IVD in Latin America and the Caribbean: national fora and awards recognize the power of volunteerism

Since 1985, we have celebrated volunteer efforts around the world every year on International Volunteer Day (IVD), 5 December. This year, the UN Volunteers (UNV) programme launched the global campaign Volunteer Now for a Common Future which highlights the importance of volunteering now to achieve the changes we want to see in the future. Together with representatives of governments, UN entities, funds, programmes and others, we thanked volunteers around the world for their work, and invited yet more to be part of the movement towards change. Check out our social media to view the 32 testimonials we published on the occasion, on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

The celebrations we had in the region were as diverse as they were engaging.
In Brazil, we organized a webinar on December 3 for private sector and volunteer-involving organizations to discuss how technology can be used to advance volunteerism. In addition, we convened Blue Room Talks, a forum where UN Volunteers shared their experiences in the field. Learn more through UNV Brazil’s Instagram account!

In Guatemala, UNV started the celebrations for #IVD2021 with a press conference to showcase the power of volunteerism to a wider audience. We UNV also had a stand at the Virtual Volunteering Fair 2021. Held by the Guatemalan Volunteer Centre, UNV used the stand to engage with prospective volunteers, raise awareness of its mandate and encourage more people to get involved in our common future.

In Peru, the celebrations began with the inauguration of Volunteer Week on 1 December, which you can learn more about from this press conference with government partners. We also held the III National Volunteerism Forum, focusing on the role of volunteerism in crisis contexts.

Together with the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations, the Bicentennial Special Project, France Volontaires and the Soy Voluntari@ Network, we held the National Recognition of Volunteerism (RENAVOL), where the good practices of Peruvian volunteer organizations were recognized.

In addition, UN Volunteers Peru participated in a Volunteer Fair in the city of Arequipa within the framework of the Patria Festival, where awards were presented to outstanding volunteers from each region of the country. For more about volunteering in Peru, read the following article.

In Venezuela, we convened a webinar to share the experience of former UN Volunteer Samira Araiz, who now works at the headquarters of the World Food Programme. She is a clear example of the opportunities that one can gain exposure to by serving as a UN Volunteer.

UNV in Venezuela also signed an agreement with FIPAN, a local non-governmental organization on a Voluntary Commitment to the SDGs for a better future, capturing the importance of cooperating with civil society.

UN Volunteers in Colombia participated in the opening of the Virtual Volunteering Summit of the Universidad del Norte and took part in the XII National Assembly of the Colombian National Volunteering System on 4 December. At this event, they shared with local authorities, the academic community and civil society the results delivered by UNV at national and global level over the past 50 years since its founding.

In addition, UNV, together with the Botanical Garden of Bogota and the Ministry of Mines and Energy, pursued climate action with a day of tree planting.
In **Panama**, 148 volunteers were recognized for their work and dedication in helping citizens in crisis contexts. They were awarded the [Volunteers of the Bicentennial](#) award.

Among the activities in **Ecuador**, UNV, together with the entities from the Equatorial Volunteering Network, organized the First Virtual Encounter entitled [Youth Volunteering for a Common Future](#), in which more than 150 volunteers from 20 provinces of the country and representing 50 organizations, participated. In addition, UNV organized the “IVD 20-21 for a Common Future” event, where UN Volunteers shared a space in which they exchanged thoughts and reflected on the importance of volunteering. You can explore the celebrations in Ecuador through the [video](#) and [photos](#) of the event.

Thousands of people around the world joined the celebrations of International Volunteer Day 2021, sharing photos or videos on social media with the hashtags #IVD2021, #VolunteerNow, #DIV2021 and #DoVolunteer. Join us in volunteering for our common future!

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This article was prepared with the kind support of Online Volunteers Lucía Mayandía, Florencia Guzmán and Helen Maccan.

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**Latin America and the Caribbean**

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