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21st Century Volunteering Practices

Two decades after the International Year of Volunteering, the United Nations General Assembly has requested UNV and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to organize a Global Technical Meeting on “Reimagining Volunteering for the 2030 Agenda” in July 2020 as a milestone in the Plan of Action to Integrate Volunteering into the 2030 Agenda. This short paper revisits the 1999 background paper "Volunteering and Social Development" after two decades, reviewing and updating the analysis to inform the Global Technical Meeting.

This paper is divided into three parts.

The first explores attempts to capture and describe how volunteering has changed over the years. This section examines the dominant conceptualizations of volunteering as a social practice and explores how research has taken into account the contribution of volunteering to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda.

The second section briefly revisits the 1999 typology and discusses how it can be revised and updated in light of the changes described.

Finally, the third section presents a framework for understanding volunteering practices in the twenty-first century and raises some critical questions for further discussion.

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Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)