

**UN****Volunteers**

## **In FACT:**

### **UN Volunteers and the Millennium Development Goals**

#### **MDG 5: Improve maternal health**

##### **Target: to reduce by the rate of maternal mortality by three-quarters**

*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.*

Globally, more than 500,000 women die in pregnancy or childbirth annually. In the developing world, the risk of dying in childbirth is one in 48, even though virtually all countries now have safe motherhood programmes. Working primarily at local level with a range of development partners, the UN Volunteers (UNV) programme supports activities aimed at the successful promotion of public health care policy, strengthening institutional capacity for effective service delivery, fostering community participation and ownership, and raising awareness on critical health issues.

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**

- Expands the outreach of medical care using innovative approaches such as mobile medical units;
- Supports development partners in public awareness campaigns;
- Fills vital human resource gaps such as having a physician attend during child birth;
- Mobilizes local human resources in response to national public health issues;
- Trains local practitioners to use the Internet and other information and communications technology (ICT) for the timely distribution of information regarding outbreaks and treatment alternatives;
- Trains local health care givers to raise effectiveness in service delivery.

##### **Through volunteer-involving organizations (VIOs), the UN Volunteers programme**

- Helps set up local health committees to promote village health centres and pharmacies;
- Supports community initiatives critical for health improvements;
- Mobilizes volunteer support for health campaigns in such fields as immunization;
- Furthers pre and post partum examinations by medical professionals including midwives.

##### **Through volunteer networks, the UN Volunteers programme**

- Promotes public health awareness through the networks of VIOs;
- Supports networks of people with the aim of sharing;
- Assists in creating health-related hotlines through VIO networks;

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UN Volunteers is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



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- Lobbies national and regional governments to implement new legislation to sufficiently finance, staff, and equip medical treatment centres.

*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](http://www.onlinevolunteering.org), and manages the [WorldVolunteerWeb.org](http://WorldVolunteerWeb.org), a portal that serves as a knowledge resource base on volunteerism worldwide.*

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