



Alexis Komboudry, 60 years old, took on a national UN Volunteer assignment in his country to support peaceful elections.

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"When you speak at your age, the young people listen to you"

Around the world today, people 50 years of age and older are contributing their passion, time and expertise to volunteering assignments with United Nations partners.

Many are drawn to volunteerism later in life as a way to contribute and give back to the societies and communities around them. For others, volunteering is a way to fulfil long-held ambitions, explore new fields of work and develop new skills.

Whatever their motivation, the work of UNV's partners and the places they live are enriched by the contributions of more than 600 older volunteers undertaking national and international assignments across the world.

Take Maria Benigna Marco-Vuagniaux (Philippines), a 69-year old national UN Volunteer with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Maria speaks of how she is driven by passion and commitment and how her connection with others helps her to stay healthy and happy.

“ As the Administrative Assistant in a department of 80 staff, I feel I am contributing in my simple way. I am learning to recognize my strengths and how to improve them. I provide substantive support and help out when colleagues have personal challenges. I render time to show empathy, lift their spirits and give advice if they are troubled, and I am proud of this. My motto is: "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others". --Maria Benigna Marco-Vuagniaux, UN Volunteer with IOM

Alexis Komboudry, a former national UN Volunteer in his home country of Burkina Faso, came to volunteer at age 60 following a 15-year stint with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), where he helped communities implement decentralization projects. After retiring, Alexis says he saw a call from UNDP for volunteers to support elections and thought to himself, “Why not get involved and see how local communities take ownership of the electoral process?”.

Alexis managed eight polling stations, trained polling station attendants and supervised the deployment of electoral material. He also took part in the sensitization of communities for a peaceful electoral process, and was able to reach fellow Burkinabe of all generations.

“ On the ground, someone said to me, "When you speak at your age, the young people listen to you". -- Alexis Komboudry, former national UN Volunteer with UNDP, Burkina Faso

Of the 638 volunteers aged fifty or above who served with UNV in 2021 to date, 494 are aged fifty plus, 125 are over the age of sixty, and 19 are 70 years old or more. The majority of these are serving in international

assignments, just like Jorge Enrique Guzman Perdomo.

At 71 years of age, Jorge the oldest serving UN Volunteer in Latin America and the Caribbean. He is part of the electoral team that advises Bolivia's plurinational electoral body. Hailing from Colombia, Jorge is a UN Volunteer Electoral Communications Expert with UNDP in Bolivia.

“During my assignment, I supported the implementation of democratic, transparent and legitimate elections that followed the severe political crisis of November 2019. I advised on the formulation of messages targeting communities, political parties and the media. Despite the pandemic, in 2020, we finally implemented our plan and helped guarantee respect of the biosafety protocols during voting days,” Jorge said.

Maria, Alexis, and Jorge are three of the many mature volunteers serving with the UN around the world. On the International Day of Older Persons, we thank them for embodying inspiration in action and contributing to the delivery of our partners.



Global

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