

1 ACCESS TO SERVICES AND SERVICE DELIVERY

2 INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION

3 COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION THROUGH VOLUNTARY ACTION

This area of contribution focuses on enabling disadvantaged groups and communities to have wider access to services and enhancing the delivery of such services. From the local community perspective, this entails strengthening the functioning of volunteer involving organizations, including the way they represent the interests of local stakeholders; improving dissemination of information to communities on available services; and encouraging the sharing of knowledge within and between communities. For service providers, it includes heightening the understanding of local needs and effective delivery processes as well as facilitating coordination between institutions. UNV works with target groups to better articulate their demand for services and with service providers to ensure they understand local needs and are able to integrate them into the programming of service delivery.

••• A first example of access to and delivery of services comes from Ethiopia. As part of a decentralized federation, the country's regions faced key challenges in generating and managing their development resources. In partnership with the central government, more than 100 Ethiopian UNV volunteers contributed to enhancing aid coordination and financial management, involving communities in development planning and implementation, and improving monitoring and evaluation of progress towards achieving the MDGs. The UNV volunteers also designed systems to improve access to information, including the creation of an e-government platform with key social and economic data, as well as an Internet-based network linking 200 high schools for interactive communication and learning.

••• In Burkina Faso, a UNV-supported project on poverty reduction among youth expanded in 2005 to include the entire Hauts-Bassin region. The project, known by its French acronym REPAJE, provided underprivileged youth – mainly street children and orphans – with skills training and self-esteem counselling to better their chances for reintegration into society. It also encouraged self-sufficiency through the sponsorship of small grants to start micro-projects. Counselling and career orientation centres created by REPAJE welcomed nearly 1,500 people, offering assistance in securing on-the-job training and helping school dropouts return to class to complete their studies. REPAJE also facilitated better coordination among civil society organizations and public structures working with and for youth as well as established a network of volunteer communicators to support awareness-raising campaigns on youth and volunteerism. The project's next

aim is to mobilize the trained youth as volunteers to share their skills with their peers. UNV is also working with the government to establish a national volunteer programme that will engage the country's educated young people in building capacities in prioritized development sectors.

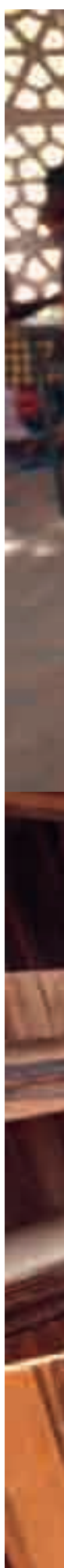
••• In neighbouring Niger, the enhancement of local service delivery has had positive results. Local officials in Mayahi District trained by UNV volunteers in budgeting and financing achieved a 30 per cent increase in tax revenue. Across the country, some 1,000 local officials received similar training, which helped improve tax revenue collection and through that financed better-quality local services.

••• A successful example of the involvement of young people in local poverty reduction initiatives comes from Bolivia. As part of the country's national strategy to fight poverty, UNV assisted in the development of a university volunteer programme to mobilize 1,100 students, half of them women, to support 175 municipalities in implementing poverty reduction strategies. Student volunteers helped one municipality develop its first comprehensive database of rural cooperatives, which contributed to more targeted policy planning and services. UNV also supported the government in developing a national law on volunteering that provided the necessary recognition and support to continue volunteerism's role in the country's development. UNV worked with Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Guatemala to develop similar volunteering programmes.

••• UNV's support to the delivery of emergency services during humanitarian crises was well recognized in 2005. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and UNV signed a global Memorandum of Understanding to further strengthen the role of UNV volunteers in responding to the plight of refugees worldwide. In the past year, some 750 UNV volunteers provided substantive and operational support to ensure access to the most basic services, ranging from the initial set up and daily logistic management of refugee camps to community services, legal affairs and information dissemination.

••• Sudan is experiencing one of the worst humanitarian crises in recent times. In early 2005, teams of UNV volunteers were among the first international observers as part of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) to go into the country's Darfur region to compile information contributing to documents used by the UN when reporting

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Young people active in skills training in Burkina Faso. UNV volunteers support underprivileged youth overcome poverty by providing access to skills training in such areas as tailoring and woodworking. Photos: UNV/Jean-Baptiste Avril



Above: A health volunteer checks an elderly woman's vital signs at a volunteer-run health centre in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. The centre was the result of a partnership between the NGO Yayasan Bina Mandiri and UNV following the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Photo: UNV/Oliver Wittershagen

Below: UNV volunteers Gilberto Sousa of Brazil and Alina Müller of Sweden visit a favela – a slum – in the coastal city of Salvador de Bahia, Brazil. The volunteers are part of a disaster prevention programme that also focuses on improving living conditions within the city's favelas. Photo: UNV/Andrew Smith

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on the human rights situation. Serving as human rights officers, UNV volunteers reached out to victims of attacks, witnesses, relatives and local authorities to gather testimonies and evidence as well as to monitor the frequency and scale of violence.

••• UNV shifted its support to the countries hit by the 2004 tsunami from relief to reconstruction and recovery in 2005. In the Maldives, UNV supported a project that boosted women's livelihoods by providing modest grants to kick-start small businesses – from tailoring to fish processing. UNV volunteers worked with local women and the Ministry of Gender to select grants, identify potential female leaders and monitor the businesses. Assistance was also provided to island communities in establishing sustainable income-generation initiatives to benefit all residents. In Banda Aceh, Indonesia, an NGO-managed crisis centre set up with the support of UNV immediately following the tsunami expanded its volunteer-run medical and counselling services to nearby towns. It provided a free on-site medical clinic, and for those unable to travel the NGO offered a mobile service reaching dozens of communities. Additionally, UNV volunteers assisted governments and communities implement disaster reduction plans. In Sri Lanka, UNV partnered with the Global Environmental Facility's (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) to support local community organizations affected by the tsunami to rebuild the coastal environment. UNV volunteers worked with the organizations to increase their capacity to plan, implement and dialogue with community members.

••• The HIV/AIDS pandemic challenges many governments worldwide. To this end, UNV supports capacity building of the health sector and other public services to better respond to the pandemic. In Guyana, UNV volunteer physicians under a new initiative supported by the American Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) had a dual task: first to provide immediate health care delivery and second to boost the country's national capacity to equip its own doctors with skills to address HIV/AIDS. To build up this needed knowledge-base, the UNV volunteer physicians, who were mainly from the South, conducted training seminars with front-line health workers and held information sessions on prevention and treatment services for families and those living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. With the help of local volunteers, the physicians conducted medical outreach clinics in rural communities, places previously excluded from HIV/AIDS programme outreach.

••• In 2005, UNV continued to assist UNDP's Southern Africa Capacity Initiative (SACI) in offsetting the dramatic loss of skilled human resources resulting from the HIV/AIDS pandemic and building longer-term solutions to address capacity issues. Some 155 UNV volunteers – 70 per cent from the South, mainly African – worked with the governments of the region and many partners to develop innovative approaches to stop the erosion of human resources, strengthen HIV/AIDS awareness initiatives and coordinate community-based support mechanisms. A national UNV programme launched in Zambia supported the public administration to improve policy design, programming quality and absorption capacity to effectively utilize donor resources. UNV volunteers helped district AIDS task forces streamline working procedures and planning mechanisms as well as supported the creation of village task forces to serve as platforms for community members and traditional leaders to better articulate demand for services. They also extended technical support to community groups and connected them to sources of funding. Local organizations in one district helped 1,400 of the poorest women across 30 villages generate income through micro-finance projects.

••• People from around the world logged on to the UNV-managed Online Volunteering service (www.onlinevolunteering.org) to share skills and time to support local NGOs and international organizations in carrying out HIV/AIDS initiatives. One volunteer in the United Kingdom provided support in marketing, proposal writing and strategic planning for Reach Out, a woman-focused NGO in Cameroon. As a result, Reach Out secured a grant to provide home-based care and psychosocial assistance. Reach Out shared its experience with a Nigerian NGO that integrated a similar strategy and implemented a volunteer-run homebased training programme.