

06 December 2017



Group photo of participants at the event "Volunteers as First Responders in Times of Crisis: Volunteers for resilience and solidarity" holding papers with the International Volunteer Day campaign tagline, "Volunteers Act First. Here. Everywhere." (UNV, 2017)

## Volunteers as first responders in Nepal

UNV Executive Coordinator Mr. Olivier Adam was in Nepal to celebrate International Volunteer Day along with United Nations partners and volunteer-involving organizations working in the country.

The event, under the title "Volunteers as First Responders in Times of Crisis: Volunteers for resilience and solidarity," kicked off [International Volunteer Day](#) (also called IVD) worldwide.

The event aligned with the IVD global campaign to promote volunteers as first responders in times of crisis and instability, helping people to rebuild their lives in the immediate aftershock of tragic events.

UNV Executive Coordinator Mr. Olivier Adam acknowledged the efforts of the Nepali people after the devastating 2015 earthquake:

“ You, the people of Nepal, experienced loss, displacement and devastation but despite the incredible grief, you demonstrated your tireless commitment to humanitarian relief and recovery. With this tragedy came hope in how thousands of Nepalese took action and volunteered. Many people volunteered without even realizing that they were volunteers - they simply worked where help was

needed for neighbors, friends and families."

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Mr. Adam also made reference to the [swift mobilization of 107 UN Volunteers who served with the United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#) in earthquake-affected sites to perform critical functions and deliver services to the victims.

One of those UN Volunteers shared their personal stories as first responders during the event. In the words of Mr. Sudarshan Ghimire, UN Volunteer with UNDP after the earthquake: “Some people didn’t have land to move in and were living in the land of other people. We volunteered to clear the debris to make a platform upon which people could rebuild their lives. Together we demolished 1,300 houses and helped around 5,000 people to rebuild their houses and their lives. The respect, admiration and love that we received from the community was an ultimate result of volunteerism.”

The three winners of the “V-Awards” 2017, who were named Volunteers of the Year 2017 as Nepal’s most inspiring and committed volunteers, were also announced during the event. Mr. Narayan Kumar Shrestha, Ms. Sajana Sunar, and Mr. Rajan Shrivastav all sent a strong message encouraging all the attendees and all people in Nepal to volunteer. Ms. Sunar shared that she started volunteering because she didn’t want others, especially children and youth, to face caste discrimination which she faced. She shared she chose to volunteer because she wanted to make a change in the society.

Ms. Valérie Julliard, UN Resident Coordinator, paid tribute to the contributions made by volunteers, commenting:

“ Volunteers alleviate sufferings of people in times of crisis, and suffering in many ways, when the only help can come from other people. Selflessness and taking action to support other people and lives on earth without expecting rewards, what I heard from many of the volunteers today, are the core attributes of the volunteers.”

The event was organized by UNV in partnership with Uniterra/CECI, VSO, Peace Corps, and KOICA.

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Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities](#)