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UN Volunteers Ola Al-Zubi (left) and Lina Kadri (right) planting a citrus tree in Deir 'Alla, Jordan Valley, in celebration of International Volunteer Day 2022.

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## IVD in the Arab States: celebrating solidarity and inclusion

The International Volunteer Day campaign in 2022 focused on solidarity through volunteering. In the Arab States, celebrations aimed to translate the campaign's slogan "Together, Act Now" into action. In a variety of initiatives, participants joined forces with volunteers or stood in solidarity with people from vulnerable local communities.

In [Yemen](#), UN Volunteers serving in Sana'a marked IVD with UNV Executive Coordinator Toily Kurbanov and UNV Regional Manager for the Arab States Christian Hainzl. The event was held at the premises of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and attended by representatives of UNDP, the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). In his [statement](#) from Sana'a, Mr Kurbanov expressed his solidarity with UN Volunteers serving in challenging contexts in Yemen and around the world.

In Djibouti, IVD was celebrated through a networking event held on 4 December and opened by UNDP Resident Representative Ms Emma N'Gouan-Anoh. The event was attended by 60 participants, including the Country Representative of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Country

Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), Deputy Representative of UNICEF, representatives from the embassies of France and Japan, the Red Cross and several local youth associations. The day focused on strengthening UNV partnerships and attracting candidates interested in serving as UN Volunteers. At a volunteer-run booth, candidates were given the opportunity to learn more about how to register to serve with the United Nations.

In Egypt, UNV held a full-day event in Cairo, with 450 attendees onsite, in the presence of the Minister of Social Solidarity HE Dr Nivine Kabbag, representatives of the Ministries of Youth and Sports and of Environment, the UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative and representatives of civil society organizations.

Activities included a volunteering exhibition, theatrical performance by Y-PEER volunteers raising awareness on the harmful practice of female genital mutilation and a high-level panel discussion on different volunteering models in Egypt. In addition, special recognition awards were distributed to volunteers who supported the organization of the Sharm el-Sheikh Climate Change Conference (COP 27) in Egypt, including nine UN Volunteers. Later in the day, the winners of the UNV Egypt 2022 Country Awards were announced.

In Jordan, UNV organized a tree-planting activity of 1,000 citrus trees in Deir 'Alla in Jordan Valley, in partnership with the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN) and under the auspices of the Minister of Culture HE Ms Haifa Najjar. The activity aimed at recognizing volunteerism and the contribution of volunteers, while contributing to our environment by adding to the country's national green cover. At the same time, the planted trees would help generate income for four local small farmers in a marginalized community, including one person with disability.

In Lebanon, a two-day event was organized on 5 and 6 December by the Arab Voluntary Union and National Commission of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It was held at the UNESCO Palace, under the patronage of the Prime Minister and in close collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

The opening ceremony was attended by more than 1,000 secondary education and university students, in addition to non-governmental organizations and UN representatives. Visitors toured the booths of more than 70 participating organizations to learn about their work and the volunteering opportunities they offer. Side sessions were also organized addressing topics related to volunteering, including a session on disability

inclusion and volunteering, where three UN Volunteers with disabilities shared their stories.

In Morocco, several activities were organized by UNV in cooperation with UN partners, government, civil society and academic institutions. These included an art workshop held in Rabat on 1 December to illustrate the contribution of volunteering to building solidarity and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A ceremony was also held to announce the winners of UNV's Morocco 2022 Country Awards on 5 December. The award ceremony was held under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the Minister of State in charge of Human Rights and Relations with Parliament and the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication.

In the State of Palestine, activities conducted to celebrate IVD focused on volunteer-led action in solidarity with small communities. These included an olive-picking activity by UN Volunteers and UNDP personnel to support the efforts of farmers in the village of Saffa, north of Ramallah.

In addition, a community-volunteering initiative was held to clean-up debris and leftovers of a UNDP sewage construction project in Attile, Tulkarm. UNV took part in the First Educational Forum for Volunteering and Volunteer Management, which was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Scouts movement on 16 and 17 November.

In Sudan, IVD was celebrated with a full day event in Khartoum on 9 December, in partnership with UNHCR, the Omdurman Cultural Centre, and the private sector. The event was attended by Head of the Resident Coordinator's Office and UNDP Resident Representative, who received a UNV Champion plaque in recognition of UNDP being the UN entity with the largest number of UN Volunteers serving in Sudan in 2022.

Activities also included a blood donation campaign, a public exhibition where volunteer-involving organizations showcased their work and available volunteering opportunities, and discussion sessions on solidarity and volunteering. The event concluded with a live musical concert.

Other activities in Sudan took place in Abyei, where staff and UN Volunteers of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) engaged with people from the local community in sporting events. Moreover, UNV and UNISFA collaborated to establish and inaugurate the first ever library at a local school catering to about 1,500 students.

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## Arab States

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 10: Reduced inequalities](#) [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)