UN Youth Volunteers Programme

Over the past year, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme has been engaging with the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD), youth-led networks, international volunteer-sending organizations, national volunteering and civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector to develop and scale-up the youth volunteers programme. The overall aim of the programme is to empower youth and foster their participation and active citizenship through volunteering, which will positively impact young people as well as development and peace programmes. Through the programme, thousands of young volunteers will be mobilized to support the work of UN agencies around the world.

UNV's mandate on youth

UNV has been actively engaged in youth and volunteerism since 1976, when the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution A/Res/31/131, mandating UNV to promote and advance the role of youth in development through volunteerism. Subsequent General Assembly resolutions and UNDP Executive Board decisions have further confirmed and expanded this mandate.

"Youth are a transformative force... The time has come to integrate youth voices more meaningfully into decision-making processes at all levels."

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on International Youth Day 2012

Over the years, UNV has worked with UN partners and Member States at national, regional and international levels to create an enabling environment for youth participation through volunteering. Towards that end, it has launched successful programmes ranging from establishing youth centres and volunteer corps to working on youth policies and legislation. One such collaboration is the recently launched US $5 million “Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future” programme aimed at addressing some of the challenges and aspirations of youth in the context of the Arab Spring. This regional programme, which covers six countries (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Syria, Turkey, and Yemen), is already being implemented in four of the six countries.

In addition, UNV has established a number of its own initiatives that promote university-level volunteering in partnership with leading universities in Europe, and the successful Online Volunteering service which opens up possibilities for young people to volunteer off-site through the Internet.
Youth Volunteers Programme

Since 1976 when the United Nations General Assembly formally engaged UNV in the inclusion of youth into development and peace building through volunteerism, UNV’s significance towards this goal has been growing ever stronger. The 2014-2017 Strategic Framework of the agency puts emphasis on youth and channels effort towards the UN Youth Volunteers Programme as a means of making consistent and tangible progress.

The main outcomes of the UN Youth Volunteers Programme to be achieved are recognition of youth as a driving force for peace and development, advanced capacity building to enable youth participation in the processes of peace building and human development, as well as the establishment of diverse opportunities for youth to get engaged in projects and programmes on community, national, regional and international level, within the frame of a United Nations Youth volunteer modality. Among the successful projects and developed policies, the Online Volunteering service enabling young people to volunteer via the internet, (whereby 65% of all online volunteers in 2013 were between the ages of 18 and 30), university-level volunteering initiatives, as well as the involvement of more than a thousand young professionals under the age of 30, (who qualify as UN Youth Volunteers), are some telling examples.
Sustainable Development Goal: