Intithar Hassan, an Iraqi volunteer and activist, sharing her experience in advocating for positive change within the society through volunteering, poetry and theatre.

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Iraq launches its first National Youth Volunteering Platform

The National Youth Volunteering Platform (NYVP) is a new innovative tool that allows young people in Iraq to be matched to volunteer opportunities. Its launch was announced on 8 December 2021 by the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports in Iraq, the Ministry of Culture and Youth in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), in collaboration with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, thanks to the support of the Government of Germany.

The National Youth Volunteering Platform will establish a structured volunteering programme for the first time in Iraq. This platform will give young people a chance to register, search and apply for volunteer activities, in line with their skills and interests.
Opportunities will be provided by various partners and organizations, including private companies, non-governmental organizations and institutions.

UNICEF will manage the operationalization of the platform with the support of the two ministries, while UNV will conduct capacity building and skills development programmes for youth volunteers. Furthermore, UNV will be promoting the platform among national partners and supporting the mobilization of youth volunteers.

“Volunteering is about giving, sharing, standing with others and supporting important issues in society to build a better future for all. Volunteer work is one of the most vital mechanisms in achieving social, environmental, economic, sports transformation and institutional work. Young volunteers become active agents of change and equal partners to achieve local, national and international progress towards sustainable human development and global peace. --Adnan Darjal, Iraqi Minister of Youth and Sports

Following the celebration on 5 December of International Volunteer Day 2021, under the theme Volunteer Now for our Common Future, the platform promotes volunteering, encourages governments to support volunteering efforts and recognizes these contributions to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“This platform is a decisive step to ensure young people can engage with their communities in the most effective way possible to bring social change, while also equipping them with skills that will improve their chances to access the labor market. --Paula Bulancea, acting UNICEF Representative in Iraq

"The National Youth Volunteering Platform opens doors for young Iraqis to serve their community, contribute to achieving lasting peace and localize the SDGs. Besides, this platform aims at building the capacities of youth volunteers to equip them with necessary soft skills for successful assignment. It also prepares them for the post assignment period," said Ahmed Alsultan, UNV Country Coordinator in Iraq.

The platform will mainly target Iraqi youth, boys and girls between the ages of 15 and 24 years, including UNICEF-supported youth groups. It has a particular focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as youth who are not in employment, education
or training (NEET), youth affected by conflict and violence and youth with disabilities.

Youth volunteerism largely contributes to the transition of societies by leading action that addresses challenges at the grassroots and providing an opportunity for youth to have a pivotal role in peacebuilding and social cohesion efforts.

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth SDG 10: Reduced inequalities SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals