



In Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan, 1,700 community volunteers acted as health messengers, reaching over 90 per cent of the people living in the five districts most affected by respiratory diseases and informing them on how to prevent tuberculosis. Their intervention not only helped reducing TB rates, but also reduced stigma, doubling the population who wanted to help tuberculosis patients instead of being afraid of them. The community volunteers had previously been trained by four experts, with support from UN Volunteers. (Arislan Kannazarov/UNDP, 2014)

ENGLISH

Overview

➔ UNV in Action: Volunteerism in the 2030 Agenda

Sustainable development cannot be achieved without people's engagement in all stages. This important lesson learnt from the Millennium Development Goals is reflected in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, which is universal, transformational, holistic, people-centred and aims to leave no one behind.

The 2030 Agenda explicitly names volunteer groups as actors in their own right among the means of implementation. Volunteer groups can be brokers of engagement, connecting institutional initiatives with volunteer action at community level and strengthen local governance. Volunteers can facilitate and support people's engagement in planning, implementing and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thereby fostering local ownership and leveraging innovative development solutions from the ground up.

Volunteerism is an old and yet new approach to development, based on people participation and mutual giving and receiving, which applies to all countries. Volunteerism has been contributing worldwide to people-centred development through

“At home and across borders, volunteers are at the very heart of sustainable development. Individually and collectively, they not only provide essential services: they build capacity and enable social cohesion. They facilitate the active participation that the new agenda needs. Volunteerism connects people and transforms lives, so that no-one is left behind.”

Gill Greer, CEO, Volunteer Service Abroad (New Zealand), Chair of Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group

its very nature. Beyond ‘getting the job done’, the added value of volunteerism lies in its capacity to transform passive recipients and beneficiaries into active agents of change. Volunteerism can provide avenues for women to engage in spaces outside the traditional norms, hold authorities accountable and ensure responsiveness to their needs and those of their communities. Expanding participation of young people through volunteerism is indispensable for the long term stability of societies, as it strengthens their social integration, while enhancing their personal development and employability.



UN Volunteers engage young people in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to vote for their priorities through MYWorld, the UN global survey asking people to choose their priorities for development. In 2012-15, UN Volunteers and community volunteers, on-site and online, engaged millions of people across the world in thinking about what matters most for them and their families in view of the definition of the 2030 development agenda. Volunteers can now involve people in assessing progress on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, using for example MYWorld2030 or other tools for crowdsourcing or crowdfunding data. (UNV, 2014)

➤ **Volunteers can contribute to SDG achievement by...**

- ...**raising awareness** about the 2030 Agenda through local campaigns and creative approaches, including in remote areas and with marginalized populations;
- ...**delivering technical expertise**;
- ...**facilitating spaces** for dialogue and action **through participatory forms of engagement** during planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Agenda at local and national level;
- ...**monitoring SDG progress** through citizen driven qualitative and quantitative data collection;
- ...**facilitating knowledge sharing** and transfer and **leveraging local expertise**;
- ...**complementing essential basic services** where they are lacking or where they are insufficient;
- ...**modeling behaviors** to inspire others and enhance willingness to contribute to SDGs locally.

➤ **Volunteer action adds value to peace and development efforts by...**

- ...**widening inclusive spaces for engagement**, including for remote and marginalized populations, as well as for youth and women;
- ...**enhancing capacities and developing skills**;
- ...**building trust** as well as 'bridging social capital' between diverse people who are not used to interacting with each other;
- ...**developing a sense of opportunity and ownership** for local challenges, leveraging collective engagement;
- ...**strengthening local governance and accountability** through increased people's participation;
- ...**building resilience and preparedness**, enhancing knowledge and a sense of responsibility for one's community;
- ...**building an enabling environment** for volunteerism as a form of civic engagement.

While ultimate responsibility for SDG delivery remains with governments, the UN system, civil society, academia, the private sector and communities themselves share responsibility for advancing development and achieving the new goals. Volunteers can play an important role in enhancing the accountability of the new SDG framework by supporting quantitative and qualitative data collection at the local level as well as participatory forms of planning, monitoring and evaluation.

The combined action of international, national and community volunteers strengthens international exchanges, South-South and regional cooperation; and can trigger a ripple effect, inspiring others and reaching the most remote communities. Volunteering strengthens awareness for the common good and social cohesion, which is particularly relevant in increasingly urbanized and diverse societies.

While volunteerism can contribute to all SDGs, UNV focuses on leveraging the strategic contribution of volunteerism in five programmatic areas: strengthening access to basic social services; community resilience for environment and disaster risk reduction; peacebuilding; youth; and national capacity development through volunteer schemes.

➤ *Multiple effects of volunteer action in multi-country community-based adaptation*

A Community-based Adaptation Programme (CBA) programme on climate change was implemented from 2008 to 2012 in 10 countries with support from UNDP, UNV and the Global Environmental Facility. Community participation in the CBA projects, which differed among the 10 countries, included providing local knowledge and expertise, informally training neighbours, building shelters for community meetings, tree planting and creating local seed banks. In seven of the 10 countries where community volunteers were integral to project design, the volunteers became the main drivers of the local-level initiatives. They were community mobilization agents, and the first people communities went to, either to report challenges or share local knowledge that had proven indispensable for successful implementation.

In Morocco, the programme mobilized 1,000 individual volunteers, including over 200 women and some 200 young people, to implement and monitor project activities.

In Namibia, over 3,500 community volunteers were involved in project formulation and implementation. Those who received training voluntarily replicated similar sessions in neighbouring villages.

Volunteers built resilience, facilitated behaviour changes and created ownership along with delivering technical expertise and enhancing local capacities.

➤ *UN and community volunteers engage youth and facilitate participation in Bangladesh and India*

During 2012-15, UN Volunteers and community volunteers in Bangladesh and India collaborated with UN Online Volunteers to roll out the MY World survey. They particularly reached out to young women and men, as well as to remote and marginalized communities, engaging tens of thousands people to have their say on priorities for the post-2015 agenda. In Bangladesh, where UN Volunteers also supported the UN dialogues on participatory forms of monitoring and accountability, UN Online Volunteers developed a literature review on the subject and translated the voting ballots to Bangla.

Such collaboration facilitated collecting local data and information, fostered innovation, enhanced capacity while leveraging local expertise, mobilized people to increase local outreach and build ownership.



Community volunteers support post-2015 national consultations with the local indigenous community in Panambizinho, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. In Brazil, one of the 88 countries holding UN-led national consultations to inclusively hear from different constituencies, UNV supported the consultations by ensuring participation of communities from remote areas. Results were shared with world leaders as an input to set the next global development agenda. (Gilmar Galache, 2013)



Adele Libam, an International UN Volunteer in the Democratic Republic of Congo, supported victims of sexual abuse to get their lives back on track in her capacity of UNV Poverty Programme Coordinator. Adele, from Cameroon, trained women in income-generating activities, such as dressmaking and baking. "These women," says Adele, "face stigmatization and marginalization from the community and are therefore a segment of labour lost for community development. It is then important to promote their integration in order to fight poverty and secure community recovery." (Jonathan Lorrillard/MONUSCO, 2013)

"The General Assembly, [...] recognizing that volunteerism can be a powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development [...] requests Member States to give full consideration to the plan of action to integrate volunteering into peace and development for the next decade and beyond."

UN General Assembly Resolution A/C.3/70/L.15/Rev.1: Integrating volunteering into peace and development: the plan of action for the next decade and beyond

Together with volunteer organizations and volunteers worldwide, UNV has been actively involved in the post-2015 process to position volunteerism in the 2030 Agenda. UNV supported consultations and dialogues and facilitated the rollout of the MYWorld survey in several countries, critically boosting the collection of offline votes by liaising with local youth organizations and civil society at large. MYWorld collected in total over 8.5 million votes worldwide. UNV is committed to support policy advocacy efforts at the national and global level also in relation to the High Level Political Forum, the body tasked to review SDG progress.

To achieve the 2030 Agenda, the UN System aspires to work in a more integrated manner. UNV is ready to deploy UN Volunteers in UN Resident Coordinator offices to support SDG mainstreaming and integration. The SDGs also call for stronger efforts in local level data collection and community engagement in participatory forms of planning, implementation and monitoring. In this regard, UNV supports the UN Coordination System and national authorities through targeted UN Volunteer profiles and solutions that contribute to aligning national plans and UN development frameworks to the new agenda, engaging people and monitoring progress in its implementation.

Mandated by the UN General Assembly and through consultations with Member States and partners, UNV developed a Plan of Action for the period 2016-30. The UN Resolution, "Integrating volunteering into peace and development: the plan of action for the next decade and beyond", recognizes the role of volunteerism as a powerful means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It further recognizes UNV as the UN entity to support implementation, and will facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration to deliver on the plan.

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. We work with partners to integrate qualified, highly motivated and well supported UN Volunteers into development programming and promote the value and global recognition of volunteerism.

UNV is active in around 130 countries every year. With field presences in over 80 countries, UNV is represented worldwide. UNV is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

For more information, visit: www.unv.org