**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Introduction**

In Kenya, volunteerism plays a pivotal role in driving humanitarian and development initiatives. Organizations such as the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), community-based groups, and international non-profits rely heavily on volunteers to execute programs that address pressing issues like disaster response, healthcare, and community development. Their efforts are invaluable in creating a positive impact on communities and advancing organizational missions (Wilson, 2023; Garcia & Lee, 2022).

However, managing volunteers effectively requires seamless coordination of tasks, schedules, and communication. The use of methods such as paper-based systems and manual tracking often leads to inefficiencies, delays, and mismanagement (Smith & Johnson, 2019). These challenges become even more pronounced during crises or emergencies, where rapid and organized responses are essential but often hindered by the limitations of traditional management approaches (Thompson, 2021; Brown et al., 2020).

**1.2 Background information**

The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) established in 1965 as a humanitarian organization dedicated to alleviating human suffering and supporting community resilience. As an auxiliary to the government, KRCS operates in disaster response, health services, and community development. Over the years, it has become one of the most prominent humanitarian organizations in Kenya, with a vast network of branches and thousands of volunteers across the country.

KRCS’s operations rely heavily on volunteers, who play critical roles in executing programs and responding to emergencies. From providing medical assistance to coordinating disaster relief efforts, these volunteers form the backbone of the organization’s success. Historically, KRCS managed its volunteers using methods including paper-based records, spreadsheets, and phone calls. While effective in the organization’s early years, these methods have struggled to keep pace with the increasing scale and complexity of its operations.Key events, such as the 2007-2008 post-election violence, highlighted the limitations of KRCS’s manual volunteer coordination. The surge in demand for urgent responses exposed inefficiencies in communication, resource allocation, and volunteer tracking. As KRCS continues to grow, the need for streamlined processes to manage its expanding volunteer base has become increasingly evident.

**1.3 Problem statement**

Volunteerism is essential to humanitarian and development efforts in Kenya, with organizations like the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) heavily relying on volunteers. However, use of management methods such as paper-based systems and manual tracking lead to inefficiencies, delays, and errors, particularly during emergencies when rapid coordination is crucial. These challenges result in resource mismanagement, communication breakdowns, and reduced volunteer satisfaction and engagement. Additionally, the absence of streamlined systems hampers the ability to track contributions and evaluate the impact of volunteer programs, limiting organizational efficiency and effectiveness in addressing community needs

**1.4 Proposed solution**

To address inefficiencies highlighted in the problem statement this system will streamline volunteer registration, task allocation, scheduling, and communication through an integrated platform. It will feature automated tracking of volunteer hours, real-time updates, and robust reporting tools to enhance decision-making and program evaluation. By improving communication and reducing administrative burdens, the solution will increase volunteer satisfaction, optimize resource utilization, and enable organizations to respond more effectively during emergencies. This approach ensures efficient management of volunteer programs, ultimately enhancing their impact on communities.

**1.5 General objective**

The general objective of this project is to develop and implement a centralized volunteer coordination system that enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of managing volunteer programs in humanitarian and development organizations in Kenya.

**1.6 Specific objectives**

1. To develop an efficient scheduling system that optimizes volunteer time and resources.
2. To enable volunteers to create and maintain profiles, including their skills, interests, and availability
3. To investigate the challenges faced by organizations in managing volunteers and identify key areas for improvement.
4. To develop a centralized system for volunteer registration, profile management, task allocation, and communication.
5. To analyse the effectiveness of automated tracking and reporting tools in assessing volunteer program impact.

**1.7 Project justification**

The proposed system aims to streamline volunteer management by centralizing the creation, scheduling, and management of events on a single platform. It will automate key processes, reducing the time and errors associated with manual coordination. Additionally, the system is designed to improve volunteer engagement through a user-friendly interface and easy communication update.

**1.8 Project risk**

The proposed system faces several risks such as security and data privacy and by implementing secure authentication, role-based access controls, and data encryption to prevent unauthorized access. Inadequate user adoption is also a risk and to to mitigate the risk of inadequate user adoption, user training sessions and clear documentation will be provided, along with a user-friendly, intuitive interface. To manage scope creep, project requirements will be clearly defined.

**1.9 Proposed budget**

The project budget outlines the financial requirements for implementing the management system covering hardware, software, and human resources. Budget for the research include:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Category | Item | Cost estimate in Ksh |
| Laptop | Payment processing software | 30,000 |
| Hardcopy | Printing cost | 500 |
| Internet and research cost | Wi-Fi | 1500 |
| Transport to research areas | Transportation cost | 1000 |
|  |  |  |
|  | **TOTAL** | **33,000** |

**1.9.1 Project schedule**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Task | Start date | End date |
| Problem identification and requirements gatherings | 6/1/2024 | 7/21/2024 |
| Project initiation | 7/21/2024 | 9/9/2024 |
| Requirement analysis | 9/9/2024 | 10/29/2024 |
| System development | 10/29/2024 | 12/18/2024 |
| System testing and implementation | 12/18/2024 | 2/6/2025 |
| System deployment | 2/6/2025 | 3/28/2025 |
| System monitoring and maintenance | 3/28/2025 | 3/8/2025 |

1.9.2 Project schedule and Gantt chart