



## **CHAPTER 2**

# **INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION**

## **Supporting empowerment**



#### MAKING DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS

- 1 ACCESS TO SERVICES AND SERVICE DELIVERY
- 2 INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION**
- 3 COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION THROUGH VOLUNTARY ACTION

This contribution involves promoting the inclusion of all stakeholders, in particular the disadvantaged, in processes that affect their well-being. It includes making information available on opportunities and how to participate; putting in place sustainable strategies and processes for participation; establishing and strengthening networks to facilitate access of targeted groups to decision making processes; and ensuring mechanisms are set up in a way that facilitates dialogue between actors at various levels of decision making. UNV's extensive role in elections is a good illustration of its value added in this area. Others include UNV's efforts to ensure that women, youth, those affected by HIV/AIDS as well as other vulnerable groups are included in voluntary task groups that address issues of concern. UNV equally embraces local volunteerism as a vehicle to foster reconciliation and bring divided societies together, thereby strengthening communities' resilience and ability to cope in a post-conflict environment.

••• The desire for peace in Liberia received a strong vote of confidence on October 11, 2005, when Liberians turned out to cast ballots in the country's first post-war elections. This resulted in Africa's first elected female head of state. UNV volunteer electoral officers attached to the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) were engaged in all aspects of the electoral process, playing a leading role in registering some 1.3 million voters. In addition to building the capacity of newly recruited staff of Liberia's National Electoral Commission, UNV volunteers trained some 18,500 national staff in all eighteen provincial UN electoral offices. In Burundi and most recently Haiti, UNV volunteers working with the UN missions there – ONUB and MINUSTAH respectively – provided technical and logistical assistance to the UN and national electoral bodies in identifying and furnishing voting centres and helping organize voter registration campaigns. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNV volunteers supporting MONUC, the UN peacekeeping mission, prepared for scheduled elections in 2006.

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A cooking oil merchant at a market in Chongwe, Zambia. She opened her business with a small loan from a microfinance NGO that received capacity building support from UNV volunteers. Photo: UNV/Jean-Baptiste Avril



Angele Sanou is an instructor at a training centre for disabled youth in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso. The centre provides students with a trade to earn a living. Hundreds of Burkinabe disadvantaged youth have received training through the UNDP/UNV project known by its acronym REPAJE. Photo: UNV/Jean-Baptiste Avril



The UNDP Resident Representative for Guatemala Barbara Pesce Monteiro (wearing blue UNV vest) briefs residents of Agua Escondida village, Quiché department, on aid information following Hurricane Stan, which ripped through the region in October 2005. UNV volunteers played an instrumental role in coordinating the UN system's response to the disaster. Photo: UNV/Aidan Leavy



Carmine Camerini of Italy, a UNV volunteer public information officer with the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), posts a public notice on the mission's efforts to disarm and reintegrate former fighters in Aru, Orientale province. Photo: UNV/Fabienne Copin

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Stationed in remote villages, some 150 UNV volunteers, nearly half were women, reached out to isolated groups to encourage their participation and inclusion in the vote. To motivate women, they worked with local female leadership to equip them with information and tools to spread the voting message.

••• During 2005, Kyrgyzstan suffered from political turmoil. To improve the situation, UNV was engaged to help establish volunteer networks as a method to tackle voter apathy among young people. Youth volunteers worked throughout the country before last October's election to raise awareness of the upcoming vote, political structures, and voter rights and responsibilities. For many young people, who felt alienated by the system, this was their first contact with politics. Working in teams of two, the volunteers spent several days in each community fostering discussions between youth and political candidates. These one-on-one interactions enabled youth and politicians to better understand each other's issues and concerns. With support from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and national counterparts, the youth in elections project was part of a larger initiative that provided young people with volunteer opportunities and advocated for their participation in community planning and decision-making processes.

••• The networks of reciprocity that bind members of a society – or social capital – have been observed to help address conflict. This approach supported the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) bring about sustainable reintegration of thousands of ex-combatants into their communities. Spearheading the implementation of UNDP's StopGap programme (Winner of the UN 21 Awards 2004), UNV volunteers supported community-based organizations in managing quick-impact community infrastructure and agricultural development projects that employed thousands of ex-combatants and community members. With UNV's Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) – a mechanism to fund UNV-led pilot projects – national UNV volunteers helped to re-broker community relations by coaching youth leaders to become part of local councils as well as organizing recreational, cultural and sports activities.

••• A UNV-supported project has uniquely combined a gender budgeting approach with the recognition, promotion and validation of the unpaid work that women do as volunteers in their communities. In late 2005, UNV joined the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in its efforts to mainstream a gender perspective into

local government participatory processes and recognize women's voluntary contributions to national development in Latin America. The project began to first take shape in five countries – Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru – where UNV volunteers worked with local counterparts to make government and society more sensitive to gender equality and participation.

••• The actions of Toshiko Kitahara, a UNV volunteer from Japan, serve as an excellent example of the inclusion of girls in education. As a UNV volunteer with the World Food Programme's (WFP) food for education unit in Afghanistan, Toshiko was shocked to learn that girls in Ragh, a district in Badakhshan province, never attended school. After speaking with various organizations and government agencies, and realizing that no school was in the works, Toshiko took matters into her own hands. She rallied friends, donors and anyone she met to contribute to constructing a school. More than 140 individuals and organizations supported the project that once completed will welcome 700 primary age girls.

••• UNV also supports the Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA), an initiative of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). In Cambodia, with SVF funding, UNV supported the inclusion of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS (PLHA). Placed within government institutions leading the national response to the pandemic, Cambodian UNV volunteers, some of whom were HIV positive, helped local organizations integrate PLHA into their programmes and advocate for the inclusion of PLHA issues in national planning processes. Focusing on gender-specific needs, they worked to reduce the incidence of discrimination against women in the workplace. They also assisted national PLHA networks create women-specific task forces and increase female membership, which reached 5,000 across the country's 12 provinces. A comparative study of project evaluations in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean confirmed the effectiveness of national UNV volunteers in implementing the GIPA approach. The study highlighted the tripartite partnership between UNAIDS, UNDP and UNV as an effective GIPA implementing strategy.

••• Salika Botsabang, Mao Meas and Nunlada Punyarut have made quite a name for themselves. As national UNV volunteers in 2005 in Laos, Cambodia and Thailand respectively, they became known as the 'Charlie's Angels' of good environmental governance in the Mekong River Basin – a reference to a TV and film series featuring

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three crime fighting, problem-solving women. The UNV volunteers were part of a pilot project aimed at protecting the Mekong River, its resources and the livelihoods of those along its banks. The river itself is one of the world's longest. Poor environmental practices and a growing population have led to unstable conditions that threaten the river's ecosystem. Throughout the year, Community Dialogue sessions were held, where the UNV volunteers, acting as mediators and translators of complex policies, led the communities into discussion. Most importantly, they helped build-up the capacity of the communities by providing training and tools to develop locally driven action plans. Several of the communities secured small grants to carry out riverbank protection, fish stock conservation and water quality monitoring.



Above: National UNV volunteer Nunlanda Punyarut (standing) and members of the Heuy Leuk community gather by the Mekong River, Thailand, to develop ideas on producing organic fertilizer with the Pon Sa-ad community across the river in Lao PDR. Cross-cultural dialogue is at the centre of a project to protect the Mekong River. Photo: Peerakit Corporate Photography

Left: Girls attending the first girls' school in Ragh district, Badakhshan province, Afghanistan. The school was constructed with funds raised by Toshiko Kitahara, a Japanese UNV volunteer serving with the World Food Programme. Photo: WFP

Page 17: National UNV volunteer Nguyen Cong Khiết (centre) with Viet Nam Youth Union volunteers at My Son Sanctuary in central Viet Nam. The sanctuary is one of three UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the country that UNV volunteers are assisting youth volunteers to preserve. Photo: UNV/Horst Wagner