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UN Volunteers cleaning St Christopher's home library, where they conducted a book drive for disadvantaged children.  
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## IVD in the Pacific: capturing the unseen contribution of volunteers to development

In celebration of International Volunteer Day (IVD) 2021, community groups and volunteer organizations across the Pacific organized events at the national level. Outstanding volunteers and organizations were also recognized through the UNV 50 Awards. The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme celebrated IVD in partnership with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), volunteer-involving organizations and government representatives.

In line with the theme of IVD 2021, *Volunteer Now for Our Common Future*, partners across the Pacific came together to honour volunteers striving to address development challenges in their communities.

“ As a society, the future of life depends on ensuring access to healthcare, education, housing and clean

energy, to all as well as adapting to climate change.

“ This is a tough task, after we have been fighting the pandemic for two years and failing to reduce our carbon footprint as we should to protect the planet. Yet for this, many times we depend on volunteers. -- Dr Simona Marinescu, UN Resident Coordinator heading the UN Multi-Country Office that serves the Cook Islands, Niue Samoa and Tokelau

Shakuntla Permal, a volunteer from Lautoka, in Fiji, received a UNV50 Outstanding Volunteer Award for raising the voices of rural women. Dr Innocent, UN Volunteer Medical Officer with UNDP in Kiribati, received an award for his dedication to caring for people living with HIV and supporting the Kiribati National HIV programme.

The Noteworthy Youth Volunteer Award went to Lynette Sifa of the Red Cross in Tonga. Working with various stakeholders, Amelia Bai received Inclusivity Champion Volunteer Award for her commitment.

“ I believe volunteering is resilient in itself - a vocation that passes on from generation to generation, and very much part of our human nature or in our DNA - because of the values of kindness, respect, charity and giving. --Shalina Miah, Regional Manager of UNV Asia Pacific, at a side event of the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference (COP26)

At the national level, different volunteer groups organized events to illustrate the importance of volunteering.

For instance, in **Fiji**, UN Volunteers organized a book drive and an online seminar. In **Samoa**, volunteer-involving organizations gather to support the International Week of People with Disabilities at the Tuanamoto Sports

Complex.

Events included a book drive and clean-up of St Christopher's home library for disadvantaged children.



Levan Bouadze, Resident Representative of the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji, noted that volunteers are key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and their recognition demonstrates UNV's importance in promoting volunteerism in the region.

“ Without volunteers, we cannot achieve a better Fiji and a better Pacific. It is often the case that what they do goes unseen and without much fanfare or attention. The theme of this year's IVD is perfect for capturing this. --Levan Bouadze, Resident Representative of the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji

"Volunteer movements are characterized by their sole agenda of helping their communities, of alleviating hardship and conflict. This is characteristic of volunteers, whose only agenda is to help, mitigate the hardships and struggles of their communities," adds Levan.

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• IVD2021 • International Volunteer Day • UNV50

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)