



National UN Volunteer Adelaide dos Remedios Magaia (right), UNV Field Monitor, is organizing beneficiaries for food distribution during the floods at Hokwe accommodation camp (Gaza province) in Mozambique. (Leonor Fernandez/WFP, 2013)

## UNV celebrates International Women's Day recognizing the work of UN Volunteers towards gender equality

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme celebrates today International Women's Day supporting the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and their theme "Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50:50 by 2030."

UNV works to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women from both an institutional and a programmatic perspective. We wish to use this occasion to feature the rich variety of ways UN Volunteers around the world contribute to [SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls](#).

Almost 2,000 female UN Volunteers currently serve in the field with UN entities worldwide. They perform all kinds of assignments, from human rights officers to humanitarian relief experts to logistics to medical doctors, in more than 60 countries. On top of it, every year 7,000 female UN Online Volunteers complete assignments to advance peace and development from home.

Moreover, more than 100 UN Volunteers serve directly supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women in field projects and programmes. This includes UN Volunteers involved in responses to gender-based violence (Viet Nam, Indonesia), the promotion of sexual and reproductive health (Cameroon, South Sudan), behavioural changes and social norms (Guatemala, Afghanistan), reconciliation and healing (Kenya, Mali) and gender mainstreaming in projects and policies, including peacebuilding, youth, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian operations throughout the world.

In Afghanistan, UNV is implementing the "Youth-Mullah Volunteer Caravan on Gender Equality and Rights", a project that aims to increase gender equality and empower local women and girls through a unique model of collaboration whereby UN Volunteers provide training to local volunteers on gender sensitization and awareness, and then these messages are channeled through local religious leaders (mullahs) to transform socio-cultural and behavioral features, central in changes towards gender equality.

In Asia and the Pacific, the joint regional programme "[Partners for Prevention](#)" aims at ending violence against women through the involvement of men and boys to change attitudes, practices and social norms. UN Volunteers work together with community

members to set up male advocacy clubs hosted by UN Women and lead discussions to encourage participants to reflect on gender stereotypes, challenge misconceptions embedded within communities and identify specific and localized responses.

In Eastern and Southern Africa, UN Volunteers support UN Women in a wide range of areas and programmes. They provide technical assistance, support the organization of conferences and logistics and improve capacity for monitoring and evaluation and communications towards the promotion of gender equality.

In Rwanda, an ongoing project in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugees (MIDIMAR) contributes to enhancing the capacities of rural women on disaster risk reduction strategies and promotes their participation in decision making processes related to disaster prevention at the community level.

In Togo, UNV adapted the co-educational curriculum “Voices against Violence” to Togolese contexts to provide interactive, child- and youth-centred ways for young people to talk about relationships, gender equality and abuse within a safe and supportive environment. Once finished, the project will have provided the curriculum to 500 volunteer teachers nationwide.

After the earthquake that hit Ecuador in April 2016, UNV mobilized 24 UN Volunteers to support the emergency response in the country. Of these, 11 were deployed with UN Women and four with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to prevent gender-based violence and organize mentoring and entrepreneurship activities for women.

Finally, a group of 35 UN [Online Volunteers](#) supported the NGO Mujeres Emprendedoras de Chile by developing gender-sensitive inspirational content on entrepreneurship to increase motivation, transfer knowledge and help women overcome the main barriers when starting a business. The project reached around 5,000 women entrepreneurs throughout the country.

As we have seen, UNV and UN Volunteers’ distinct approach contributes to personal change in attitudes and practices, supports UN agencies in providing women and girls with equal access to basic social services, engages broad community participation and makes women’s voices heard in local development, planning and decision-making for the long-term benefit of entire societies in multiple places around the world.

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 5: Gender equality](#)