

International Volunteer Day 2012

Across the world, from Ecuador to Haiti, Liberia to Bosnia, Jordan to Vietnam, people celebrated IVD 2012.

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.

Across the world, from Ecuador to Haiti, Liberia to Bosnia, Jordan to Vietnam, people celebrated IVD 2012. On December 5th, volunteers and volunteer organizations held a variety of events including parades, campaigns, conferences, competitions, blood donation drives and coordinated volunteer actions. They celebrated with their communities, local institutions, UN organizations and government authorities to recognize the hope and commitment that volunteers bring to make the world a better place.

“Every year, hundreds of millions of people around the world give their time and share their skills,” said Flavia Pansieri, Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme. “They are driven by a desire to contribute to the well-being of their society, without expectation of material reward, and their efforts promote civic values and social cohesion.”

Volunteers and voluntary organizations joined together to mark the day.

- In **South Africa**, organizations such as Volunteer Services Overseas, Regional AIDS Initiative of Southern Africa (RAISA), UNV South Africa, and Peace Corps offered free diagnostic services, sports activities and donations of food and clothing items to the Lufuno Home Based Care Center in Limpopo Province.
- In **Ghana**, volunteers celebrated by cleaning and decorating four separate children's wards for Christmas at the St. Louise Marie Children's Hospital.
- In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, UN Volunteers marked IVD with a blood donation drive and free HIV testing.
- In **Guinea Bissau**, volunteers created a national sensitization campaign on recycling and sustainable management of natural resources.
- In **Sri Lanka**, UN Volunteers held an art competition with the theme 'Volunteering for Water'.
- Volunteer **Canada** launched a new website designed to serve as a central connection point for key volunteering organizations and websites across Canada.

In 2012, UNV initiated a five-year strategy to raise global awareness of the existence and importance of IVD. The strategy included a new IVD logo and use of the established platform, Volunteer Action Counts, with its website

www.volunteeractioncounts.org. Through this website, users downloaded a wide range of IVD promotional materials to support their IVD events, and uploaded their IVD stories, photos and videos. In addition, volunteers used Twitter to share their stories and experiences by using the hashtag #actioncounts.

Every year, hundreds of millions of people volunteer their time and skills to help make the world a better place. IVD serves as an ideal opportunity to recognize the significant impact that volunteerism makes worldwide. Volunteering can embrace all people, “from the activist who works full-time for a cause to the occasional citizen who reaches out when he or she can,” said United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon to mark the occasion. “Each sets an example of the spirit of compassion we need. Each makes a valuable contribution to reaching our common goals.”

More information about the campaign is available [here](#).