YOUR ASSIGNMENT AS A VOLUNTEER.

Volunteer Toolkit

Promoting Volunteerism for Peace and Development
Foreword

The Promoting Volunteerism for Peace and Development: is a practical guidance for UN Volunteers on how to give expression to Volunteerism for Peace and Development during their UN Volunteer assignment and beyond. The tool is part of a Volunteer Toolkit, which contains eight (8) volunteer management tools: The Volunteer Toolkit has been developed to support the implementation of UNV Programme Strategy 2011-2013, more specifically to enhance the effectiveness of volunteer management and the skills of UN Volunteers to become good advocates of Volunteerism for Peace and Development.

The Volunteer Toolkit is to be disseminated and/or made available to UN Volunteers over the course of their volunteer assignment. The objective is to ensure that UN Volunteers (POs, other international UN Volunteers, and national UN Volunteers) can benefit from each tool at the relevant stage of their assignment: Pre-assignment; Support during assignment and End of Assignment.
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Introduction

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme. When you receive this guide, you are one of almost 8000 UN Volunteers annually supporting peace and development worldwide. You are serving either on an assignment in development contributing to achieving the MDGs with UNDP or other UN agencies or in a peacekeeping mission or a special political or peace-building mission, in humanitarian response or in an electoral operation.

As a UN Volunteer you have the extraordinary opportunity to create beneficial change and have a positive impact on people’s lives. Even if your UNV assignment is fairly short, you can have a long-term impact and achieve a ripple effect that extends far beyond the immediate beneficiaries of your efforts. Your actions can also inspire others to volunteer and to believe that they too can make a contribution towards peace and development. Ultimately, if development is to be effective and sustainable, the people affected by it must take ownership of its processes and drive them forward.

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that promotes volunteerism to support peace and development and it benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer. UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for volunteerism globally, encouraging partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing volunteers. These beliefs inform the concept of volunteerism for peace and development, which is at the core of UNV’s mission.

The difference UNV makes is by demonstrating peace and development results and impact through volunteerism. UNV’s comparative advantage is the ability and knowledge to bring about transformational change through volunteerism, community voluntary action and civic engagement through active partnerships with civil society, volunteer involving organizations, UN agencies and Governments. This is inspiration in action.

UN Volunteers come from 158 countries and many more cultural backgrounds, and thanks to this wide variety of perspectives you bring a range of experiences, expectations and approaches to volunteerism for development. This diversity gives volunteerism for development a particular dynamism.
Your role as a UN Volunteer is that of both facilitator and catalyst. UNV encourages you to be creative and entrepreneurial in finding ways to develop capacity and to promote and foster volunteerism for development both within and beyond the formal framework of your assignment. After all, there is no single ‘correct or optimal way to volunteer for peace and development. By optimizing the impact of volunteerism, especially in terms of developing capacity, you can have a deep and long-lasting impact.

Whether your service is in your own country or abroad, we believe that you have chosen to be a UN Volunteer because you share the United Nations’ commitment to development, human rights and peace. All of these values have volunteerism at their core. As a UN Volunteer, you are part of a cumulative global effort – volunteerism – that is a powerful force for peace and development. Indeed, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are only achievable if many millions of people around the world voluntarily mobilize to attain them.

In this handbook you will find practical tools and some examples of how you can personally give expression to volunteerism for peace and development during – and beyond – your UNV assignment. It draws on previous experiences promoting and advocating volunteerism for peace and development in the field. Many UN Volunteers provided valuable insights and practical advice based on their personal experience in assignments around the world. This guide is intended to be a living document that will be continually updated based on feedback from UN Volunteers so that it remains relevant. Your comments and suggestions will therefore be greatly appreciated.

I wish you a great assignment with many positive results.

Flavia Pansieri
Executive Coordinator
United Nations Volunteers
Volunteerism for Peace and Development

What is volunteerism for peace and development?
Volunteerism fosters empowerment and broad-based ownership, through which even the most disadvantaged groups can contribute to more stable and cohesive communities. Volunteerism is both a manifestation and driver of social capital and civic participation, involving more people in the decisions that affect their lives. In particular, it can help disadvantaged populations move from being passive recipients to becoming engaged actors in their own development. As a component of peace or development programmes, particularly at the community level, volunteerism provides a sense of belonging and ownership, putting marginalized communities at the centre of their reconciliation and/or development processes. It is also an important means by which individuals gain the skills necessary to realize their economic potential.

Evidence shows that people in conflict environments have the will and instinct to respond with resilience and resourcefulness even in intense or prolonged conflicts. In fact, many of the concepts related to peace making and peace building – from conflict prevention and reconciliation, to reintegration and reconstruction – are rooted in volunteerism. Ongoing national and international conflicts continue to weaken national and individual resilience. Nevertheless, emerging from within these conflicts, volunteerism can serve as a key source of reconciliation and reconstruction in divided societies.

Volunteering has been a valuable partner in a broad spectrum of peace and development activities, having as their overriding goal the eradication of poverty and the betterment of the human condition. It is closely linked to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), where as of today, global progress in achieving MDG targets has been slow. As indicated in UNDP’s MDG Breakthrough Strategy, and specifically the MDG Acceleration Framework, strengthening participatory processes and building partnerships with civil society, which can be enhanced through...

1. OECD International Network on Conflict and Fragility. http://www.oecd.org/document/57/0,3343,en_2649_33693550_42113657_1_1_1_1,00.html
Volunteerism, are vital for achieving these goals. It is also widely recognized that to promote sustainable human development, peace is a prerequisite in that process.

Volunteerism benefits society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening solidarity and reciprocity among citizens. It can transform the pace and nature of development and peace initiatives.

"Many of the volunteers had no job, no money, had nothing to do all day… Through their voluntary work they were able to increase their self-esteem, feel useful in their community and take on responsibilities. They felt they were actively contributing and playing a part in their own development… Volunteering can develop such incredible power and value in the way it channels energies, enthusiasm, commitment and skills that otherwise would be wasted or perhaps even used in a destructive way."

Achim Merlo, UNV Programme Officer in Kyrgyzstan on his experiences in the Ferghana Valley, Central Asia

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is inspired by the conviction that volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling development challenges worldwide. Everyone can contribute their time, skills and knowledge through volunteer action and their combined efforts can be a significant force for achieving peace and development.

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UNV and volunteering for peace and development

“UN Volunteers and the United Nation Volunteer (UNV) programme are not merely about providing human resources or filling the gap, but in fact assisting and uplifting communities so that people can aspire for a better tomorrow.”

Haoliang Xu, former UNDP Country Director in Pakistan

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The enormous potential of volunteerism for peace and development inspires us as an organization, and it is our mission to deliver on that potential.

Ever since UNV served as the focal point of the International Year of Volunteers in 2001, UNV has acted as a global advocate for volunteerism for peace and development, promoting greater understanding and recognition that volunteerism is a sustainable and culturally adapted asset for development and peace. UNV also serves as the hub for volunteerism within the United Nations, reinforcing linkages between volunteerism and the attainment of the MDGs.

Achieving the MDGs by the year 2015 calls for a global partnership with commitments from both developed and developing countries. It also requires the active participation of millions of ordinary citizens from all sectors of public and private life. National governments have development plans specific to their country’s needs. Mobilizing people’s energy, creativity, knowledge and skills through volunteerism towards meeting development goals can facilitate a country’s progress, especially when civil society, the private sector, multilateral and bilateral agencies and other stakeholders are prepared to integrate volunteerism in delivering on their own mandates. UNV itself, through mobilizing UN Volunteers and other volunteers, works toward harnessing volunteerism at the country, regional and international levels to meet critical development goals.

Promoting volunteerism for peace and development is at the core of the UNV mission, and it is our hope and expectation that you will keep volunteerism at the forefront of your UNV assignment right from the start. As a UN Volunteer, you can make a difference by taking a creative approach both within and beyond the prescribed structure of your assignment to develop capacity and mobilize others to volunteer for development. Implementing volunteerism for peace and development results in a win-win situation for the country where you are volunteering, for your host organization and for you.

Dolores Nunez from Spain was serving as a UNV Assistant to the UNDP Resident Representative in Ecuador while also building capacities of representatives of volunteer involving organizations. During her working hours she also trains and advises members of the national volunteerism round table on project writing and proposal in order to obtain funding. This was made an integral part of her Description of Assignment.
What does it mean to volunteer?
Volunteerism is a fundamental source of community strength and resilience that exists in all societies throughout the world. Volunteerism is expressed through a wide range of activities, including traditional forms of mutual aid and self-help, formal service delivery, campaigning and advocacy, as well as other forms of civic participation. The UN General Assembly defines volunteerism as undertaken of free will, for the general public good, and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor.3

Following the International Year of Volunteers in 2001, the UN General Assembly recognized that "volunteerism is an important component of any strategy aimed at...poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, disaster prevention and management, social integration and overcoming social exclusion and discrimination". And that "volunteering, particularly at the community level, will help to achieve the development goals and objectives set out in the UN Millennium Development Goals..."4

Here are a few contemporary examples of culturally recognized forms of volunteerism:

- **Minga** – In Latin America, minga means a call for action or a coming together of the community for the benefit of all.

- **Harambee** – In East Africa, harambee means working together for a common purpose, and encompasses both short, informal affairs as well as organized, days-long events. Harambee gatherings play an important role in building and maintaining communities.

- **Kutandizana** – In Zambia, kutandizana means helping each other.

- **Zunde RaMambo** – In Zimbabwe, Zunde RaMambo literally means 'Chief’s Granary', but it refers to various forms of volunteerism, such as collective planting and harvesting, especially to help vulnerable people overcome hardships and benefit from the harvest.

- **Tatawo** – In the Arab region, tatawo refers to volunteer labour at both the community and the family level, an exchange that is offered without expectation of direct equal return.

- **Mikprites** – The Albanian people have an informal mutual support mechanism called mikprites, meaning hospitality.

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3. UN General Assembly A/RES/56/38 Distr. 10 January 2002
4. UN General Assembly A/RES/51/106 December 2002
Daan – In India, daan means voluntary giving to contribute to the well-being of society.

Gotong Royong – In Indonesia, gotong royong means working together, and it can address the needs of individuals, families and larger communities.

Bayanihan – In the Philippines, bayanihan refers to mutual assistance and self-help among peers.

As a UN Volunteer, you are part of this proud tradition.

© Mario Rizzolio 17 February 2008, Quito, Ecuador
Prior to your assignment

UNV strives to infuse volunteerism into every stage of your assignment, from your initial recruitment to your eventual return home. Together, we are strengthening volunteerism for peace and development.

**Volunteerism for peace and development in your Description of Assignment**
The expectations of both UNV and your host organization are explained in the Description of Assignment (DoA).

Promoting volunteerism for peace and development is an integral part of every UNV assignment. Your DoA outlines ways to promote volunteerism through your assignment, as well as ways to integrate volunteerism into your assignment to help you achieve its objectives.

We encourage you to discuss your Description of Assignment with your supervisor and the UNV Programme Officer or UNV Programme Manager so that together you can ensure that this is materialized.

Reflecting volunteerism for peace and development in the Description of Assignment makes clear to everyone concerned how volunteerism can add value to the assignment. According to Sarah Gleave, former UNV Programme Officer for Laos, including volunteerism for peace and development in the Description of Assignment helps to achieve the following:

- It creates a better match between an individual’s reasons for becoming a UN Volunteer and the output expectations of their managers;
- It improves integration of volunteerism into peace and development, and in programmatic areas in which UNV is engaged;
- It provides UN Volunteers space to mobilize other local volunteers;
- It increases the impact of each volunteer at the community level, which further integrates the volunteer into the community;

This results in happier volunteers!
In Nigeria, UN Volunteers supported the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization’s (FAO’s) work on preventing avian influenza. National UN Volunteer Dr. Musa Swang Shallangwa assisted in the collection of data and assessment of the trends of diseases and outbreaks, with an emphasis on avian influenza and other trans-boundary animal diseases. Beyond his duties as a skilled statistician, he also volunteered to lecture on avian influenza to students of higher education institutions and to the general public. In addition, he dedicated time as a resource person for a Nigerian Television Authority programme about what avian influenza is and why the public should be concerned about it.

Preparatory and ongoing reflection on volunteerism for peace and development in your assignment

Formal and informal reflection on your assignment will be an important part of your experience as a UN Volunteer. It would be helpful to begin to reflect on your own experience – your expectations, observations, hesitations, etc. – before your assignment begins. For example, you might want to keep a written record such as a journal or a blog as a way to keep track of how your perceptions of your assignment change over time.

Before your assignment, you might want to jot down your personal expectations of what you hope to achieve, particularly in terms of promoting volunteerism.

During the course of your assignment, you may want to take stock periodically and think about the specific volunteerism for peace and development element of your assignment and how you can implement it. Once you are on assignment, your UNV Field Unit will support you in this reflection process. You may also find the Volunteer Reflection Toolkit (which your Programme Officer will provide) helpful.
In the town of Maungdaw in western Myanmar, on the border with Bangladesh, local Muslim and Rakhine young people regularly meet at the local football field to play football. Primo Wusong, a UN Volunteer with WFP, regularly joined the group and found that it was one of the few local forums where young people from the two communities mixed together. Since then, he has used this opportunity to encourage dialogue between the groups.
During your assignment

“If I would run another mission... I would recommend to the Secretary-General himself to use the [United Nations Volunteers programme] and its people as much as possible because they have proven to be extremely professional. UN Volunteers have been one of the essential elements for the success of the operation.”

Aldo Ajello, Advisor to the Secretary-General, United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ)

Technical competence, professional experience, motivation, attitude and previous volunteer experience were all significant criteria in your selection as a UN Volunteer. Sharing your knowledge and expertise is clearly an important element in your assignment, but your role is not simply to manage an agenda, an office, a programme or an operation. You have the chance to contribute to development, create positive change and have a beneficial impact on people’s lives. This section of the handbook presents a few requirements and suggestions that can help ensure that your work will be effective and have a lasting impact.

Useful concepts and approaches to volunteerism for peace and development

‘Expertise’

“Whenever we go to ‘help’ another country, it is easy to forget that they know more than we do. The people with whom you are working are the experts on their own life and experiences.”

People in Aid News, July 2005

As a UN Volunteer, you have decided to dedicate a period of your life to volunteering for peace and development. You are a qualified, experienced and committed professional with substantive knowledge in your own area of technical specialization. No-one in the community in which you are working, or among your colleagues from other agencies, NGOs or other partners, should see you as ‘just a volunteer’.

Nonetheless, you should be prepared for the possibility that you may not be regarded as an ‘expert’ by your community until they feel you have earned this title. At the same time, it is worth remembering that no-one is an expert when they first enter a new country and culture. Be open
to the possibility that the people you have come to work with may end up teaching you more than you teach them.

In short, you should be proud of your expertise and your professionalism, and seek out opportunities to employ your skills while bearing in mind that there is still much to learn. In the end, the quality of your performance should speak for itself.

If you are a national UN Volunteer, you are likely to be familiar with the local culture where you are carrying out your assignment. However, even though your local partners are fellow nationals, they may still consider you to be an outsider. They may also hold you to a higher standard than international volunteers, expecting more from you and being less forgiving of mistakes.

What can you do to earn their respect and trust? As is true for all volunteers, humility and a willingness to listen and learn from your hosts will help. You can also demonstrate your solidarity by highlighting your shared commitment to achieving your country’s national development goals. Telling them about any successful volunteer-facilitated development projects in your own part of the country that you have been involved in will underscore your solidarity and commitment.

“When they see a volunteer coming all the way from Cairo, they appreciate it more,” says Khaled Hammad, a UN Volunteer on assignment in his native country of Egypt. In his experience, beneficiaries of assistance from national UN Volunteers understand that “you’re not only there to do your job – for the money – but that you believe in something, to help them change for the better.”

A Person-to-Person Approach
One of the most critical keys to success as a UN Volunteer is to be a good listener. Listening conscientiously is not only a courtesy, but also an important way to show respect and to learn from those around you. Your impact will be greater and your own experience richer if you take the time to listen to and really understand your hosts. At the same time, give your hosts time to understand UNV and its mission, and always make time for mutual exchange. The people you encounter while carrying out your assignment are not only recipients of aid, but human beings. Remember that you are on this journey together.
How you communicate what you know also matters. Try to avoid taking a prescriptive or didactic approach or ‘acting like an expert’. There is a difference between telling people what they should do and creating conditions in which people can take matters into their own hands.

“People knew that I was there to assist them and to extend a helping hand to them, and they realized that I was not there to achieve any personal material gain but rather assist them during the difficult time that they were going through. This sense of brotherhood that was developed with the local population (and mainly with the victims of human rights abuses) made my assignment a very special one.”

Emilya Cermak, UNV Human Rights Officer with MONUC5, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Inclusiveness
Inclusiveness is a central tenet of volunteerism because it helps empower disadvantaged people. Because of UNV’s core commitment to promoting volunteerism; it has a special role to play in fostering the inclusion of all groups in peace and development, particularly socially or politically disadvantaged groups. These groups may include women, people with disabilities, people with HIV & AIDS, younger or older people, victims of wars or natural catastrophes and others.

During your UNV assignment, consider the environment you are in and identify which groups are socially or politically disadvantaged. Why are they disadvantaged? And what can you do to make their community more inclusive?

Gender
Addressing the gender dimensions of a project or initiative is crucial to achieving sustainable development. UNV believes that achieving equality between women and men – gender equality – is inextricably linked to peace and the development goal of making real improvements in people’s lives and in the choices and opportunities available to them.

As a UN Volunteer, you have the mandate and duty to promote gender equality in everything you do. Ultimately, you must ensure that both women and men are included in, and stand to gain from, the work you carry out during your assignment.

With this in mind, strive for gender equality by drawing both women and men into the listening and consultative processes so

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5. MONUC: Mission des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo
that your initiative will benefit from both perspectives. Yet simply inviting both women and men might not be enough; sometimes women and men have different priorities and responsibilities, so schedule meetings at a time that is suitable to both. Also be aware of and sensitive to context-specific hierarchies or imbalances among women and men that might make one group less likely to voice their needs and concerns.

But gender equality means more than simply involving equal numbers of women and men in development initiatives, or serving equal numbers of female and male beneficiaries. Instead, the goal is to enable both women and men “to influence the entire agenda and basic priorities” of development. This requires that you work with both women and men to identify the long-term strategic and short-term practical needs of both groups and the communities in which they live, and if necessary, address them separately. It might also require you to proactively challenge existing conditions of inequality – but in doing so, work closely with both women and men to understand the context that gave rise to inequalities and to the extent possible, to jointly identify solutions.

For example, when initiating a livelihood or disaster mitigation project, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are both women and men being consulted? Do consultation meetings take into account the schedules and priorities of both women and men?
- Do both women and men have an equal say in decision-making? Can the project build in opportunities to balance decision-making between women and men?
- Does the implementation of the project incorporate traditional gender roles? If so, are there ways to challenge those roles while minimizing polarization?
- Will the project’s success be evaluated in terms of its impact on gender dynamics in the communities where it is implemented? If so, how will this impact be measured?

In times of war or violent conflict, women may be called upon to support their families in ways that they had not previously done, yet they may lack the resources to do so. Kirsti Mwandingi, an international UN Volunteer serving with UNHCR Angola, helped initiate a self-help agricultural cooperative for 125 women and girls who were war refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo. She solicited funds to build a shop, office and storeroom where these women could operate their business, and she voluntarily dedicated substantial time and energy in very difficult circumstances to ensure they could open savings accounts that would give them a sustainable income to support their community and their children’s education.
Building Individual Capacity
Your UNV assignment involves developing local capacity, and your contribution should result in the enhancement of your hosts’ knowledge and skills. Bolstering the capacities of both the individuals and institutional structures you work with is crucial to ensuring that your work will have an enduring impact. You are much more likely to leave behind a lasting legacy if you invest in the personal and professional development of the people around you.

One way to do this is by finding co-workers within your host agency and collaborating closely with them throughout your assignment to create conditions for them to develop their capacity and become initiators of change. At the outset of your assignment, they may advise and support you during your learning curve by helping you to understand local institutions, practices and customs. During your assignment, you can help build your co-workers’ knowledge, skills and expertise so that they will be able to continue your work upon your departure. Your efforts to build capacity will also be more effective if you recognize local insights and technical and organizational skills and increase their visibility locally.

Transcending Boundaries
Poverty tends to reinforce pre-existing cultural, religious and political divisions. In situations of violent conflict, such divisions are often intentionally aggravated in order to intensify hostilities.

Volunteerism is one way to help transcend these kinds of divisions, overcome misconceptions and even find common ground among opposing groups. Together with your host partners, you may be able to tactfully explore and create opportunities to promote participation in volunteerism by members of different groups who may not normally interact with each other, or may even be hostile toward each other.
In Sri Lanka, UN Volunteers organized camps where young people from different communities, ethnic groups, genders, castes, social strata and geographic locations come together. Some of these young people had never interacted with their peers from other parts of the island because of the protracted civil war that has driven the country. Tamil, Muslim and Buddhist youth, who all had strong misconceptions about each other, found themselves sharing common concerns and discussing ways to overcome their country’s ethnic and religious divides and achieve peace. According to Okama Ekpe Brook, UNV Programme Officer in Sri Lanka, this small volunteer initiative enabled these diverse young people to find common ground and unite behind a shared goal of ending the conflict. The camp participants promised to maintain contact with each other and continue working together for peace, now with the full realization that they are all in the same boat.

The Sri Lanka UNV Field Unit organized a race for young people in order to sensitize them to the importance of the Millennium Development Goals – here, Programme Officer Okama Ekpe-Brook starts the competition.
Taking an inventory
Understanding the various resources – especially human resources – available to you during your assignment will help you not only to carry out your assignment, but also to come up with ways to promote volunteerism for peace and development. Below are some suggestions for taking an inventory of the resources available to you during your assignment.

Mapping Your Environment
At the outset of your assignment, it is helpful to ‘map out’ the social context in which you will be working. This includes trying to identify the various peer groups or social groups in your environment and assessing the extent to which they share the belief that volunteering can make a significant contribution to the development process. (Keep in mind that they may use other terms or expressions to describe volunteering, or may not even recognize voluntary actions as volunteering.)

The following groups can be critical to the success of your assignment – and each group provides an opportunity for you to integrate volunteerism for peace and development:

- Your colleagues – those who work closely with you;
- Former UN Volunteers (national and international);
- Your supervisors;
- Beneficiaries of your project or assignment – e.g., patients, farmers, trainees, vulnerable groups, disaster victims, etc;
- The wider local community – particularly marginalized groups such as people with disabilities, young people or women;
- The local expatriate community – if there is a local expatriate community, its members may also be a resource;
- Other volunteer-involving organizations or volunteer-sending organizations;
- The media – the media can communicate human interest stories that highlight the impact of your efforts;
- The private sector – businesspeople might volunteer their time, and businesses might provide funds or in-kind contributions to support your project or initiative;
- Local leaders – e.g., elders, faith healers, religious leaders, community organizers, among others;
- Local institutions – e.g., the municipal or local administration, schools, hospitals, etc;
Authorities at the national level – political leaders, the government and the civil service, if these are accessible to you; Partners of the national government – notably United Nations agencies working in the country, but also bilateral aid agencies and international NGOs.

Local Traditions of Volunteerism
Identify the character and features of any traditions of volunteering in your new community. Could a local tradition of volunteering be harnessed to increase support for, and encourage local ownership of, your assignment? Perhaps you could help rediscover and/or promote local traditions of volunteering in tandem with your assignment. Once again, keep in mind that local traditions might not be called, or even considered, volunteering.

Sources of Support for Volunteerism
UNV considers volunteerism to have three major sources of support:

- Individual volunteers;
- Volunteer-involving organizations (civil society groups, schools, hospitals, etc.);
- Volunteer networks.

In carrying out your assignment, you may be able to tap into one, two or all three of these sources of support for volunteering. For example, you may meet individuals among your colleagues or neighbours who might volunteer to support your efforts. Or a local organization that involves volunteers might partner with you or assist you. Volunteer networks, either in the country where you are on assignment or based elsewhere, can be useful sources of information on best practices and shared experiences. If you share your experiences as a UN Volunteer with them, such networks can also learn from your experiences (both successes and failures).

Sometimes UN Volunteers integrate volunteerism into a project without realizing it or giving recognition to it, according to Fumie Arimizu, UNV Programme Officer in Samoa. Rather than using the word ‘volunteer’ or ‘volunteering’, they call it a ‘contribution’ by beneficiaries or communities where a project takes place.
Volunteer Contributions

Volunteers, their organizations and networks have at least three channels for contribution:

- Philanthropy and service to others;
- Mutual aid and self-help; and
- Advocacy and campaigning.

Consider how your initiative could be more effective if you harnessed local volunteer potential. Does your initiative aim to help a clearly defined group of people? If so, there might be members of that group who would volunteer to help provide necessary services. Local volunteers outside the immediate beneficiaries of your initiative might also help deliver or amplify the services. Broader and more inclusive service delivery has greater likelihood of resulting in successful and sustainable development.

“I have organized several activities where many local volunteers participated. Despite the difficulties these volunteers have (such as lack of financial and institutional support, no recognition of volunteerism or volunteer actions), they are so enthusiastic to volunteer in their community... I keep thinking, how can I communicate more effectively with people; by using which expressions/language can I convince people to be more interested in volunteering and accept it as a potential starting point for community development efforts in their own world.”

Kanako Terui, UNV Programme Officer in Kosovo

UN Volunteers in Burundi helped to rehabilitate a paediatric ward in Roi Khaled Hospital in Bujumbura, but according to Iram Batool, UNV Programme Manager in Burundi, what they did went far beyond ‘just painting’. The UN Volunteers involved local associations and NGOs in the rehabilitation project, and tried to build their awareness about volunteerism and how they could work together to help vulnerable groups within Burundi. In this way, they expressed the volunteer spirit and demonstrated the benefits that volunteerism can bring.

DURING YOUR ASSIGNMENT...
Implementing volunteerism for peace and development throughout your assignment

Some UN Volunteers may have ample opportunity to promote volunteerism for peace and development directly through their assignment. For example, it would be easy to integrate volunteerism into your assignment if you are an agriculturalist, an HIV & AIDS trainer or health professional, a volunteer project specialist or volunteer programme manager, or if your assignment is directly focused on community mobilization and capacity building, human rights, or civil and humanitarian affairs.

However, UN Volunteers on a specific technical assignment (particularly a short-term assignment) may think it is difficult or even unrealistic to apply the values and approaches of volunteerism for peace and development in their daily work. But it is possible. Here are a few examples of how this can be done:

- An electrician on a UNV assignment could mobilize local counterparts to volunteer to repair electrical lines in remote areas;
- An IT technician could help set up websites for local NGOs, or teach computer classes in youth or community centres;
- A dentist whose formal assignment is to care for UN employees could conduct public education sessions to teach dental hygiene to local people, or even train local people to do so;
- A journalist on a public information assignment could encourage local communities to tell their own stories in their own words and on their own terms, which is empowering.

There are endless possibilities for engaging in volunteering both within and beyond your day-to-day work during your UNV assignment. Be creative! What could you do?
Dr. Onuoha Clement, a surgeon who served as a UN Volunteer in the surgery department of Sangre-Grande Hospital in Trinidad and Tobago, organized an extremely successful Walk Against Child Hunger. Speaking for both himself and fellow physicians serving as UN Volunteers, he said that "we were happy to have demonstrated that our volunteer calling is not limited to our professional assignments as medical doctors. Rather, when the need arises, volunteers can work and walk the walk too. If this is not volunteerism, then what else is?"

Over the page are some additional observations and suggestions on implementing volunteerism for peace and development throughout your assignment.

**Building up organizational capacity**

Where traditions of volunteerism seem less apparent (due to a recent conflict, for example), there may be a need to help strengthen an existing volunteer group that may not be functioning to its full potential. You could try to help build up the capacity of this local volunteer organization so that it will be able to mobilize volunteers more effectively, undertake initiatives with confidence and
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You can assist local partners in:

- Articulating objectives more clearly;
- Designing an action plan;
- Identifying and training leaders, including board members;
- Recruiting, training and managing staff and volunteers;
- Interacting with local and national authorities;
- Promoting and advocating a cause.

Sources of support for local volunteer groups

If local groups do not yet have access to networks that could support their development efforts, you could connect them to any relevant networks you may know and/or to external sources of support. The UNV Online Volunteering service could be a valuable starting point since it has helped build capacity in a wide variety of organizations around the world.

This cost-free service enables organizations to mobilize volunteers to support their development activities over the Internet. The UNV Online Volunteering service can be accessed at www.onlinevolunteering.org.

Nations (FAO), Francesco Bailo’s role was to help peasant associations in the western highlands of Guatemala increase their business and thus improve the living conditions of communities in remote rural areas such as the Altiplano Marquense, where 97.7 percent of the population lives in poverty. “Through the Online Volunteering service, we have built a direct link between two rural associations of the Altiplano and online volunteers from 15 different countries on five continents”. Their contributions were a big push for developing the associations’ business”, declares Francesco. Through onlinevolunteering.org, the peasant associations were able to find a graphic designer based in London. In less than six weeks she sent newly-designed stickers with a new logo ready for printing. Online volunteer Lilian Yip from Malaysia designed the layout of the associations’ new brochure”, in coordination with marketing expert Angélica María Hernández Balderas from Mexico, who wrote the content. A team of 13 online volunteers from six countries is now exploring ways to take the associations products to international markets, and will assist them in identifying suitable marketing channels and conforming to regulations.
The multiplier effect
Collective action voluntarily undertaken for the public good has characterized many great social movements. The synergy of 10, 100 or 1,000 people working together achieves so much more than one person or a handful of people working in isolation. The more volunteers that you are able to mobilize, the greater your impact will be.

Public education and advocacy
During the course of your assignment, you may encounter a situation or a need that is not yet fully recognized or understood by all concerned. In such a selection of the association’s products. Thanks to UNV and online volunteers, they are now just as marketable as lines from big producers.

A project to promote local participation and volunteerism in waste management in Gabú, Guinea-Bissau, offers a good example of how volunteerism can mobilize and bring people together to take development into their own hands. The project mobilized more than 90 local volunteers in 16 neighbourhoods to actively participate in the town’s waste management, and it also sensitized the local population to the importance of volunteerism for development. According to Ana Forjaz, UNV Programme Officer in Guinea-Bissau, although the project’s substantive focus was waste management and it contributed visibly to a major improvement of the service delivery and health situation in the Gabú region, the project also served as a pilot experience for effective local governance within a broader UNDP/UNCDF local development programme.
cases, public education or campaigning to
draw attention to the need can help
increase understanding and broaden
support for change. However, before
undertaking this kind of public education
or advocacy campaign, it is important to
ask yourself whether you are doing so
because of your own values and beliefs,
or those of the local population. It is also
important to consider who will be directly
affected by any change and how they will
be affected – will solving one problem
create another? Sometimes such efforts
to bring about change run counter to
deeply entrench cultural traditions, so
proceed carefully, maintaining respect for
local customs and beliefs.

In North Darfur, gender
mainstreaming and halting gender-
based violence are long-term goals
that must be addressed by the
community itself, according to
Shahzada B. Ahmad of the Sexual
and Gender Based Violence Project,
and volunteerism offers a way to help
achieve those goals. UN Volunteers
have implemented a legal aid
programme and created a network of
local attorneys who offer their
services free of charge to women in
need. These volunteer lawyers
perceive their work as an honour;
they see themselves as providing
their community with knowledge.
A Spanish UN Volunteer with the UN mission in Guatemala educating the local community on their rights.

Innovation
During your assignment, if you come up with an idea about how to promote volunteerism for development, together with your co-workers and colleagues try to turn this idea into an initiative that could attract local and/or national support for volunteerism. There might be a way to do this within the framework of your UNV assignment, or you might be able to do it in tandem with your assignment, perhaps by partnering with other local organizations.

While serving as a UN Volunteer in Laos, Avi Sarkar started a free school in the village of Non Kho Neua in space donated by local temples and the village primary school. Since the school opened in 2002, more than 1,000 children have attended. Twenty unpaid volunteers from the local community teach the children, giving their time on weekends and after work, as well as collecting resources for the school and sometimes even contributing their own money to buy snacks for the children or to put on school events such as sports days. Inspired by the contributions of these volunteer teachers, medical staff from the local hospital – including doctors, nurses and pharmacists – began offering free health services to the children attending the school. All of this began with the efforts of one UN Volunteer.
Integrating volunteerism for peace and development into different kinds of UNV assignments

Every type of UNV assignment has the potential to promote volunteerism for peace and development, but different approaches may be required depending on the specific type of assignment or its location.

Participating in, or initiating, local volunteer activities and projects not only helps the country where you are assigned, but can also help motivate you and give you the chance to get out of your regular working environment and get to know your host country and its people more closely.

You are also expected to be an internal advocate for volunteerism for development within your host organization; some ways to do this include organizing volunteering opportunities for agency staff, fundraising internally for local welfare projects, etc.

This section is by no means comprehensive, but it highlights some possible scenarios for promoting volunteerism for development in different kinds of UNV assignments.

Assignments in emergency and rehabilitation situations

Famine, natural disasters, armed conflict – UNV assignments in these situations may not leave much time to think about long-term strategies for promoting volunteerism for peace and development. However, you can be on the lookout for traditional volunteer-based approaches to coping with these kinds of emergencies, and be ready to help the host community put them into action.

Ideally UN Volunteers are more engaged in capacity building than in purely service delivery. Yet even in emergency situations where you may be involved in providing vital services, you may still be able to help build (or rebuild) local capacity. Usually, competent local leaders will emerge in these situations, and you can support them as they help people who have been affected by the emergency. You can also
Assignments with United Nations peacekeeping, peace-building, political and electoral missions

Within a peacekeeping, peace-building or political mission, or the fast-paced environment of an electoral operation, both the security situation and tight work deadlines can make it difficult to do much more than carry out your specific technical assignment. However, in addition to sharing your knowledge and skills with colleagues in your regular working environment, you may be able to find ways to interact with local NGOs and community-based activities within or alongside your assignment. Some examples of areas where this could be particularly feasible include:

- **Electoral activities** – especially civic education or voter sensitization activities;
- **Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)** – the reintegration stage in particular lends itself to volunteerism opportunities since former combatants are being reconnected both socially and economically with their home communities (volunteer activities could include joint sports or theatre activities, among many other possibilities);

**After Typhoon Durian caused massive damages in the Philippines in 2006, Bishnu Timilsina, a UN Volunteer from Nepal serving with UNICEF Philippines as Water and Sanitation Officer, volunteered to support emergency relief efforts in the Bicol region. He conducted a rapid needs assessment and then provided technical assistance to local governments and communities to maintain WatSan facilities in evacuation centres, relocation sites and affected communities. He motivated and assisted local people to construct nearly 1,000 toilets in the affected region with logistical assistance from UNICEF. He also promoted sanitation and hygiene practices in schools and evacuation centres. All of these volunteer activities were above and beyond his UNV assignment with UNICEF Philippines.**

encourage local people to respond to community needs through voluntary action (e.g., caring for the ill or wounded, providing informal education, replanting crops, etc.) and support their self-reliant efforts to help their community recover.
Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) – the local population can be mobilized to contribute manual labour, for example, to facilitate projects such as the rehabilitation of schools, health centres and orphanages.

You can also take advantage of the many resources that are available at no cost within your mission to support volunteer activities; these resources might include:

- Transportation from the Transport Section;
- Access to radio broadcasts from the Public Information Section;
- Use of podiums, gazebos or tents from the Engineering Section;
- Engaging off-duty UN peacekeepers in local welfare or community-based projects.

In Liberia, UN Volunteers have organized advocacy campaigns to promote volunteerism as a means to strengthen national peace-building efforts and contribute to development. For example, in November 2006, UN Volunteers attached to the United Nations Mission in Liberia organized a brainstorming session attended by 130 students from Monrovia’s four universities to introduce the concept of a National Youth Volunteer Service (NYVS) programme in Liberia. Through the NYVS programme, Liberian youth can contribute to national reconstruction and development. According to Ilaria Carpen, UNV Programme Officer in Liberia, since that first session, the NYVS programme has expanded dramatically, with recent events attracting 1,500 student volunteers.
Integrating volunteerism for development into the UNDP/UNV Country Programme

Where there is a UNV Programme Officer at the UNV Field Unit, s/he is responsible for building up the UNV programme and its volunteerism for peace and development dimension in the host country under the supervision of the UNDP Resident Representative. Sharing your experiences with volunteerism (both successes and challenges), as well as your ideas and suggestions for volunteer initiatives with the Country Office Team, will help them develop best practices for utilizing volunteerism.

It is also important for UNV HQ to learn from your experiences in addressing and integrating volunteerism for peace and development and good practices in doing so. Please share any stories or good examples you have by emailing them to VolunteerLearning@unvolunteers.org. The “Volunteer Knowledge and Innovation Section” will make use of your valuable contribution to boost UNV volunteer learning and share knowledge and good practices to support volunteerism for peace and development across UNV field units.

Contribute your thoughts
UN Volunteers and UNV Programme Officers are required to address volunteerism for peace and development in their work plans, project reports, annual programme reports, testimonials, etc. UNV Programme Officers are also required to address the volunteerism for development dimension of their work in their biannual reports.

Feel free to contribute photos or videos of any volunteer activities you are involved in both within and beyond your assignment; UNV can use these images to both document and promote the impact of volunteerism for development. You are also requested to share any notes or other writings about your experience with UNV so that we can use them to inspire current and future UN Volunteers.

*Please share your photos, videos and any written materials about your experience by emailing them to information@unvolunteers.org.*

Periodic Reports
All UN Volunteers are required to complete initial, interim and final Volunteer Reporting System (VRS) reports. These reports are multiple-choice questionnaires that include a number of questions that take into account the volunteerism for development dimension of your assignment. These reports will help UNV and our volunteers take stock of how well UNV as an organization is implementing volunteerism
for development, which will help us improve future delivery.

Networking

Networking with fellow UN Volunteers, your Field Units, as well as with your other networks and contacts, is an important way to promote and advocate volunteerism for peace and development. By sharing experiences with volunteerism, good practices can be identified and new ideas and innovative approaches can emerge that will help make volunteerism for development more effective. Of course, formal and informal meetings and personal conversations are not the only way to network; you could also communicate the volunteerism for development message via blogs and online forums and social networks.

TEAMWORKS

Teamworks is the globally available, secure Web 2.0 social networking platform that enables UN organizations and their external partners to leverage the collective knowledge of communities, individuals, programmes and projects. Teamworks was launched in November 2010 as a rich, full-featured platform. By using Teamworks you are joining thousands of colleagues across the globe and across the United Nations family to share knowledge and expertise and collaborate in ways never previously possible.

What you can do with Teamworks

- Profile your work and experience
- Share files, photos, and videos securely
- Stay up-to-date on colleagues’ activities
- Find and consult with recognized experts
- Exchange content in any language
- Participate in Communities of Practice
- Search the network for solutions
- Create spaces for all partner collaboration
- Get support on policy and tech issues

For questions related to TEAMWORKS, please contact UNV focal points: Romain Desclous romain.desclous@unvolunteers.org (Former Volunteers), or Koye Adeboye aadeboye@unv.org (IYV+10 and External Partners).
“I tried to bring my NGO and the self-help groups we worked with together with UNV and other volunteer organisations, both local and international. I think exchanging ideas and meeting other volunteers is very important.”

Isabel Specker, UN Volunteer intern in Mongolia

International Volunteer Day

International Volunteer Day (IVD), celebrated each year on 5 December, provides a special opportunity for all volunteers to highlight the role of volunteerism in helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Join your fellow UN Volunteers, as well as national and local volunteer-involving organizations and their volunteers, in celebrating and raising awareness of the important contribution that volunteerism makes to development.

International Volunteer Day offers a great opportunity to build solidarity and attract attention to volunteerism for peace and development. Invite your colleagues and other contacts in your country of assignment to participate in International Volunteer Day events, including preparations and follow up. You might even organize an event yourself.

In Afghanistan on International Volunteer Day 2007, UN Volunteers collaborated with other UN agencies and local ministries to educate local youth in different regions and empower them to initiate their own volunteer projects for the benefit of their communities. The volunteers trained the youth about health and sanitation issues, and then the young people went back to their home communities to educate their peers and further spread awareness of volunteerism for development.

Despite security restrictions and other challenges to organizing regular programming, International Volunteer Day was a successful vehicle for educating Afghan youth in different regions. According to Karma Loday, OIC/UNV Support Officer in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, “there is no security situation that will hinder volunteers determined to make a difference.”
International Year of Volunteers IYV+10

In November 1997, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2001 as the International Year Volunteers (IYV). The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme was designated as the international focal point.

The premise underlying IYV 2001 was that voluntary service makes an essential contribution in addressing problems in areas of social, economic, cultural, humanitarian and peace building. For this to happen, there was a need for greater recognition and facilitation of volunteer work, more vigorous promotion of voluntary service, and networks to facilitate a drawing upon – the “good practice” – of volunteers. The designation of an International Year of Volunteers by the UN General Assembly (GA) provided a valuable framework and established a favorable environment enabling a more strategic use of volunteer contributions.

The year 2011 marks the 10th anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) in 2001. Opportunities exist for activities throughout 2011 that will showcase the diversity, breadth and depth of volunteering worldwide and offer the chance to raise the profile of volunteering and mobilize many more volunteers. Throughout 2011, UNV will partner with different stakeholders to exchange and develop ideas and actions for raising awareness about the contribution of volunteerism to peace and development; acknowledging the importance of the work already
accomplished by the various stakeholders and identifying areas where greater efforts are needed.

All leaders in Governments, volunteer involving organizations, civil society, private sector, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations system and from communities are called to recognize and celebrate the achievements of volunteers by actively engaging in the marking of IYV+10.

There are many ways you can get involved to prepare for and mark IYV+10:

- **Visit World Volunteer Web**: The www.worldvolunteerweb.org is the space where you can find news, background information and useful tools for IYV+10.

- **Liaise with your host agency and others**: You may be able to assist with events your organizational network anticipates hosting. Use the IYV+10 promotional materials to brand your own organization’s campaign. You may also wish to contact other organizations within your country to exchange event ideas and collaborate for the upcoming year.

- **Complete an online survey**: to prepare and mark the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers in 2011 and to provide information on existing national committees, which could play a role in marking IYV+10. The survey can be found at: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JMWF2K3.

- **Offer online support**: If you wish to volunteer online for IYV+10, you can visit www.onlinevolunteering.org for opportunities to support IYV+10 activities. Go to “Opportunity Search” and type “IYV+10” in the keyword field.

- **Looking for volunteers to support your IYV+10 activities?** You can register your organization on www.onlinevolunteering.org and post IYV+10 related opportunities for volunteers to support your activities over the Internet.

For more information, tools, brochures and resources, visit http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/iyv-10/field
After your assignment

“A UN Volunteer’s experiences should be an ongoing and evolving process – not just a one-time stint.”
A former UN Volunteer

When your UNV assignment comes to an end, you will join the ranks of a global community of more than 50,000 former UN Volunteers scattered all over the world. Both collectively and individually, former UN Volunteers are part of a very powerful force. Many UN Volunteers view their assignment as one stage of a lifelong commitment to volunteerism for peace and development.

Debriefing and End-of-Assignment Report

When you undergo your end-of-assignment debriefing and submit your final Volunteer Reporting System (VRS) report, you are invited to share comments and stories about your personal experiences with volunteerism for development. We ask you to share your experiences so that you can contribute to and enhance our knowledge about volunteerism for peace and development. Stories that showcase the special role volunteerism played in achieving the objectives of your assignment are especially helpful.

The process of recording your experiences will help to highlight the benefits you brought to your host community. This process also offers you the opportunity to identify challenges and describe how you addressed them (or if the challenges persist, to offer your suggestions for addressing them). It is an important chance for you to reflect on your assignment and put your whole experience as a UN Volunteer into a broader picture, in terms of your contribution to both development and your personal growth, before you return home or move on to your next professional opportunity.

Sharing your experiences with volunteerism during your assignment will help UNV improve its support for future volunteers. Your experiences and the lessons you learned during your assignment will also help future volunteers to grasp the distinctive contribution that UN Volunteers make to development, and will furnish them with good practices from the field.
Keeping up-to-date
The World Volunteer Web (www.worldvolunteerweb.org) is an important resource for keeping current with developments in volunteerism around the world. You can help keep this valuable interactive repository of information and expertise about volunteering relevant and up to date by contributing stories, videos and photos from your UNV assignment to the website, or even starting a blog about your ideas for promoting volunteerism.

Before departing the location of your assignment, you might also assist local volunteer groups to submit their own stories and experiences to the World Volunteer Web. We also invite you to keep updated on the work of UNV by viewing our website (www.unv.org).

Staying involved
After your UNV assignment ends, there are many ways to stay involved in volunteering for peace and development. Some of these include:

- Getting involved in volunteering activities in your home community (or wherever you go after your UNV assignment);
- Becoming a member of the Former UN Volunteer Network and contribute to promote, enable and strengthen volunteerism for peace and development while staying in touch with fellow former UN Volunteers. Do not hesitate to contact us at Former.Volunteers@UNV.org for more information on how to become a member.
- Sharing your skills and expertise directly from your home or office by volunteering over the Internet via the UNV Online Volunteering service (www.onlinevolunteering.org);
- Continuing to support local NGOs or other organizations you may have helped during your UNV assignment;
- Supporting the efforts of other organizations to help them strengthen the impact of their development work;
- Being an advocate for volunteerism for development in your home community. (See the next section for more details.)

Advocating for volunteerism for peace and development at home
Regardless of where you go or what you do after your UNV assignment, you will have opportunities to persuade others to become involved in voluntary actions to promote development and reduce suffering around the world.
As a former UN Volunteer, you are very well positioned to be a persuasive advocate for volunteerism for development thanks to your ability to speak from experience. Your personal insights, enthusiasm and conviction will help make your message compelling.

Make the most of your position to inform and educate the public (whether at home or elsewhere) about development issues and to lobby governments to foster conditions in which volunteerism can flourish. If you wish, you can also be an informal ambassador for UNV, encouraging others to become UN Volunteers.

Your efforts as an advocate for volunteerism for peace and development will have much greater impact if they are coordinated through active networks, so be on the lookout for opportunities to join others or support collective action to advocate for volunteerism.

No matter where you are based, how much time you have, or what kind of work you do after your UNV assignment has ended, you can play an important role in promoting volunteerism for peace and development. With so many former UN Volunteers around the world, the possibilities for success are enormous. Please do whatever you can to continue supporting our collective mission of harnessing the vast potential of volunteerism to advance development and peace worldwide.

This is a living document that will change as your needs change. If you have comments and additions that you feel can make it more useful, please send your feedback to volunteer_tools@unv.org. It is hoped that the exercises and topics discussed will help to make your transition a successful one. We look forward to hearing from you in the future.