

# Transforming UNV for the Global Goals

UNV ANNUAL REPORT 2017



*We are*  
**inspiration  
in action**

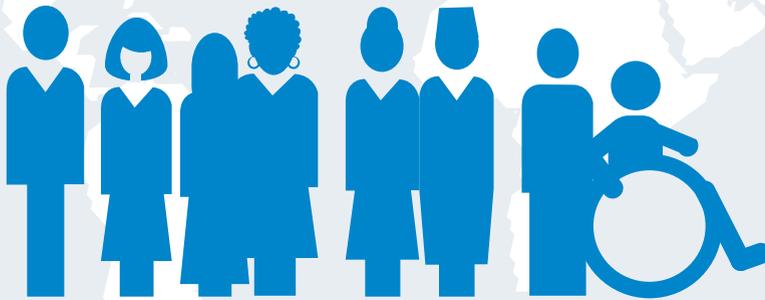


## UNV facts and figures 2017

**6,501**  
UN Volunteers

from over **100**  
different professions

served with **35**  
United Nations  
partners worldwide



**17,893**

**UN Online  
Volunteers**

**23,000**  
assignments  
providing flexible  
solutions to

**38** United Nations partners and  
**2,200** non-governmental organizations

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

UNV is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and reports to the UNDP Executive Board.



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.



Cover: Racha Serhal, national UN Volunteer, UN-Habitat, Lebanon. Racha undertakes a comprehensive socio-economic survey at a shop in Nabaa using a digital survey tool for spatial urban research and analysis to improve the situation of marginalized groups. (Nadim Bou Habib, 2018)



*UNV Executive Coordinator, Olivier Adam, greets community members of a project implemented with the support of UN Volunteers to empower women through capacity development in the production and marketing of agricultural and livestock products in Kaga Bandoro, Central African Republic. (UNDP, 2018)*

# WELCOME

Dear readers,

In 2017, UNV continued to offer innovative volunteer solutions to its United Nations partners and Member States in common pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNV contributed to the engagement of citizens through volunteerism while strengthening national ownership and capacities along with South-South cooperation.

UNV embarked on two important change processes in 2017: developing its new UNV Strategic Framework 2018–2021 and undertaking a transformation to align its structure with its new objectives to better serve Member States and the United Nations system and to effectively respond to Agenda 2030 and the United Nations General Assembly's Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review.

Throughout this transformation, UNV continued to mobilize committed UN Volunteers in 131 countries – at the global, national and local levels. In 2017, 6,501 UN Volunteers from over 100 different professions served with 35 United Nations partners on the ground worldwide. The number of UN Online Volunteers increased to 17,893, with 23,000 assignments providing flexible solutions to 38 United Nations partners and 2,200 non-governmental organizations.

Of all UN Volunteers, 83 per cent came from the Global South – clear evidence that UNV facilitated South-South cooperation through the transfer of expertise and knowledge across development and peace contexts.

National UN Volunteers are well placed to engage citizens through volunteerism for sustainable development and peace, and the encouraging trend of increased demand for national UN Volunteers continued in 2017. The proportion of assignments fulfilled by national UN Volunteers grew from 28 per cent in 2014 to 40 per cent in 2017, adding weight to the global growth of volunteer movements and the increasing role of local volunteers in many communities around the world.

Throughout 2017, and benefiting from the results of an evaluation of its first Strategic Framework, UNV consulted extensively with United Nations partners and Member States in its reform efforts. The new Strategic Framework 2018–2021 will enable UNV to further its positioning as a competitive service provider. With the transformation process started in 2017, UNV will be more focused than ever on supporting national capacity development through volunteerism. Likewise, in 2017, UNV strengthened its presence at the regional and country levels and further empowered personnel through a devolution of decision-making responsibilities.

A transformed UNV will, over the coming years, be even better positioned to support the achievement of Agenda 2030 and to uphold human rights in fast-changing peace, development and humanitarian contexts – while always striving to leave no one behind. I encourage you to read about UNV's latest results and achievements in this year's annual report, which proudly demonstrates how UN Volunteers continue to make an impact in all five Ps of the Sustainable Development Goals – planet, people, prosperity, peace and partnerships.

**Olivier Adam**, Executive Coordinator

# VOLUNTEERING FOR THE PLANET

In 2017, UN Volunteers engaged in climate action and volunteering for the planet at the global, regional and national levels, demonstrating that volunteerism remained a powerful force in sustainable land use, biodiversity, ocean health and climate initiatives for generations to come.

## Environmental initiatives

**Volunteers continued to be key drivers of environmental movements and initiatives across the globe. UNV not only advocated for the recognition of community volunteers but also deployed hundreds of UN Volunteers on assignments that aligned to the Global Goals for the Planet.**

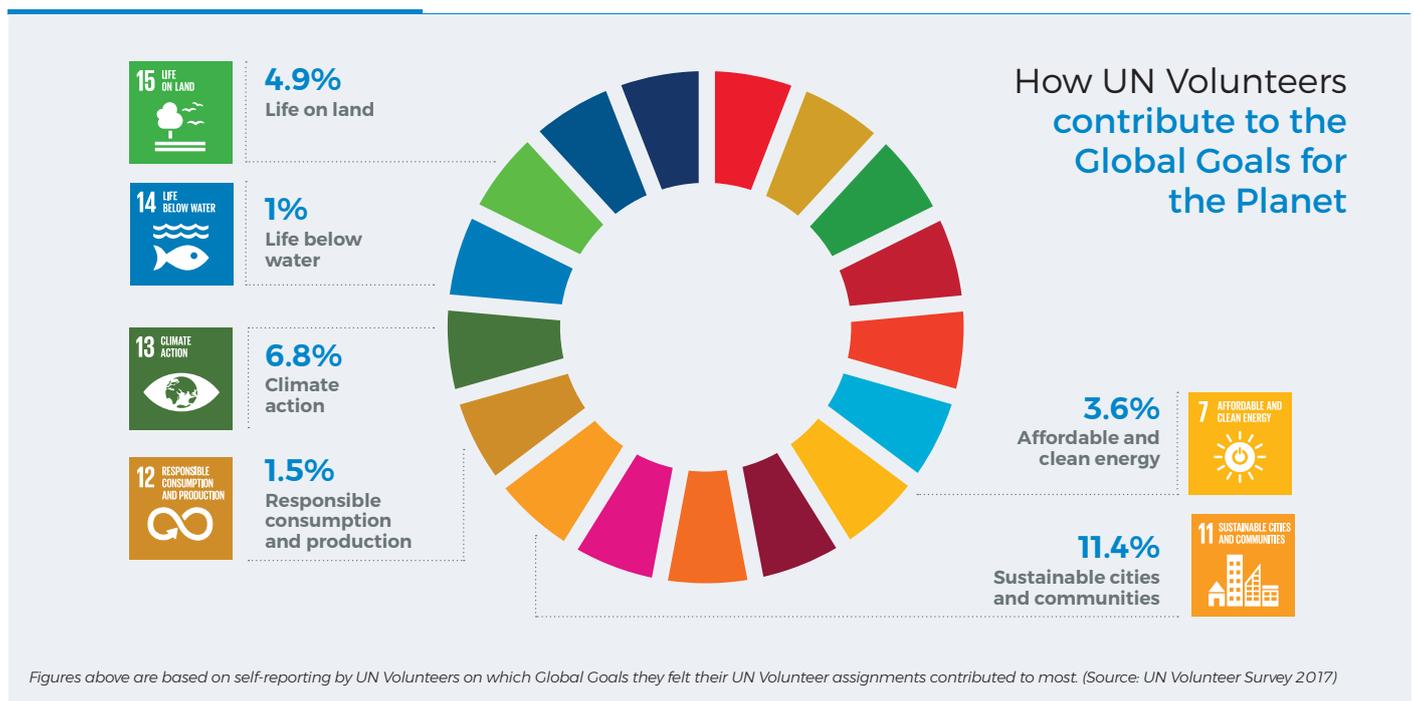
In partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in 2017 UN Volunteers were assigned to work on environmental initiatives worldwide.

In **Angola**, the civil war destroyed several protected natural areas, resulting in the loss of forests and biodiversity. UN Volunteers assigned to UNDP facilitated dialogue between the Government and the Global Environment Facility of UNDP, which funds a project to preserve and create natural reserves in the country. Through these efforts, the local communities participated in development initiatives within the parks, ensuring that people who live in these protected areas lead a more environmentally sustainable lifestyle.

In **Timor-Leste**, UNDP and UNV partnered on environmental sustainability by promoting the use of energy-efficient, low-carbon cooking appliances. Establishing and promoting a cook stove market mechanism helped to improve the country's social business sector and entrepreneurship while reducing forest and land degradation. The project aimed to have up to 20,000 improved cooking stoves and bio-briquettes in use by households, schools, bakeries and restaurants.

## Disaster risk reduction and preparedness

**Volunteers are often the first responders in a natural disaster. They are on the spot and can save lives and livelihoods during and after an emergency. UNV also recognizes the vital importance of volunteers in disaster risk reduction. In collaboration with a range of United Nations partners, UN Volunteers – national, international and online – worked with communities in 2017 to help people become more resilient to climate change and its effects.**





Participants in the Early Warning Signs Training in Rwanda, coordinated by UNV and UNDP. The training aimed at equipping women volunteers with disaster risk reduction skills to reduce the devastating effects of natural disasters. (UNV, 2018)

In 2017, UNV **Myanmar**, in collaboration with UNDP and the United Nations Children’s Fund (**UNICEF**), supported the development of a youth volunteer project on disaster risk reduction to strengthen community resilience. Engaging with communities in three pilot regions, 450 UN Youth Volunteers assessed disaster risks and concluded that fire, floods and cyclones are the main hazards to which their communities are vulnerable. Those UN Youth Volunteers became agents of change in their own families and neighbourhoods.

Seven national UN Volunteers mobilized with the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (**OCHA**) and UNDP were part of recovery and disaster risk reduction efforts in the aftermath of the 2017 floods in **Peru**. Additionally, a total of 1,500 corporate volunteers, both local and national, developed creative and innovative ways to renovate 73 houses in the region of Puno, achieving improvements of up to 10 per cent in heat efficiency and 90 per cent in air quality.

In **Bolivia**, national UN Volunteers provided advice on disaster preparedness to the United Nations and the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (**ECHO**). These specialist UN Volunteers became multipliers by supporting wider volunteer networks through capacity-building on climate change mitigation.

Innovation in disaster risk reduction featured in UN Volunteers’ use of drone technology as part of their work with UNICEF in mapping emergency flood response data in **Malawi** in 2017. UN Volunteers used drones to capture photos and video of the washed-out areas and in assessing the impact on the ground. Together with local leaders and communities, UN Volunteers then used this information to inform the local disaster response plans and develop action plans for assistance.

In collaboration with United Nations agencies, along with governmental and non-governmental organizations, UNV led a project in **Rwanda** to enable women to improve their lives and keep their property and families safe in disaster-prone areas.

The project mobilized more than 400 women community volunteers in three districts who are now skilled in reducing the effects of disasters. These women have also become integrated into local decision-making processes.

OCHA, UNV, UNDP and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (**UNISDR**), with financial support from Japan, continued to partner on projects to strengthen disaster risk reduction by supporting volunteerism across the Pacific, South Asia and South-East Asia: including **India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka** and **Thailand**. In 2017 UN Volunteers provided technical and coordination expertise to United Nations country teams in integrating volunteerism into national policy documents. More than 4,400 local volunteers were mobilized and 15,200 people reached to raise awareness on the important role of volunteerism in building resilient communities.

## Volunteers for climate action at COP23

**Contributing to global efforts to combat climate change, UNV supported the UN Climate Change Conference 2017 (COP23) – a large-scale event attended by over 20,000 international delegates and participants.**

UNV joined forces with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (**UNFCCC**) to recruit, train and oversee more than 650 local volunteers who carried out over 34 different tasks at COP23. In doing so, UNV and its partners placed diversity high on the agenda. Volunteers of varying ages, genders, nationalities and cultures were selected, bringing together individuals from more than 80 countries, including people with disabilities as well as refugees.

The spirit of volunteerism in addressing climate change was maintained throughout, and this atmosphere was acknowledged by conference participants and high-level stakeholders as having had a memorable, positive impact on COP23.



Norah Ngeny, international UN Volunteer Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, UNDP, Lao PDR, talks to local volunteer rangers about conservation of the Ong Mang Sanctuary in Savannakhet. (UNV, 2017)

# VOLUNTEERING FOR PROSPERITY

Volunteerism enabled personal growth and innovation within supportive national and regional structures in 2017. Through volunteerism, UNV advocates for an opportunity to contribute to the SDGs – regardless of a person’s economic status, gender, education level, ethnicity or disability. UNV leaves no one behind.

## Promoting volunteerism worldwide

To promote and maintain an enabling environment for national capacity-building and volunteering, UNV partnered with Member States and regional bodies to provide support in developing national and regional volunteer schemes in countries and regional structures around the world. These included: **Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, India, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania and Sri Lanka**, along with the **African Union Youth Volunteer Corps** and the **Economic Community of West African States Volunteer Programme**.

In 2017, UNV supported the development of youth policies in **India** and **Myanmar**. UNV was involved in the creation of laws on volunteerism in **Côte d’Ivoire** and **Madagascar** as well as national policies on volunteerism in **Kenya** and **Rwanda**. UNV supported research on youth volunteerism in **India** and **Cambodia**. An assessment of the contribution of volunteerism to national development in **Ethiopia** was also undertaken with contributions from UNV.

## Diversifying the United Nations workforce

The United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development committed United Nations Member States and agencies to “leave no one behind”. However, despite accounting for around 15 per cent of the global population, it is still rare to see people with disabilities among the United Nations workforce.

In 2017, UNV made engaging people with disabilities a corporate priority and partnered with UNDP on the UNDP/UNV Talent Programme for Young Professionals with Disabilities, with the support of the Government of **Germany**, to include volunteers with disabilities in working towards the SDGs.

In 2017, Rupmani Chhetri of India was deployed as a specialist UN Volunteer with UNDP in **Ukraine**. Her main tasks included raising awareness of the rights of people with disabilities, and she proved to be a highly effective champion of including disability in United Nations programming. UN Online Volunteers supported the work of Rupmani by helping to create training materials and supporting social media activities. In 2016 and 2017, the percentage of UN Online Volunteers with disabilities increased from 2 per cent to almost 4 per cent.

## How UN Volunteers contribute to the Global Goals for Prosperity



**8.5%**  
Reduced inequalities



**10.5%**  
Decent work and economic growth



**5.9%**  
Industry, innovation and infrastructure



Figures above are based on self-reporting by UN Volunteers on which Global Goals they felt their UN Volunteer assignments contributed to most. (Source: UN Volunteer Survey 2017)



*Lilian Gonzales Beyuma, UN Volunteer Local Technician, promoted a Productive Community Organization. Lilian was in charge of revaluing the local tradition of weaving and motivating other women to weave their own articles to generate income and gain financial autonomy. (UNV, 2017)*

## National capacity-building through volunteerism

**National capacity development is at the heart of nearly all UN Volunteer assignments, and in 2017 UNV ensured that the descriptions of volunteer assignments were more focused than ever on supporting local expertise through volunteerism.**

In 2017, UN Volunteers served with FAO on a project creating employment opportunities for vulnerable groups in **Mongolia**. UN Volunteers also served with UNDP's recovery and peacebuilding programme in **Ukraine** to mitigate the negative consequences of armed conflict, especially for youth. The assignments included organizing workshops on peace and justice, gender issues and youth employment with the aim of reducing tensions in communities and building the work-ready skills of participants.

In **Afghanistan**, UNDP and UNV created Youth-Mullah Gender Volunteer Caravans in which young volunteer men and women working alongside mullah volunteers disseminated key messages on women's rights. In 2017, 20 campaigns were conducted, reaching more than 16,000 individuals.

UNV in **India** launched a new volunteering platform using the technology of the UNV Online Volunteering service to enable youth to connect with organizations and support sustainable development across the country. The platform is a marketplace for non-profit organizations to publicise opportunities for volunteers, allowing youth networks, volunteer-involving organizations, civil society organizations, public institutions and state governments to seek support from active and engaged volunteers.

In 2017, Cisco and UNV expanded their partnership to support innovation in development and increase access to information and communications technology in under-served populations. Cisco and UNV mobilized Cisco Networking Academy programme graduates in their countries of origin – **Bangladesh, Indonesia** and **Sri Lanka**.

## The refugee crisis and community-building

UN Volunteers have become an integral part of the response of United Nations agencies, particularly the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to the refugee crisis in Europe and beyond. In 2017, 834 UN Volunteers, half of whom were women, served with UNHCR in 74 countries. Likewise, translation is an essential aspect of the refugee support provided by UNHCR, and UN Online Volunteers, with a collective knowledge of many languages, contributed their considerable translation skills to fulfil this need.

International and national UN Volunteers supported the social and economic resilience of refugees and host communities, with the priority in 2017 being the protracted Syrian refugee crisis. In 2017, UN Volunteers were deployed to assignments in Europe for the first time, with UN Volunteers working with **UNHCR** in **Belgium, France, Greece, Ireland** and **the Netherlands**.

In 2017, 375 UN Volunteers served in countries neighbouring Syria, with most assignments focused on improving the well-being of both refugees and host communities. These UN Volunteers included teachers, monitors of cross-border operations and enumerators.

In **Iraq**, national community solidarity volunteers worked with volunteer groups in the refugee camps to provide training on shelter rehabilitation, carpentry, painting and other practical skills that refugees could use to improve their living conditions and livelihood opportunities.

In northern **Jordan**, UN Volunteers contributed to the social and economic stability of host communities by supporting small enterprises, implementing cash-for-work projects and organizing vocational and entrepreneurship trainings. In **Lebanon**, UN Volunteers contributed to UNDP's vocational and technical trainings and paid internship programmes for young Lebanese from host communities to address the consequences of the Syrian crisis on youth employment. In **Turkey**, UNV supported the social and economic integration of Syrian and Turkish women through the creation of volunteer-based solutions to increase employability. Finally, national UN Volunteers were deployed in **Syria** with UNDP and the United Nations Population Fund (**UNFPA**) in the fields of youth, gender, gender-based violence, communications, operations, administration and data analysis.



*The joint initiative by UNV and Tajikistan of entrepreneurial competitions for young professionals. (UNV, 2017)*

# VOLUNTEERING FOR PEOPLE

Through volunteerism, every global citizen has the opportunity to contribute to the SDGs. By volunteering, people take on responsibility for their own community, solidifying local ownership of development goals. Within the Global Goals for People, UNV actively supported the efforts of United Nations partners and Member States in the global fight against poverty, gender inequality, humanitarian suffering and hunger in 2017.

## Partnering in humanitarian assistance

**In 2017, national and international UN Volunteers took on assignments in dangerous environments, often in remote areas and in the midst of conflict, to contribute their time, energy and commitment to United Nations humanitarian assistance efforts. More than 1,000 UN Volunteers served with FAO, OCHA, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) on the frontlines of humanitarian catastrophes worldwide this year.**

UN Volunteers worked with OCHA in coordinating the aid response to the humanitarian crisis in **Somalia**, with many volunteers hailing from neighbouring countries and joining UNV as part of surge capacity to address the famine emergency. UN Volunteers introduced new ways of disseminating information about United Nations' efforts and operations, including where, when and how communities could get help.

As a result of programmes implemented by UNDP and UNV in Gaza, women had more opportunities than before to be involved in humanitarian action within their communities. In 2017, there were 55 UN Volunteers in the **State of Palestine**, 28 of them women, who promoted gender equality through volunteerism.

UN Volunteers – mainly engineers and procurement experts – were assigned to the UNDP Funding Facility for Stabilization in **Iraq**. Following the de-escalation of violence and conflict in the country, many Iraqis have returned to their homes, often in more difficult living conditions. International UN Volunteers assisted with reconstruction of public infrastructure and the restoration of livelihood opportunities for the returnees.

In 2017, UNFPA and UNV began inviting applicants from UNV's Global Talent Pool to participate in humanitarian training and assessment workshops. Successful candidates from the workshops are added to UNFPA's surge roster for rapid deployment to emergencies. This new initiative marks a deepened level of partnership between the two agencies which will be particularly effective in response to humanitarian crises.

## How UN Volunteers contribute to the Global Goals for People

16.8%  
No poverty



10.1%  
Zero hunger



21.7%  
Good health and well-being



15.7%  
Quality education



25.6%  
Gender equality



7.4%  
Clean water and sanitation



Figures above are based on self-reporting by UN Volunteers on which Global Goals they felt their UN Volunteer assignments contributed to most. (Source: UN Volunteer Survey 2017)



*Firoj Ahmed, UN Volunteer Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, FAO, Sudan, consults with village leaders in the North Delta, Kassala, on food sustainability as part of a Joint Resilience Project. The project works with communities through a participatory approach to identify the effects of drought and floods on livelihoods and their nutrition status, and to strengthen their resilience against droughts and floods. (UNV, 2016)*

## Addressing SDG 5 — gender equality and women’s empowerment

**UN Volunteers are an important component of capacity on the ground in the global pursuit of gender equality. In addition, the gender ratio of UN Volunteers improved from 43 per cent female in 2015 to 47 per cent female in 2017. In non-family duty stations, UNV has explicitly sought out and submitted highly qualified female candidates to United Nations partners for selection – particularly for peacekeeping missions, which are traditionally gender imbalanced.**

Of the UN Volunteers hosted by **UN Women** in 2017, 73 per cent were women. These UN Volunteers undertook programme monitoring and evaluation as well as communications and public advocacy of gender equality among communities.

UN Volunteers assigned to UN Women in Quetta, **Pakistan**, launched a radio project in 2017 which engaged marginalized women and youth in two towns in the establishment of community-based radio programmes for entertainment, information and education. Thirty community volunteers were selected and trained, with the support of the University of Balochistan.

In **Togo**, the UNV-implemented project Voices Against Violence provided interactive, youth-centred ways for people to talk and learn about relationships and gender equity in a safe and inclusive environment. A total of 500 national volunteer teachers were trained in the principles of respectful and non-violent behaviour. They then delivered the programme in their classes and their communities – multiplying the power of the project by spreading the curriculum to thousands of young Togolese.

Partners for Prevention (P4P) was a UNDP, UNFPA, UNV and UN Women regional joint programme for the prevention of violence against women and girls in Asia and the Pacific. It focused on prevention interventions, capacity development and policy advocacy by working on the ground with local volunteers who had an understanding of their own community’s culture and language. Volunteers acted as a bridge between the United Nations, governments and national and regional partners. In 2017, international and national UN Volunteers served as project coordinators with P4P in **Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea** and **Viet Nam**.



*UN Volunteers organize workshops on making hygiene pads out of cloth for women prisoners in Togo. (UNV, 2017)*

# VOLUNTEERING FOR PEACE

In 2017, 2,169 UN Volunteers supported United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions. UNV continued to be a provider of highly qualified and committed personnel to the United Nations Department of Field Support (DFS), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA). Around a third of UN Volunteers worldwide are deployed in UN peacekeeping, political and peacebuilding missions.

UNV contributed civilian personnel to United Nations peacekeeping efforts in the **Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire**, the **Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Kosovo**<sup>1</sup>, **Liberia, Mali, South Sudan, Sudan** and **Western Sahara**, and to political missions in **Afghanistan, Colombia, Guinea-Bissau, Libya** and **Somalia**.

## Change for peace

**Building lasting peace, providing access to justice for all and strengthening governance institutions requires inclusive national ownership. Participation and social cohesion therefore underpinned UNV's programmatic approach to its involvement in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations in 2017.**

Two long-standing United Nations peacekeeping missions, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (**ONUCI**) and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (**MINUSTAH**), where UN Volunteers had contributed widely and deeply in peacekeeping efforts, came to an end in 2017. After 13 years, MINUSTAH transitioned to a newly established mission, the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti, where UNV continues to support peacekeeping and peacebuilding in **Haiti**, with new UN Volunteers serving in its ranks.

In 2017, 60 UN Volunteers served with the new United Nations Mission in Colombia (**UNMC**) to conduct monitoring and verification exercises and carry out daily inspections of areas around the transitory standardization zones established under the ceasefire agreement. The UN Volunteers supported the mission's disarmament assistance service and helped to maintain 24-hour shifts in conjunction with military personnel. In the spirit of inclusiveness and community participation, UN Volunteers helped to raise awareness about the peace process among civil society, promoting the work of UNMC and interacting with communities to understand their perspective of the process. The UN Volunteers deployed in 2017 quickly proved themselves to be valuable contributors in meeting the mission's objectives due to their willingness to adapt to difficult living conditions, their motivation to contribute to the peace process



**35.4%**  
Peace, justice and strong institutions



How UN Volunteers contribute to the Global Goal for Peace

Figures above are based on self-reporting by UN Volunteers on which Global Goals they felt their UN Volunteer assignments contributed to most. (Source: UN Volunteer Survey 2017)

<sup>1</sup> All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).



UN Volunteer and UN Online Volunteer, Karol Alejandra Arámbula Carrillo (Mexico), serves as a Field Officer in the Territorial Space for Training and Reincorporation (ETCR) Filipinas in Arauca, Colombia. (UNV, 2017)

in **Colombia** and, in some cases, their qualifications and previous experience in similar contexts.

In 2017, 440 UN Volunteers served with the United Nations Mission in **South Sudan (UNMISS)**, comprising about half of the civil affairs personnel. Among other interventions, in Rimenze, a remote area in Western Equatoria, South Sudan, over 6,600 internally displaced persons (IDPs) had been sheltered in a

Catholic compound for more than four months without any humanitarian assistance. In response, UN Volunteers organized a peace forum to provide a platform for community, religious, political and traditional leaders along with the UNMISS team to engage with the community.

UN Volunteer medical doctors and officers served in 2017 for the **United Nations Department for Safety and Security in Somalia**. The medical team supported the mission primarily by assuring the health of its personnel. In addition to meeting the medical needs of staff in United Nations agencies, these UN Volunteers offered training to other medical and paramedical personnel, sharing their expertise with the African Union Mission in Somalia, the Somali National Armed Forces and a range of national partners involved in the Somali peace process.

In the **Central African Republic**, UNV supported the Special Criminal Court, a United Nations joint project with the Government to address impunity and strengthen the rule of law. UN Volunteers worked directly with local civil society organizations to reinforce their understanding of the role, mandate and functions of the Special Criminal Court and to explain how people could participate in the judicial process. Through this mobilization of civil society, UN Volunteers acted as a bridge between the Court and the community, promoting equal access to justice and conveying the relevance and importance of the project to local communities and victims. The members of the project's steering committee – the Government, UNDP, the **United Nations mission in the Central African Republic**, UN Women, the Special Prosecutor and magistrates – were united in acknowledging that local UN Volunteers were at the heart of capacity-building efforts through peer-to-peer learning. Since July 2017, more than 500 individuals in eight regions of the country have been reached, including 100 women and youth leaders along with local volunteers, internally displaced and people with disabilities.



UNV Programme Officer, Moubarakou Salami, along with the Deputy Mayor and Priest Jule leads a sensitization workshop about the Special Criminal Court for members of the community and representatives of human rights NGOs in Berberati, Central African Republic. (UNV, 2017)

# ENGAGEMENT FOR PEACEFUL COMMUNITIES

Volunteering is a powerful mechanism for giving a voice to those who may otherwise not be heard. The overarching concepts of the Global Goals — respect for human rights and leaving no one behind — were reinforced in volunteer assignments throughout the globe in 2017 by volunteers becoming facilitators for people to actively participate in democratic processes and solutions.

## Electoral support by volunteers

UNDP hosts UN Volunteers and other local volunteers to support communities and government institutions during electoral processes every year. In 2017, UNV continued to mobilize UN Volunteers to support UNDP in promoting credible and inclusive elections. UN Volunteers were deployed across **Kenya** under the auspices of the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention to prevent electoral violence and promote peace during the general elections held in August 2017. The UN Volunteer Peace Coordinators worked with a team of more than 200 Peace and Cohesion Monitors across the country to support the national electoral process. The UNV deployment quickly scaled up peacebuilding activities using the Uwiano Platform for Peace, a national multi-stakeholder conflict prevention and response system that integrates the use of SMS, incident reports and media reports.

National UN Volunteers supported UNDP's Enhancing Youth Participation in the 2017 Legislative and Presidential Electoral Process project in **Liberia** as UNV Youth and Election Regional Coordinators. These volunteers encouraged young women and men to get involved in the electoral process, build their capacity and skills to monitor, prevent and mitigate violence during and after the elections, and ensure timely and high-quality reports and communication about the results.

UN Volunteers in **Burkina Faso** have laid the ground work for future election processes by collaborating with the Independent Local Electoral Commission to create a national polling staff databased. In 2017, furthermore, in the region, local UN Volunteers have been mobilized for The Peace Building Fund, a cross border project in Liptako Gourma (**Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali**) to promote peace, social cohesion between refugees and host populations, as well as empower youth and women for better economic perspectives in a volatile security context.

**“ Skilled UN Volunteers provide trusted and valued support in UNDP’s electoral programmes. By applying culturally sensitive approaches, they motivate community volunteers to participate, generating a sense of ownership that fosters inclusive and peaceful elections. ”**

Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator



UN Volunteers Somda Flore (centre) and Adama Millogo (left) helped to raise awareness about the importance of the elections among the local population in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso. (UNV, 2016)



National UN Volunteer, Mariama Traoré (left), facilitates a workshop on conflict prevention and mediation for the PARC Jeunesse Mali project in Ségou, Mali. (UNV, 2017)

## Voices for peace through volunteering

In **Burundi**, UN Volunteers worked with UNFPA and UNDP on a project aimed to support citizen security and social cohesion for conflict-affected youth.

In **Mali**, the PARC Jeunesse Mali project supported youth and promoted youth leadership through inclusive civic participation. UNV, as project partner, provided capacity-building at the national level. By the end of 2017, over 800 young people in Mali had directly benefited from the PARC Jeunesse Mali project. In the region of Ségou, activities included a capacity-building workshop on conflict prevention and mediation. In Mopti, an equivalent workshop was supplemented by activities that addressed issues of citizenship, social cohesion and human rights. In the Gao region, the rehabilitation and furnishing of Gao's youth house was completed and a training course on project management offered to participants.

UNV has developed a highly successful partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), especially in the mobilization of UN Youth Volunteers in West and Central Africa. Over the last three years, 21 UN Youth and Specialist Volunteers have supported **UNODC in Senegal** in the fight against illicit drugs and transnational organized crime in the region. Their contributions have been particularly notable in the cross-cutting areas of programme management, communications and monitoring and evaluation.

"We started recruiting UN Volunteers in 2015. I quickly appreciated their value for our office because they are motivated and technologically savvy, and many have graduated with recent new knowledge and have innovative profiles with high-quality work experience, all of which brings a fresh wind to UNODC," noted Pierre Lapaque, UNODC Regional Representative.

In 2017, the number of UN Youth and Specialist Volunteers assisting UNODC in Senegal increased as they were deployed in intentionally strategic ways to develop, monitor, document and communicate about projects. Almost every project of the UNODC Regional Office for West and Central Africa now benefits from the unique contributions of UN Volunteers. Based on this successful model, UNODC has started engaging UN Volunteers in other countries in the region.

In 2017, UNODC appointed and trained UN Volunteers, half of them women, in **Niger** as part of a US-funded project to support the judicial system. These UN Volunteers provided legal aid to more than 600 detainees awaiting trial in Niger's prisons, bringing these cases to the attention of the Specialized Judicial Unit.

# PARTNERSHIPS

Deploying global citizens as UN Volunteers and effectively integrating volunteerism into United Nations’ programming for 2017 relied on strong relationships between UNV and its partners. In 2017, UNV worked closely with 38 United Nations partners, Member States, academic institutions and non-profit organizations along with the private sector and civil society.

## South-South cooperation

**In 2017, 83 per cent of all UN Volunteers and 51 per cent of international UN Volunteers were from the Global South – a trend that reflects UNV’s unique ability to provide a globally connected platform for people to be involved in addressing development challenges through the exchange of skills, knowledge and best practice.**

In June 2017, UNV and the **Thailand** International Cooperation Agency co-hosted a conference on South-South exchange through youth volunteering in support of the SDGs. The event facilitated peer learning, innovation sharing and partnership building around volunteerism in South-East Asian countries and beyond. The conference attracted more than 100 participants from national and subnational governments, United Nations agencies, youth organizations, volunteer-involving organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector.

UNV participated in the Global South-South Development Expo 2017 (GSSD 2017) in Antalya, **Turkey**, organized by the **United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation** and hosted by the Government of Turkey. The GSSD 2017 was an occasion to take stock of the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among

Developing Countries (BAPA), share experiences of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in the achievement of the SDGs, and initiate early discussions on preparations for the second high-level United Nations conference on South-South cooperation, “BAPA+40”, to be held in Buenos Aires in March 2019.

The second International Volunteer Service Exchange Conference (IVSEC) in Beijing, **China**, was co-hosted by UNV and the Beijing Volunteer Service Federation in December 2017. The event continued to build a strong Southern constituency and voice in international volunteering, and developed new ideas for how volunteering, can be mainstreamed to support national development priorities in low- and middle-income countries. Volunteerism has been identified as a key component of the “people-to-people bonds” pillar of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which aims to build connectivity between China and other countries and international organizations based on the ancient Silk Road land and maritime routes. At IVSEC, the BRI Volunteer Service Alliance was launched, which will provide a new channel for Chinese volunteer-involving organizations to extend their work and develop new partnerships.

A long-standing achievement in creating effective volunteer infrastructures within the African region continued in 2017. With



**15.6%**  
Partnerships  
for the goals



How UN Volunteers contribute to the Global Goal for Partnerships

Figures above are based on self-reporting by UN Volunteers on which Global Goals they felt their UN Volunteer assignments contributed to most. (Source: UN Volunteer Survey 2017)

UNV's technical assistance, three countries of the Economic Community of West African States (**ECOWAS**), **Guinea**, **Liberia** and **Sierra Leone**, benefited from youth volunteering in key sectors such as education, health and youth. Likewise, the African Union Youth Volunteer Corps has deployed 229 youth volunteers from 44 countries to serve in 22 countries across the continent.

## New dimensions in partnerships for volunteerism

**In 2017, UNV built on substantial progress made in innovative and South-South-focused partnerships, including increased collaboration with non-traditional partners.**

**Germany** continues to support online volunteering and initiatives focused on women, peace and security, and **Japan** has maintained funding for its partnership with UNV to support human resource development for peacebuilding. The **Republic of Korea** significantly increased its financial contribution to UNV in 2017.

In August 2017, the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development took place in New York, involving more than 2,400 participants from around the world. A total of 43 governments submitted voluntary national reviews, with 17 of them explicitly mentioning the valuable role of volunteers and volunteerism in achieving the SDGs within their countries. New memoranda of understanding were signed with FAO and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**). At a UNESCO conference on the future of youth populations, the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, spoke of the potential of youth volunteers: "In a world where ignorance of the other is on the rise, we must innovate for peace and find new ways to foster a culture of peace and dialogue, starting with young researchers and young volunteers." The FAO agreement aims at scaling up successful collaborations and enabling seamless rapid deployments. FAO currently has UN Volunteers posted in duty stations such as **Chad**, **Honduras**, **Mongolia** and **Viet Nam**.

In the area of non-traditional partnerships, UNV piloted corporate online volunteering initiatives with a selected group of private sector partners, including Amadeus IT, Medtronic Foundation, Samsung and Thomson Reuters.

## Partnering for volunteerism

The theme of International Volunteer Day (IVD) 2017 was "Volunteers Act First. Here. Everywhere", which recognized the essential work of volunteers in first response. IVD 2017 was celebrated on 5 December in close partnership with the International Federation of **Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** in over 80 countries around the world.

In June 2017 three national UN Volunteers started their volunteer assignments with the **World Bank** in Sri Lanka.

UNV partnered with the **Russian Federation** and the Association of Volunteer Centres to have 32 UN Volunteers participate in the Sochi World Festival of Youth and Students 2017. These UN Volunteers, serving with United Nations agencies around the world, gave talks and participated in discussions on youth inclusion and development as a significant component of sustainable development.

**Kazakhstan** hosted the World Expo 2017, "Future Energy", at which national UN Volunteers, including youth, and more than 50 United Nations Expo 2017 Volunteers assisted with the promotion of alternative energy solutions in achieving the SDGs. The Forum-Café "Youth for Sustainable Development and Energy Efficient Lifestyle in Kazakhstan and Central Asia to Build Peace Globally" was held in Astana, with the facilitation of UNV, to mark International Youth Day. At the end of the forum, the Astana Youth Declaration 2017 was drafted and included recommendations from youth representatives on how to increase the participation of young people in sustainable development.

UNV participated in the 14th Nationwide Consortium Research Exchange Forum at the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University in **Japan**. The forum brought together academics and students from over 772 universities across the country. The theme centred around the importance of engaging youth volunteers for global peace and sustainable development.



Participants at the event "Volunteers as First Responders in Times of Crisis: Volunteers for Resilience and Solidarity", International Volunteer Day 2017, Nepal. (UNV, 2017)

## UNV key statistics 2017

During 2017

**6,501**  
**UN Volunteers**

on the ground  
were hosted by  
UN partners



in **131** countries  
of assignments

and, as  
UN Online  
Volunteers,  
virtually  
worldwide

**17,893**

**UN Online  
Volunteers**

UN Volunteers  
were from

**159**  
**countries**

**83%**  
from the Global South

**41%**  
national UN Volunteers

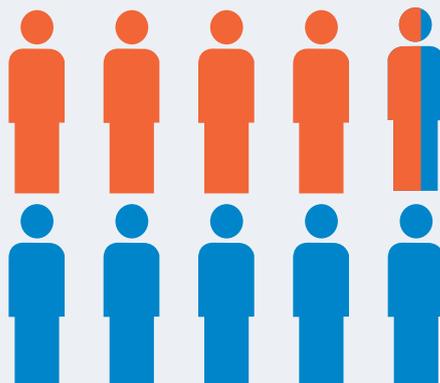


**28%** UN Volunteers on-site  
were under the age of 29

**63%** UN Online  
Volunteers were  
**29 years old** or under



**47%** of  
UN Volunteers  
on-site were  
women



**61%**  
of  
UN Online  
Volunteers  
were  
women







# UN VOLUNTEERS

*We are inspiration in action*

## United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme

Headquarters

Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1  
53113 Bonn, Germany  
Telephone: (+49 228) 815 2000  
Fax: (+49 228) 815 2001  
[www.unv.org](http://www.unv.org)

New York Office  
One UN Plaza / DC1 – 23rd Floor  
10017 New York NY, USA

Regional Office for the Arab States and CIS  
Majed Al Adwan St 16  
Amman, Jordan

Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific  
1st Floor, United Nations Service Building, Rajdamnern Nok Avenue  
Bangkok 10200, Thailand

Regional Office for East and Southern Africa  
Block N, 3rd Level, UN Complex Gigiri, UNON  
00100 Nairobi, Kenya

Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean  
Ciudad del Saber Building 144 b  
Panama City, Panama

Regional Office for West and Central Africa  
Complexe CITAMIL, Immeuble E, BP 5640-Dakar-Fann, Point E  
Dakar, Senegal

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/unvolunteers](http://www.twitter.com/unvolunteers)  
YouTube: [www.youtube.com/unv](http://www.youtube.com/unv)

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