

# INTEGRATION

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme works to mainstream volunteering into national development programmes and integrate it into the planning and activities of partners. Volunteerism facilitates the participatory elaboration of national development strategies, helping to ensure local ownership, sustainability and the engagement of all stakeholders.



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## Integrating volunteerism into development planning

**The UNV programme promotes the integration of volunteering into the objectives and activities of partners such as governments and development organizations, in order to facilitate national ownership of development processes.**

UNV partners with UNDP to support democratic governance worldwide. More than 1,500 UNV volunteers are working with UNDP in this area, playing a critical role in providing specialist technical support to governments and other stakeholders at national and local levels. Working with local authorities and communities, they ensure that governance is grounded in the principles of human rights, access to justice, inclusion and gender equality. This ensures that people have the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

A measure of UNV's success in demonstrating the effectiveness of volunteerism is seen in the replication and scaling-up by partners of development initiatives and the engagement of more volunteers through UNV partners and other organizations. Programme agreements between UNV and its partners provide for the increasing engagement of UNV volunteers and the mobilization of local communities to participate in development through voluntary action.

For instance, UNV collaborated with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in a natural resource management project in Cape Verde, which was replicated in Ethiopia, Zambia and Zimbabwe in 2007. The project involved youth volunteers, developing their capacity in watershed and habitat management and providing them with income through agroforestry.

## Using knowledge against gender discrimination



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**Volunteerism enables communities to generate their own solutions to development challenges, thus complementing the work of governments and development partners, including civil society organizations.**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a harmful practice and a fundamental violation of human rights that affects 90% of women in Sudan, according to the 1999 Safe Motherhood Survey by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). A national strategy to abolish FGM has existed since 2001, with the Government and UN agencies involved in different approaches to combat the practice. In 2007, UNV contributed to the development of the National Strategy for the Abandonment of All Types of FGM and launched an abandonment campaign.

UNV's unique approach to combating FGM capitalizes on volunteerism and local community action. Working closely with UNFPA, the Ahfad University for Women and other stakeholders, UNV engaged local volunteers to tackle these issues from within their own communities. This led to greater openness to consider collective abandonment of the practice.

By involving males and youth in peer education, engaging midwives and mothers in sexual education, and working with schools to raise the awareness of children, UNV and community volunteers were able to challenge FGM from a community perspective.

The holistic approach of this pilot project has been crucial to its success. A combination of innovative information materials, entry into the community through schools, and reaching the families of pupils through public events has led to engaging a greater number of people. To ensure sustainability, UNV and partners supported the creation of a new non-governmental organization comprising the community volunteers it mobilized. The scheme is being replicated elsewhere in Sudan and expanded to include new partners.



## Addressing HIV/AIDS among vulnerable groups

**Voluntary participation has the potential to move disadvantaged populations away from being passive recipients and towards becoming engaged in local development efforts.**

UNV builds partnerships that stimulate the creation of supportive political, legal and social environments to address the issues and needs of vulnerable groups. UNV engages vulnerable groups and peer networks – including women, youth, people with disabilities and people affected by HIV/AIDS – in voluntary efforts to address development issues.

In Benin, UNV and The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria co-funded a programme that developed the capacity of Boy Scout leaders to provide leadership on issues surrounding HIV and AIDS. UNV and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) provided Boy Scout leaders with training in organizational skills, sensitization and HIV/AIDS awareness. As a result, the Boy Scout leaders are working with their Scout groups to discourage risky behaviour leading to the spread of HIV/AIDS and reduce related stigmatization. The programme has now been formally incorporated into the curriculum of the Scout movement and will become part of a worldwide initiative called 'Red Ribbons for Scouts'.

Similarly, in Mongolia, UNV volunteers mobilized local partners to participate in outreach and advocacy activities. These enhanced public awareness and reduced risky sexual behaviour among youth by addressing the prevention of sexually-transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. UNV volunteers and local voluntary community volunteers worked as facilitators and role models to mobilize and strengthen the participation of adolescents, sex workers and other vulnerable populations in the National Strategy to Respond to HIV/AIDS.



**UNV volunteers play a key role in supporting the integration of peace and development interventions on the ground. They help to provide a secure and stable environment within which constitutional and political processes can begin to flourish, particularly in post-conflict countries and those transitioning to democratic governance. The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has been working with UNV since 1992.**



The United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) drew on almost 700 UNV volunteers in 2007, representing almost 40% of the mission's international civilian personnel. They helped identify, localize, disarm and repatriate foreign combatants in remote areas, monitored and raised awareness about human rights violations, and acted as spokespersons for the mission.

Since facilitating the presidential and legislative elections in the DRC in 2006 – the largest electoral operation ever supported by the UN – UNV volunteers have been developing the capacity of thousands of national election commission staff, thus enabling greater investment in civic and voter education. In 2007, UNV volunteers supported preparations for the local elections to be held in 2008, with more than 55,000 polling stations and over 200,000 candidates.

UNV is working through the United Nations Mission in Nepal to support the effective and timely implementation of the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and its transformation into lasting sustainable peace. In 2007, UNV volunteers worked with the Mission in the areas of child protection, civil affairs, gender and public information, as well as technical, administrative and electoral support. UNV helped conduct the 2008 elections for a Constituent Assembly and provided a team of UNV volunteer electoral monitors to review and report on all aspects of the electoral process.



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## Fostering national ownership in post-conflict communities

**UNV strengthens the capacities of national counterparts to assume ownership for development processes and to recognize the importance of engaging volunteers as a cohesive force and a tool for peace and development.**

UNV provides support in Somalia to crisis prevention and recovery programmes, poverty reduction projects and to the Rule of Law and Security Programme. Working with UNDP, the World Food Programme (WFP) and other partners, UNV volunteers focused in 2007 on supporting and empowering vulnerable and marginalized populations, including ex-combatants, internally displaced persons and returnees.

Promoting the maintenance of peace and security, UNV volunteers train the police force and prison staff, strengthen law enforcement and assist in psychosocial reintegration activities. They also support youth and women's organizations in improving livelihoods and raising awareness of issues such as HIV/AIDS. In 2007, UNV volunteers helped to build new prison and hospital facilities, improve infrastructure for orphans and mental health patients, and train nurses and midwives.

## Planning for development: The role of volunteerism in development

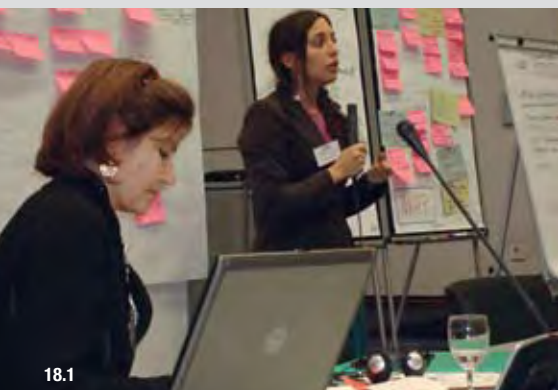


**UNV promotes the integration of volunteerism into development planning. UNV focuses on bridging gaps between policy-makers and local decentralized structures, facilitating coordination between urban and rural development programming and peacekeeping in post-conflict countries.**

In 2007, UNV supported decentralization processes to improve local governance in several countries, promoting the establishment and capacity building of local development and planning structures. UNV also enhanced the mobilization of communities towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and fostered their participation in monitoring MDG country indicators.

Reflecting the integration of volunteerism in development planning by the United Nations system, the role of UNV volunteers and/or volunteerism was incorporated in 41 of 80 United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) in 2007, compared to nine in 2005. The same was true of 29 Country Programme Action Plans (CPAPs), up from two in 2005. UNV also supported governments in the preparation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) processes, promoting the national ownership of strategies by enhancing the broad-based participation of civil society.

Based on the global Memorandum of Understanding and Note on Guiding Principles signed in 2003, UNV and DPKO are working together to enhance an environment in which volunteerism is recognized as a significant element in the success of UN peacekeeping operations. In 2007, about 3,000 UNV volunteers supported 18 peacekeeping and special political operations in fulfilling their mandates. About half of all UNV volunteers are engaged in peacekeeping and special political operations and they constitute 30% of the international civilian personnel supporting DPKO missions worldwide.



## Integrating volunteerism in UN-wide agendas

**UNV works with UN partner agencies and governments to support social mobilization and transparent and participatory development. UNV is participating in the UN 'Delivering as One' pilots, which aim to ensure more efficient and effective development progress.**

The 'One UN' Programme in Albania supports people's participation and social inclusion and recognizes the contribution of volunteerism to these ends. As a member of the One UN team, UNV has supported the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the development process. Under One UN joint programmes, UNV volunteers will be instrumental in engaging community volunteers in the implementation of local development initiatives to improve the social integration and living conditions of minority Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania and will work with youth in disadvantaged areas. UNV is also contributing to national efforts to curb the 'brain drain' affecting Albania by mobilizing promising young graduates at home and providing volunteerism opportunities for skilled expatriates returning from abroad.



## Enhancing support for volunteerism

**UNV helps countries to integrate volunteers into their development programmes and utilize volunteerism to meet national development targets.**

In Senegal, UNV is working with UN agencies and the Government to promote volunteerism as a viable means of engaging local communities and delivering on the country's development objectives.

The UNDAF (2007-2011) includes the promotion of volunteerism as a vehicle for increased aid effectiveness in the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy. The role of volunteerism is also recognized as a cross-cutting mechanism for the implementation of the UNDP country programme in the CPAP.

In response to Government priorities in 2007, UNV launched a project with UNDP and other UN organizations to support efforts to achieve the MDGs through volunteerism. The project aims to establish a legal and regulatory framework for the engagement of volunteers and to create a volunteer service support and coordination centre to strengthen national capacities for the coordination and promotion of volunteerism.