International Volunteer Day 2014

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International Volunteer Day (IVD), on December 5th, was designated by the United Nations in 1985 as an international observance day to celebrate the power and potential of volunteerism. It is an opportunity for volunteers, and volunteer organizations, to raise awareness of, and gain recognition for, the contribution they make to their communities.

On IVD 2014, the IMPACT 2030 Declaration—a UNV-brokered collaboration between the UN and the private sector on corporate volunteering—was presented to the UN Secretary-General’s Special Advisor on Post-2015 Development Planning at an event organized by UNV in New York. IMPACT 2030 is a global coalition of private sector leaders and other stakeholders aiming to expand and encourage corporate volunteering activities to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. You can watch the video of the event here.

IVD 2014 highlighted the contribution of volunteers in engaging people from the grassroots in decision-making processes, ultimately creating spaces for participation that lead to stronger governance, social cohesion, peace and sustainable development. We not only celebrate volunteerism in all its facets, but also pay special tribute to people’s participation in making a difference locally, nationally and globally.

- In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UN Volunteers and staff of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo joined to celebrate IVD in Goma. ‘Volunteer and put your weapons down!’ showcased the potential of young volunteers to advocate for sustainable peace. Some 300 volunteers equipped with spades, brooms and wheelbarrows took to the street, sweeping and cleaning as they went. In addition, volunteers helped plant trees and painted a mural about environmental protection in the yard of a local school to encourage environmentalism among the young. Aimed at promoting youth commitment to peace in the Kivus region, a concert featured local young artists and volunteers raising awareness of their shared culture and identity. More than 200 volunteers from nine associations took part in the IVD activities in
Goma.

- In Turkmenistan, seven alumni of the U.S. government-funded exchange program FLEX and local volunteers held trainings for community members to share professional skills. The event started with an introduction to volunteerism and its benefits for the community and the volunteers themselves. Following this presentation, community members took part in trainings focused on communications skills, project management, team-building and time management.

- In Bhutan, IVD was celebrated through a series of public activities. In the capital, Thimphu, distinguished keynote speakers and a panel discussion by volunteers shed light on the many ways people contribute to volunteering in the country. Information on volunteer opportunities, as well as the possibility to vote for the MY World survey was offered at the display stalls during the day. Posters highlighting the volunteer work of 11 organizations were exhibited for two weeks after IVD at the Nehru-Wangchuck Cultural Centre. In addition to the official events, two youth centres managed by the Department of Youth and Sports in the towns of Phuentsholing and Gelephu initiated activities to mark IVD, including a cleaning campaign.

More stories from world's volunteers are available here.