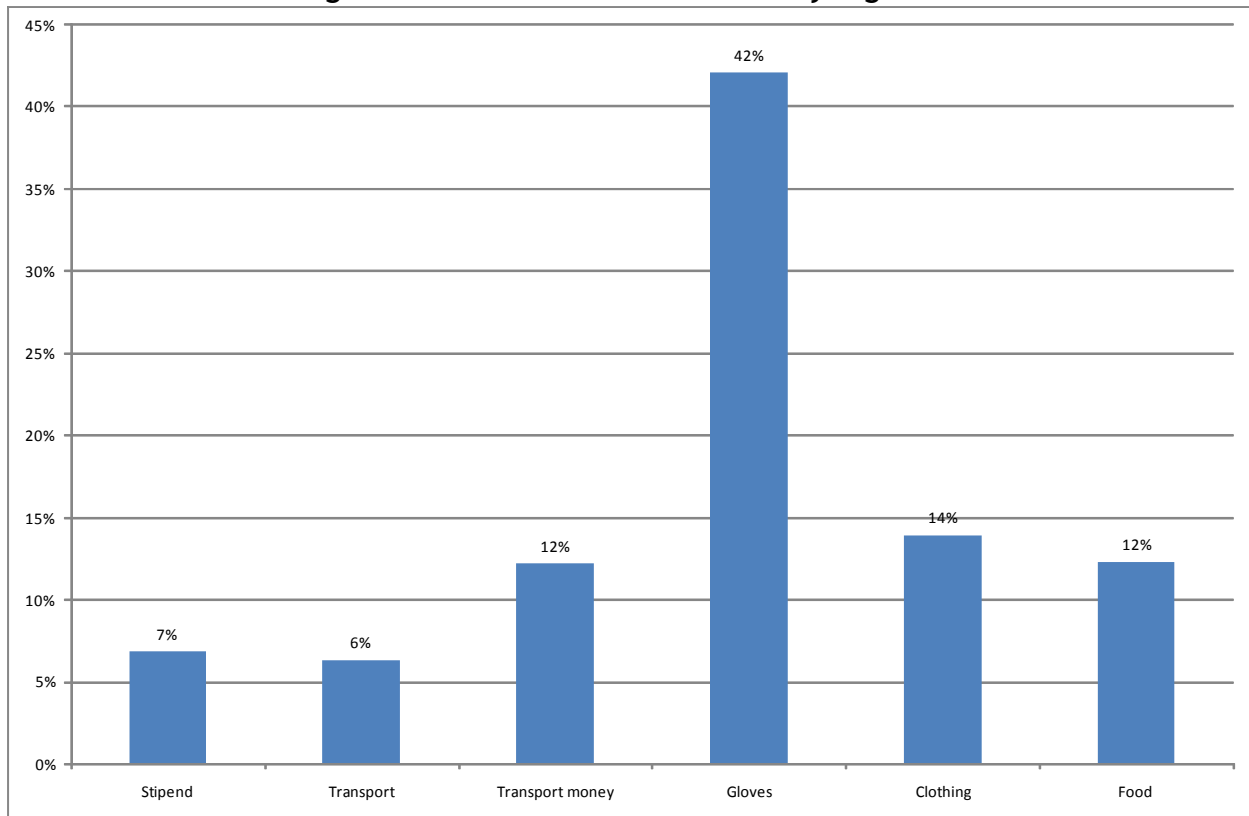
The overwhelming majority (93%) of volunteers refer patients to health professionals. Further, more than six in ten volunteers receive patients referred by health professionals and are supervised by health professionals.

Attendings meetings to strenghen referrals is less common, but is reported by more than half (51%) of the volunteers.

South Africa shows the strongest collaboration with health professionals.

In Malawi and Nigeria, fewer than half of the volunteers attend meetings to strengthen referrals.

**Figure 12. Costs for which money is given**



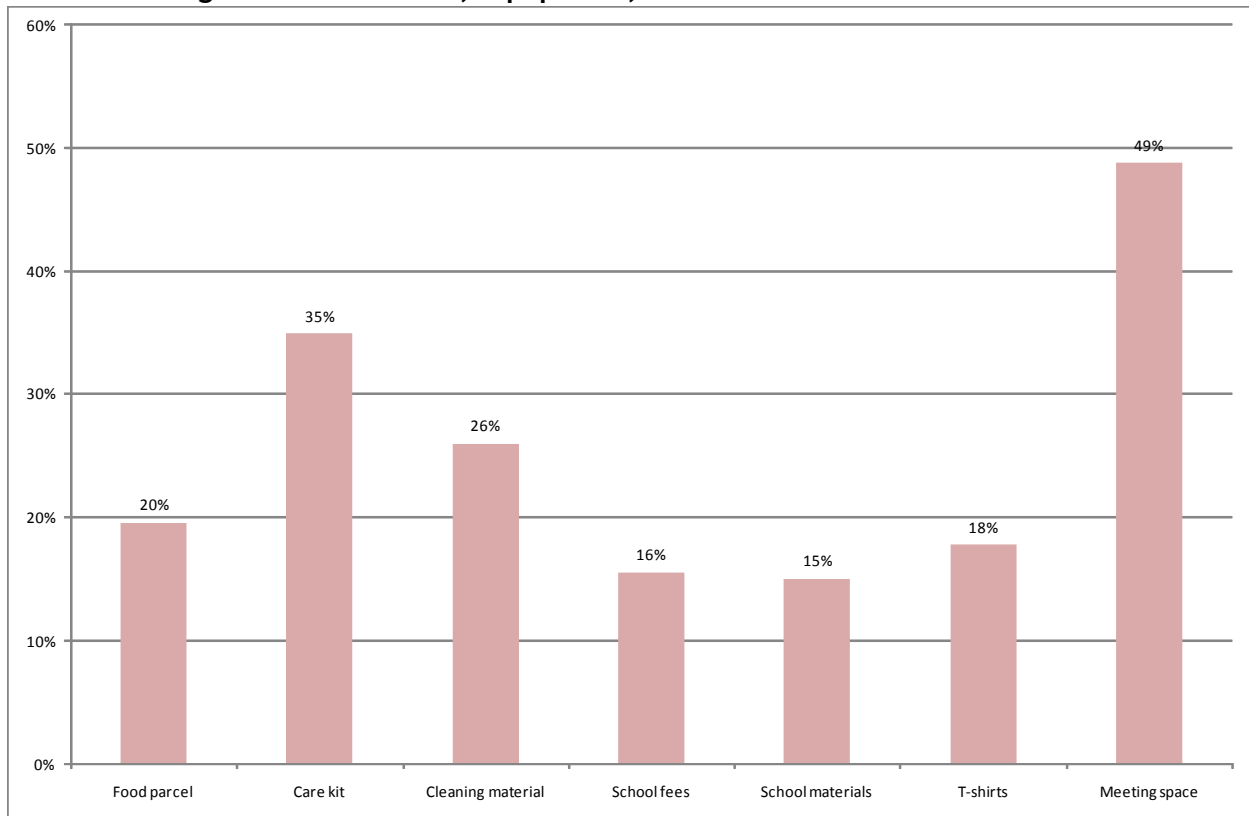
Only 7% of all volunteers are given a general stipend to help cover the time and money costs of the volunteer work. Ugandan and South African volunteers are most likely to receive general stipends. However, even in these countries only 20% and 19% respectively receive stipends.

Gloves are the item for which volunteers are most likely to report receiving money to help with costs. But even for gloves, only 41% of volunteers receive this assistance. South African volunteers are the most well-covered for this form of assistance, with 81% receiving it. In Cameroon only 3% of volunteers receive money for gloves.

Money for clothing and transport are received by 14% and 12% respectively of volunteers, while 10% of volunteers receive another form of assistance with transport costs, such as assistance with buying bicycles. Nigerian volunteers are the most likely to receive money for clothing and transport.

12% of volunteers receive money for food. Nigerian volunteers are again the most fortunate here, but even in Nigeria only 28% of volunteers receive this form of assistance.

**Figure 13. Tools, equipment, materials and other assistance**



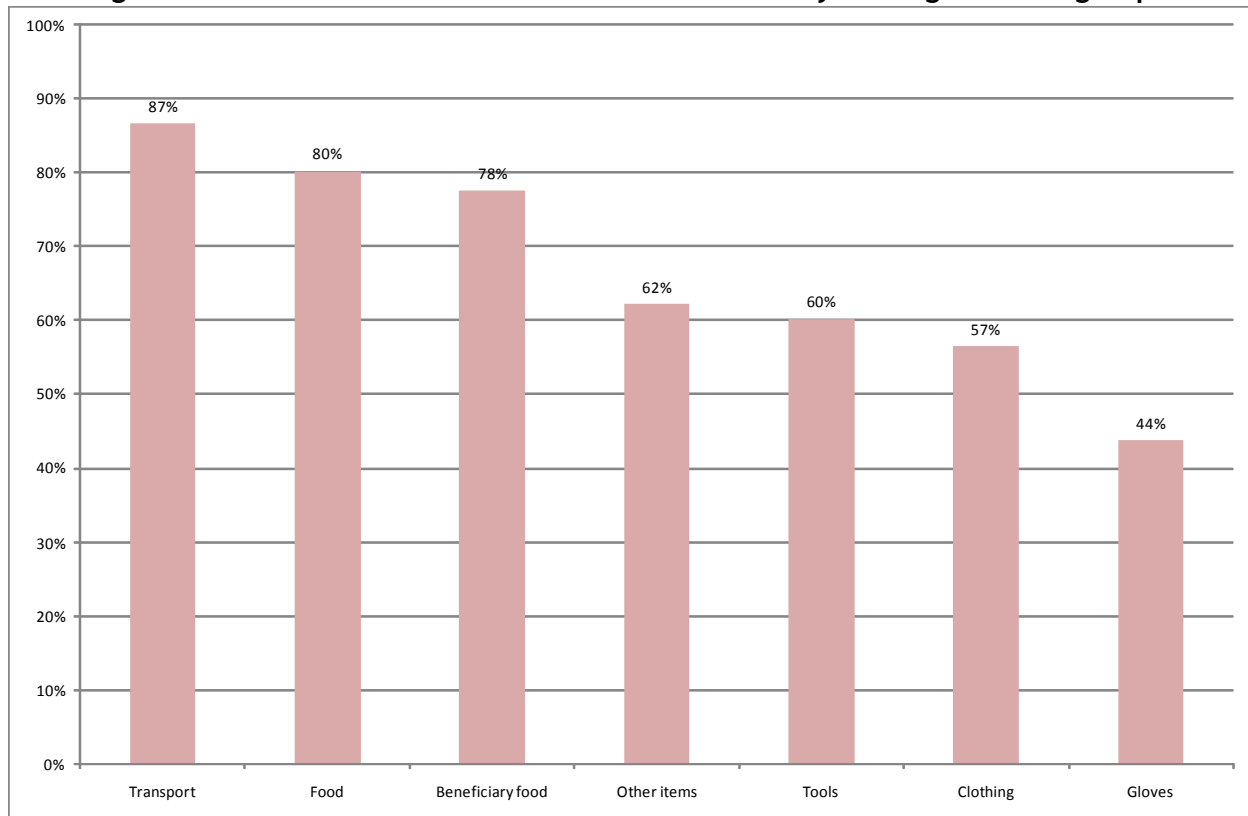
Nearly half of the volunteers report that they are provided with meeting space. But the extent to which this happens varies widely across countries - from 0% in Cameroon to 88% in Malawi and South Africa.

Other relatively common forms of assistance are provision of care kits and cleaning materials. However, even these are provided only to 35% and 26% of volunteers, while food parcels for beneficiary households are provided to only 20% of volunteers.

While 80% of Nigeria's volunteers are provided with care kits, no Cameroon volunteers and only 11% of South Africa's receive this form of assistance. Similarly, while 63% of Nigeria's volunteers are given cleaning materials, only 8% of South Africa's and 5% of Cameroon's are assisted in this way.

Only 15-16% of volunteers are provided with school fees and/or school materials for orphans and other vulnerable children (OVCs). This type of assistance is most common in Kenya and least common in Cameroon and Uganda.

**Figure 14. Costs incurred that are not covered by the organisation/group**



A large majority (87%) of volunteers incur transport costs in doing their volunteer work that are not covered by the organisation or group with which they work. Even in the country, Cameroon, where this is least common, 78% of volunteers report incurring this cost.

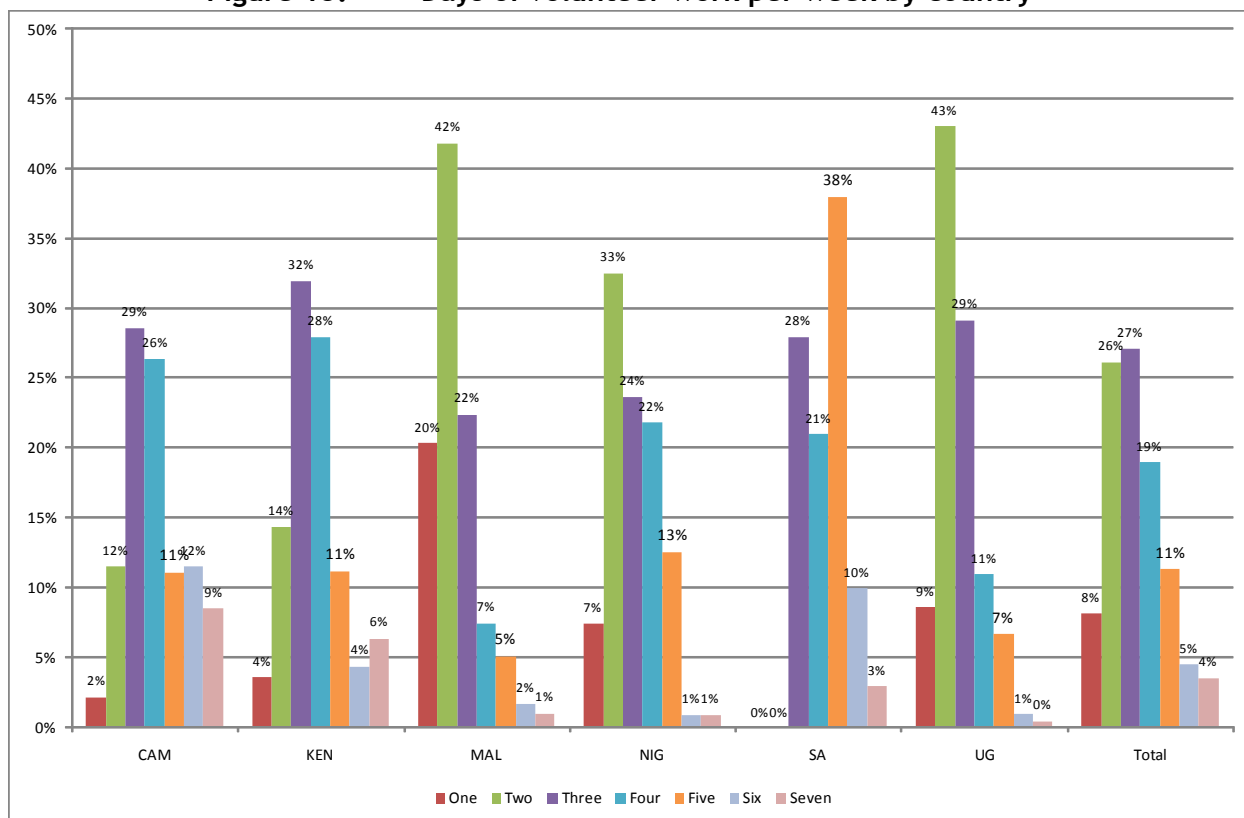
More than three-quarters of all volunteers also incur costs in respect of food for themselves while working and food bought for beneficiary households. Malawi's volunteers are most likely to report these types of costs.

62% of volunteers spend money buying other items for beneficiary households. In Malawi and South Africa over 80% of volunteers report such costs.

60% of volunteers report costs incurred for tools such as special lotions and care kits. South Africa's volunteers are most likely to report these costs. A similar pattern is found in respect of clothing items other than gloves.

Finally, 44% of volunteers spend money on gloves. Some of these volunteers also report receiving assistance with the cost of gloves, but presumably this assistance does not cover the full costs.

**Figure 15. Days of volunteer work per week by country**



More than half (53%) of volunteers did volunteer work on two or three of the seven days before they were interviewed. A further 39% worked more than three days over the past seven days. Four percent did volunteer work on every day of the previous week.

Only 11 volunteers did no volunteer work in the previous seven days.

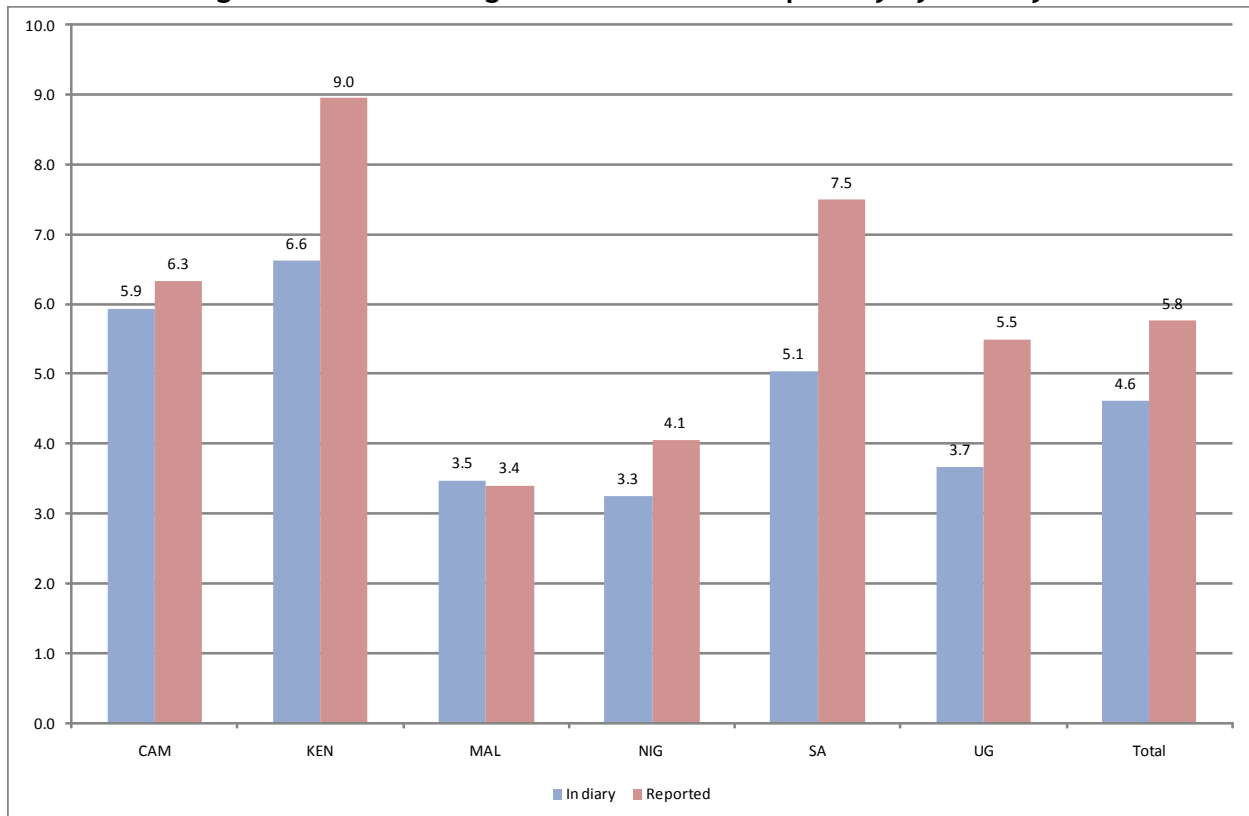
Volunteers in Cameroon are most likely to have worked six or seven days in the past week, while this is least likely for volunteers in Uganda.

Working a five-day week is most common in South Africa.

Volunteers report that they are responsible for between 1 and 150 households each. Those who give large numbers are often supervisors of other volunteers. The median number of households cared for per volunteers is four. (We use the median because a few large numbers will skew the mean, which is the other measure for “average”.)

Each volunteer has a median of three people who are on anti-retroviral therapy under their care and two who are ill and not on this therapy. And they have a median of four orphans and other vulnerable children under their care.

**Figure 16. Average hours volunteered per day by country**



Volunteers were asked in two ways about the number of hours spent volunteering per day. Firstly, they were asked the question: *“Over the last seven days, how many hours did you spend per day on average on volunteer work on the days you did this work?”*

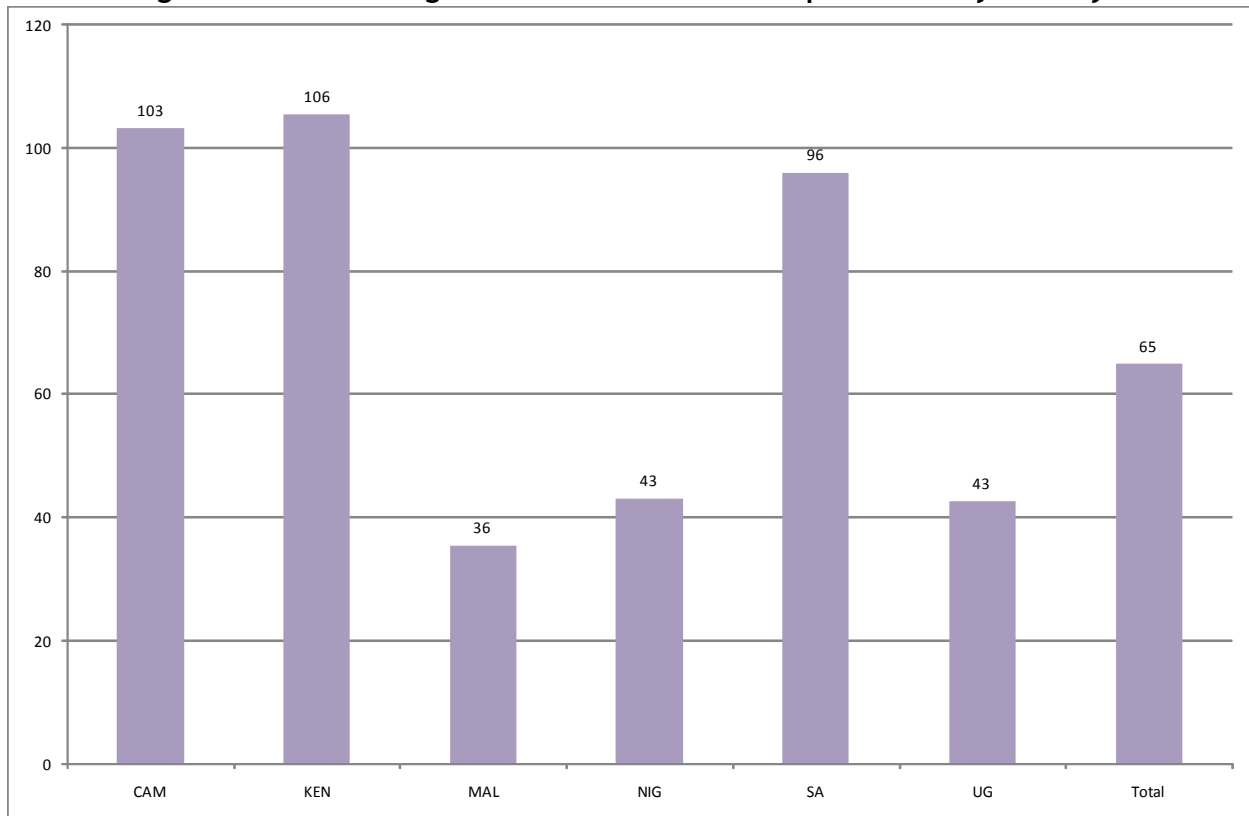
Secondly, they were asked to detail all the activities that they did on the last day that they did volunteer work, including both volunteering-related activities and other activities. They were asked to list activities done from the beginning to the end of the day, giving the beginning and end time for each activity. These activities were recorded in a diary by the interviewer. The research team afterwards calculated how much time in total was spent on volunteer work.

For both methods, time spent travelling in relation to volunteer work was included.

The simple question method gave an average of 5.8 hours per day across all countries, while the diary method gave an average of 4.6 hours. This matches international research which finds that the diary method usually gives a lower, but more accurate, estimate.

Figure 16 shows that Kenya’s volunteers record the longest average hours spent on volunteer work, while Malawi and Nigeria record shorter hours.

**Figure 17. Average hours of volunteer work per month by country**



If we multiply the average hours of volunteer work per day by the average number of days per week, we get the average number of volunteer hours per week. We can then multiply by 4.3 to get the average number of volunteer hours per month.

Figure 17 shows that the volunteers do an average of 69 hours of volunteer work per month. The average ranges from 36 hours per month in Malawi to 106 hours in Kenya.

Even in Malawi, the number of hours is close to a full week's work in many paid jobs in the formal sector. Yet, as we have seen, most volunteers do this work for no pay.

## Calculating the value of volunteer work

As noted in the introduction, the volunteers who were interviewed for this study did not include any who were on a long-term contract receiving a stipend, wage or salary. In some countries, some volunteers reported receiving a small stipend for their work. But in most cases they received no payment for the work.

Below we calculate the monetary value of the work done by taking a minimum wage that is paid in each country and multiplying it by the average number of hours worked per week by the volunteers who were interviewed in that country. This shows the minimum amount that government or the organisation with which the volunteer works would need to pay the volunteer if she or he was paid a wage. In some countries volunteers might decide that it is not realistic to demand a wage. But the calculated value of the work that is done can still be used in advocacy to show the value of the services that the volunteer delivers. This can then be used to advocate for other forms of assistance and support for the volunteers in return for both the services delivered and the “saving” that the volunteers are achieving for government and the organisations by working on an unpaid basis.

In **Kenya**, the minimum wage for nurses is KShs. 22,500 (US\$ 300) per month, and the normal hours of work per week, before overtime, are 40 hours per week. The volunteers work an average of 24.4 hours per week. So we can calculate that their work is worth  $24.4/40$  of the minimum wage for nurses, i.e. KShs. 13,704 per month.

Alternatively, we can use the overall minimum wage for government workers, which is KShs. 7,050 per month. Using this wage, we can say that the work of an average Kenya volunteer is worth KShs. 4,294 per month.

In **Malawi**, the minimum monthly wage for a health surveillance assistant is MK9,500 (US\$ 68) and such assistants are expected to work eight hours a day from Monday to Friday each week. The volunteers work an average of 8.2 hours per week. The value of their work can therefore be said to be MK1947.70 per month.

In **Nigeria**, the National Minimum Wage (Amendment) Act of 2000 set a minimum wage of N5,500 per month for both government and private sector employees. Standard hours of work are from 7h30 to 16h00, with an hour off for lunch. This gives 7.5 hours per day, and 37.5 hours for a standard five days' of work per week. The volunteers in Nigeria work an average of 10 hours per week. So we can calculate the work of an average Nigerian volunteer is worth  $10/37.5$  of the national minimum wage, i.e. N1,464 per month.

In **South Africa**, the minimum hourly wage for domestic workers who work 27 or fewer ordinary hours per week is R8.12 (US\$1). The volunteers in South Africa work an average of 22.2 hours per week. This gives a value for the work of a volunteer of R780.44 per month.

In **Uganda**, the Employment Act of 2006 provides for an eight-hour working day and six-day working week. Nursing assistants currently constitute the lowest cadre of health worker, although the Ugandan Ministry of Health tends to phase them out over time and is not training new assistants. Nursing assistants earn a gross monthly salary of US\$199,000. The volunteers in Uganda work an average of 9.9 hours per week. This gives a value for the work of a volunteer of US\$40,977 per month.

## In summary

The survey confirmed the dominance of women among volunteers in that across all countries more two-thirds of volunteers were women. More than two-thirds of all volunteers were also between 30 and 49 years of age, a stage in the life-cycle when a woman usually has heavy responsibilities in terms of her children and family. Adding to the burden, more than half (55%) of both male and female volunteers also did income-earning work.

One third of the volunteers had not received any special training related to the volunteer work. Of those who had received training, more than half (52%) received only once-off initial training before they started doing volunteer work.

Almost all (96%) volunteers reported that they undertook home visits, 82% did monitoring of anti-retrovirals and 74% visited patients in the clinic or hospital. But volunteers also did a wide range of other tasks. Other common tasks included engaging in advocacy in public forums, training household caregivers outside their homes, organising and mentoring orphans who are not family members, and following up on school performance of orphans.

Linkages exist between the volunteers and the countries' health systems in that the overwhelming majority (93%) of volunteers reported referring patients to health professionals. Further, more than six in ten volunteers received patients referred by health professionals and were supervised by health professionals.

Gloves were the item for which volunteers were most likely to report receiving money to help with costs, but even for gloves, only 41% of volunteers received this assistance. And some who received gloves also reported having to spend their own money on gloves.

Care kits and cleaning materials are essential tools for volunteers. However, only 35% and 26% respectively of volunteers reported receiving these tools. A large majority (87%) of volunteers reported incurring transport costs that were not covered by the organisation or group with which they worked.

Volunteers were asked in two ways about the number of hours spent volunteering per day. Firstly, they were asked the question: *“Over the last seven days, how many hours did you spend per day on average on volunteer work on the days you did this work?”* Secondly, they were asked to detail all the activities that they did on the last day that they did volunteer work, including both volunteering-related activities and other activities, and the time spent on volunteering was calculated from this “diary”.

The simple question method gave an average of 5.8 hours per day across all countries, while the diary method gave an average of 4.6 hours. This matches international research which finds that the diary method usually gives a lower, but more accurate, estimate.

Volunteers were also asked how many days on average they worked per week. Overall, the volunteers did an average of 69 hours of volunteer work per month. The average ranged from 36 hours per month in Malawi to 106 hours in Kenya. Even in Malawi, the number of hours is close to a full week's work in many paid jobs in the formal sector. Yet most of these workers work for no pay, while they incur costs in doing the work.

The averages reported above conceal wide variations between countries. This provides the possibility for volunteers in countries where conditions are especially bad to use the example of other countries to advocate for improvement. The calculations on the monetary value of the unpaid volunteer work, combined with information about the other costs borne by volunteers and about the wide range of services delivered by them, can be used in advocating for better support to be provided for volunteers.