Become a UN Youth Volunteer

UN Youth Volunteers are between 18 and 29 years old, and work with UN agencies on the frontlines of political, developmental and humanitarian operations.

Who are UN Youth Volunteers?

UN Youth Volunteers are a separate category of UN Volunteers recently created in response to the United Nations Secretary-General’s call for greater engagement in volunteerism of history’s largest generation of people under 30. UN Youth Volunteers help the United Nations – one of the world’s most important intergovernmental organizations - to fulfill its mission. These young volunteers are assigned to host United Nations agencies to work on the frontlines of political, developmental and humanitarian field operations. UN Youth Volunteers are young people aged 18 to 29 years who
want to engage in development and peace initiatives worldwide.

What do UN Youth Volunteers do?

As a UN Youth Volunteer, you will help advance peace and sustainable development either in your own country or in another country around the globe. You will help people to lead healthier and safer lives and communities to be able to better address present and future challenges.

UN Youth Volunteer positions are wide ranging; you may work in human rights, climate change adaptation, primary health care, disaster management, peacebuilding, youth engagement or many other areas. You may work directly in a United Nations agency or be assigned to one of its partner organizations, a university or the government.

In return, you will be rewarded with an experience that will stay with you for the rest of your life. Your engagement as a UN Youth Volunteer will be an opportunity to change the world for the better while simultaneously honing your own skills, gaining knowledge and a better understanding of the realities of international development and peacebuilding.

How long is the assignment?

Because UN Youth Volunteers are sponsored by United Nations agencies, their partners, governments or academic institutions, the length of assignment depends on the requesting entity’s needs. Most UN Youth Volunteer assignments are between six and 24 months. On occasion, national and international UN Youth Volunteer assignments are less than six months and then are referred to as ‘short-term’ assignments.
When UN Youth Volunteers are sponsored by an academic institution, they are called UN Youth University Volunteers. UN Youth University Volunteers undertake shorter duration assignments – generally between three and six months.

Tell me a bit more...

UN Youth Volunteers receive a basic living allowance that allows the volunteer to live healthily and safely in the assigned area. If you volunteer outside of your home area, return airfare or land transport (as applicable) and some other basic costs are paid by the host agency. You will receive orientation and training before and after your assignment.

Who qualifies as a UN Youth Volunteer?

The UN Youth Volunteer programme is looking for motivated and talented youth between the ages of 18 and 29. (Note: you must be younger than 29 throughout the duration of your service). The educational background and experience required varies by assignment, but generally work experience over two years is not expected.

Am I the right fit?

Because the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme has built a reputation for recruiting and fielding the highest caliber volunteers that the world has to offer, no less is expected of UN Youth Volunteers. Here is a checklist to see if the UN Youth Volunteer programme is right for you:

• Am I committed to global peace and development?
• Am I motivated and enthusiastic?

• Can I adapt readily to new cultures and situations?

• Will I dedicate between six and twenty-four months to the volunteer assignment?

• Asset: Am I interested in or have I done any volunteering or community work in my country or elsewhere?

I’m in! How do I apply?

All UN Youth Volunteer assignments to volunteer abroad are advertised in our website (under Special Calls for Volunteers). We also advertise assignments to volunteer in your country. We also advertise vacancies for youth via Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. As these assignments go fast, we encourage you to check the sources above on a regular basis. Details on qualifications and how to apply are included in the advertisement for each assignment.

Note: There is no general registration for UN Youth Volunteer assignments. You can only apply via advertisements for individual assignments.

If you are 25 years of age or older and have several years of work experience in a specific area of expertise, you may want to register for the UNV Global Talent Pool.

You may also be interested in volunteering online with our UNV Online Volunteering service.