



In FACT: UN Volunteers and Governance

Volunteerism is an important component of effective governance and successful social and economic development. Through the work of UN agencies and governments, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme supports decentralization processes that promote participatory local governance and the empowerment of communities by engaging in a wide range of good governance projects.

UN Volunteers contribute to local-level planning and management capacity building, enhance participation of local people and increase access to information and networking. They place particular emphasis on local empowerment by facilitating community engagement, building the capacity of governments at the municipal, district and provincial levels, and strengthening civil society through support to local organizations and targeted groups such as women and youth.

In Albania, UN Volunteers facilitate dialogue among governments and development actors, extend technological support to governments at the municipal and regional levels and establish regional human resource development centres to enhance the skills of administrative personnel. They also assist local municipalities with participatory planning and management and help community-based organizations (CBOs) and volunteer groups to mobilize financial resources for social infrastructure projects, such as the construction and rehabilitation of roads and first aid posts.

In the Gambia, UN Volunteers work with local governments and communities to support the decentralization process and improve public services. UNV social planners and technicians provide training and assistance to CBOs and government personnel in community administration and financial management and support the development of legislation to promote a decentralized local government system. At the community level, UN Volunteers facilitate the establishment of village development committees, conduct baseline surveys as inputs for local government development plans, identify community needs and implement development activities. They are engaged in civic education campaigns on good governance practices and policies, gender sensitivity and youth engagement to heighten awareness and involvement.

In Ghana, UNV is working to boost taxpayer confidence in authorities and revenue collection at the Tema Municipal Assembly (TMA). By creating a forum for citizens to raise their concerns and by bringing merchants, traders and the TMA together, UN Volunteers are helping build trust in people to honour their tax obligations. Part of a wider UNDP and UN-HABITAT approach to reverse low trends in revenue collection, the results to date have been encouraging. Merchants enjoy better security and sanitation at markets and now have a channel - the Civic Action Plan Implementation Committee – to take forward issues. At the same time, the TMA reports a net increase in its revenue generation thus enabling it to make further improvements.

In Indonesia, UN Volunteers and CBOs work together in governance processes and urban development by enhancing managerial and mobilization capacities of CBO personnel and facilitating interaction with governments, parliaments, councils and the media. They also establish volunteer centres to promote public interest in voluntary action and good governance practices.

Based in Bonn, Germany, UNV is the UN organization that supports sustainable human development globally through the promotion of volunteerism, including the mobilization of volunteers. As a part of its activities, each year, UNV provides the opportunity for over 7000 skilled and experienced professionals, 70 percent coming from developing countries, to support peace, relief and development initiatives in some 150 countries. In addition, it engages thousands of other individuals in the work of the United Nations through www.onlinevolunteering.org, and manages the WorldVolunteerWeb, a global volunteering portal that serves as a knowledge resource base for campaigning, advocacy, information dissemination and networking.

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