



In FACT: UN Volunteers and the Millennium Development Goals

MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Target: to halve the number of people who suffer from hunger and whose income is less than one dollar a day

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will require the ingenuity, solidarity, and creativity of millions of ordinary people through voluntary action. Efforts on the part of national governments, supported by the international community, can only complement what ultimately will depend on the full involvement of people all over the world. Six billion people have something to contribute. Recognizing this fact is the first step on the road towards harnessing this vast resource in a global effort to meet the MDG targets.

In the developing world, an estimated 1.2 billion people survive on less than US\$1 a day, 800 million are under-nourished and 153 million children under age five are underweight. Creating opportunities for all members of a community to influence and contribute to their own development process is central to activities relating to the reduction of poverty and the betterment of the human condition. Working primarily at community level with a range of development partners, the UN Volunteers (UNV) programme focuses on activities aimed at strengthening local capacity, fostering ownership and participation, and building on existing forms of voluntary action as a catalyst for social and economic development – all key components for people-centered and people-driven development.

UNV's work in advocating volunteerism focuses on the promotion, recognition, facilitation and networking of volunteer action, including:

Through individual volunteers, the UN Volunteers programme

- Extends technical support to public institutions in poverty mapping and analysis;
- Assists in the organization and coordination of hunger prevention and mitigation plans;
- Provides technical assistance aimed at enhancing local productive systems and income-generating activities, such as household agriculture, informal sector and rural off-farm activities;
- Trains farmers to use the Internet and other information and telecommunications technology (ICT), accessing weather forecasts, commodity prices for crops and agricultural by-products and to market their own produce.

Through volunteer-involving organizations (VIOS), the UN Volunteers programme

- Enables community groups to prioritize needs and engage in development initiatives;
- Encourages and supports community-based organizations (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to become providers of development resources such as microfinance and extension services, especially in remote areas.

United Nations Volunteers

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Through volunteer networks, the UN Volunteers programme

- Empowers local groups, such as associations or cooperatives of farmers, fishermen and cattlemen, to share good practices on production methods, natural resource management and disease control;
- Promotes field visits, documentation, through the sharing of experiences and supports local initiatives taken in the fight against poverty and hunger.

UNV is the UN organization that supports the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals through the promotion of volunteerism, including the mobilization of volunteers. To this end, UNV provides the opportunity each year for more than 7,000 women and men - 75 per cent coming from developing countries - to support peace, relief and development initiatives in some 140 countries. In addition, it engages thousands of other individuals in the work of the United Nations through www.onlinevolunteering.org, and manages the WorldVolunteerWeb.org, a portal that serves as a knowledge resource base on volunteerism worldwide.

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