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Gender and volunteering: an interactive toolkit for promoting gender equality and volunteering in national policy frameworks.

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Promoting gender equality through volunteering: a new interactive toolkit for policymakers

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme has developed an interactive online toolkit for promoting gender equality through volunteering in national policies and frameworks, to help policymakers and practitioners consider how volunteering can support efforts towards gender equality and women's empowerment. It is available on UNV's Knowledge Portal on Volunteerism.

Millions of women, men, girls and boys around the world actively volunteer, using their time and efforts to help others. Since volunteering is done by, and between people, there are differences in the way women and men participate in volunteering activities. These differences include, for example, the amount of time women and men spend volunteering, the institutional context (formal vs. informal volunteering), the type of volunteering activities in which women and men engage, the sectors or issues that drive men and women to volunteer, or the levels of responsibility which male and female volunteers have.

Like other gender differences observed in society, these are not natural occurrences but are shaped by social structures and power dynamics

between groups of people. Where inequalities occur, the potential capacities of women to contribute to development efforts through volunteering are reduced.

UNV has developed an interactive toolkit for promoting gender equality through volunteering in national or subnational policy frameworks, to help policymakers and practitioners consider how volunteering can support efforts towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

The toolkit outlines ways in which gender concerns can be integrated into national volunteering frameworks, strategies or plans. It also suggests ways in which volunteering focal points and other stakeholders can work with broader policymakers to ensure that volunteering is a positive tool for gender-equal social and economic development.

The central part of the toolkit presents step-by-step guidance for conducting a gender analysis, identifying and categorizing priority actions, and identifying opportunities for policy integration.

Building on examples from different countries and organizations around the world, seven interrelated strategies for change are provided: 1) Data and evidence approaches, for example through measurement and improved gender-disaggregated data; 2) Addressing gendered barriers to volunteering, such as gender-specific safety and security concerns; 3) Challenging the gendered distribution of volunteer work, for example through gender-responsive budgeting; 4) Promoting women's voice and leadership through volunteering; 5) Building value around women's volunteer work, for example through policies and investments to formalize unpaid work; 6) Volunteering to support gendered needs and priorities, such as women's economic empowerment; 7) Volunteering for strategic change and gender-equal societies, for example through national strategies and plans.

The toolkit also includes case studies from India, Mexico, Niger and Turkey, highlighting country-specific initiatives to promote gender equality through volunteering.

For more information, please visit the [UNV Knowledge Portal on Volunteerism](#).

Global

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