

05 September 2016



National UN Volunteer Hamza Tidjani Ousmane, UNHCR WASH Officer in Batouri, is providing assistance to a young boy while inspecting water points on the site of Lolo, Batouri, Cameroon (Rakotondrazafy A. M. Ny Aina / UNV)

## Our mission: Mobilize volunteers

We mobilize volunteers to serve in UN agencies, both in development programmes and peacekeeping operations

Once primarily a provider of volunteers to the United Nations (UN) system in support of programme countries, UNV has evolved in terms of the size and spread of its mandate, results and activities, driven by the changing external environment for peace, development and the eradication of poverty, by the wider acknowledgment of the role of volunteerism globally and by intergovernmental legislation.

Executive Board decision 2006/18 confirmed UNV's business model, leading to UNV being operational in three domains:

- mobilizing volunteers to enable more people to be directly involved in humanitarian, peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery, as well as sustainable development and poverty eradication work of the UN;
- advocating for volunteerism and civic engagement in peace and development; and

- pursuing the integration of volunteerism across policy, legislation and programming as well as delivering on internationally agreed development goals.

UNV works under a dual mandate – to mobilize volunteers for the United Nations System and to advocate for the importance of volunteerism in development worldwide.

The United Nations General Assembly created UNV in 1970, with an initial mandate to provide qualified and motivated volunteers for the United Nations System in support of peace and development in operational countries.

Over nearly five decades, the scope of UNV's mandate has expanded, driven by a constantly changing global environment and wider recognition of the value of volunteerism. A series of UN decisions now direct UNV activities and results to also focus on youth engagement and on demonstrating how integrating volunteering in peace and development projects and programmes can widen and deepen impact.

Changes in the development paradigm over the years also created a shift from international technical cooperation towards greater support for national and home-grown solutions, achieved by strengthening national and local capacities. Likewise, the growing vulnerability of communities due to exposure to recurrent natural disasters and conflict has demanded a much more robust humanitarian intervention globally. These trends are reflected UNV volunteer mobilization and programming for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and peacekeeping.

## UNV and development assistance

Development assistance means enabling people to improve their lives in the long term. Development aid strives to address the underlying issues and socio-economic factors that impede human progress.

All around the world, UN Volunteers help people lead more productive and fulfilling lives, such as through their work on projects in quality education and improved healthcare, or by ensuring equitable access to community resources and sustainable practices. UN Volunteers at times also work with governments and other local partners, helping to boost local capacity and augment knowledge.

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### [A SHORT HISTORY OF UNV](#)

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## UNV and peacekeeping operations

The United Nations itself was established in a post-conflict setting, namely the aftermath of World War II, one of the most devastating conflicts in human history. To this day, humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping represent some of the United Nation's greatest and toughest field operations and responsibilities.

Interventions in conflict and post-conflict environments help alleviate the plight of people in desperate situations typically by addressing their emergency, short-term and early recovery needs. UN Volunteers are frequently at the forefront of United Nations humanitarian and peacekeeping operations because of their skills and expertise, but also because of the commitment they bring to peace and recovery processes.

UN Volunteers usually live in the communities they serve and – importantly – are perceived as politically and socially neutral. As non-threatening global citizens, UN Volunteers greatly facilitate the building of bridges between various groups by promoting dialogue and fostering situations of confidence and trust.