



UN
VOLUNTEERS



INTERNATIONAL
VOLUNTEER YEAR 2026

International Volunteer Year 2026

Communications Guide



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01

International
Volunteer Year
(IVY 2026)



1.1 International Volunteer Year (IVY 2026)

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development (short: International Volunteer Year; acronym: IVY 2026). This landmark decision calls upon governments, international and regional organizations, civil society, the private sector and academia to recognize and **strengthen the role of volunteerism in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

IVY 2026 offers a unique opportunity to celebrate, mobilize and elevate the contributions of volunteers who are driving positive changes in communities around the world. Volunteers are at the heart of sustainable development – responding to the challenges our society face with local knowledge, innovation and solidarity. They often reach communities that are underserved or in crisis, making a tangible difference where it is needed most.

IVY 2026 emphasizes the importance of creating safe and enabling environments for volunteers, investing in their capacity development and ensuring their contributions are recognized. These efforts are essential to ensure that volunteerism continues to thrive as a force for sustainable development.

IVY 2026 is a collective journey – empowered by people, partnerships and purpose. Everyone is invited to participate and make the Year inclusive and inspiring. From governments and United Nations entities to international and regional organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector – all are encouraged to organize events, share knowledge and showcase volunteer-led initiatives and success stories.

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) is facilitating global implementation of IVY 2026 in close cooperation with governments and United Nations partners. The [IVY 2026 Knowledge Portal](#) serves as a central hub for collaboration, learning and storytelling – connecting people across boards and inspiring a global narrative of inclusive and sustainable progress.



1.2 International Volunteer Year around the world

The International Volunteer Year (IVY 2026) was officially launched on International Volunteer Day, 5 December 2025, with a global webcast available on <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1y/k1yjwp71gi>.

Throughout 2026, a wide range of events and initiatives will take place, reflecting the global momentum around volunteerism driven by governments, international and regional organizations, civil society, the private sector and academia. These activities will be featured on the [IVY 2026 Knowledge Portal](#). To be included, stakeholders are encouraged to submit information about their initiatives by using the [submission form for activities and events](#) available on the Portal.



02

Communicating
the International
Volunteer Year
(IVY 2026)



2.1 Theme

The International Volunteer Year (IVY 2026) emerges at a time when the world is grappling with **complex and interconnected challenges** – climate change, conflict, economic instability and widening inequality. These issues are deeply felt by communities everywhere, often straining their ability to cope and recover.

In this context, IVY 2026 highlights the **essential role of volunteers** in helping communities respond, adapt and rebuild. Volunteers are not just supporting development – they are shaping it. Whether mentoring youth, restoring ecosystems, assisting in disaster recovery or strengthening local health services, volunteers bring **empathy, practical skills** and often **local knowledge**. They step in where help is most needed, fostering **trust and connection**, especially in times of crisis.

IVY 2026 celebrates volunteerism as a **powerful force for sustainable development** and invites all sectors to **recognize, support and collaborate** with volunteers to build resilient communities and a better future for all. IVY 2026 aims to **build awareness** of the transformative potential of volunteerism and to encourage **increased investment in volunteer infrastructure and support systems**. The Year advocates for enhanced **research, capacity development**, and the adoption of **innovative practices** that strengthen the impact of volunteer efforts.

Everyone has a role to play – governments, international and regional organizations, civil society, the private sector and academia need to work towards recognizing and valuing the importance of volunteers in the lives of communities, especially those in need.

2.2 Historical Context

2026 will mark the 25th anniversary of the first International Year of Volunteers, which was declared by the United Nations General Assembly in **2001** to recognize and promote the contributions of volunteers globally. In **2011**, a decade later, the world celebrated **the Year's 10th Anniversary**, renewing its commitment to volunteerism and encouraging countries to build lasting support systems for volunteers.



2.3 Quick facts

Volunteering means giving time, skills, and energy freely to benefit others or contribute to a cause, without financial compensation. It can be formal or informal, local or global.

Volunteerism takes many forms.

Volunteers contribute through local initiatives, online platforms and international assignments. This diversity strengthens the reach and relevance of development efforts.

Volunteers hold deep cultural and social significance. Volunteering has long been a part of human society – from mutual aid traditions to organized movements – and is embedded in traditions and values across cultures. It fosters solidarity, civic engagement, and a sense of belonging.

There are an estimated 2.1 billion volunteers worldwide every month.

Informal volunteering (25%) within communities is more than double the rate of formal volunteering (11.7%) through organizations.

Volunteers are resilient and adaptable.

They often work in challenging conditions, bringing creativity, empathy, and endurance to their missions and communities that they serve.

Volunteering is for everyone. People of all ages, genders, backgrounds and abilities can volunteer. Whether through informal acts of kindness or formal programs, volunteering offers a way for everyone to contribute meaningfully to their communities and to global development efforts.

2.4 Key messages

Volunteerism drives sustainable development

Volunteers contribute across economic, social and environmental dimensions, accelerating progress toward the 2030 Agenda. From climate action and poverty reduction to education and health, volunteer efforts are essential to building inclusive and resilient societies. Their contributions must be recognized, measured, and reflected in development planning at all levels.

All forms of volunteering matter

Whether formal or informal, in-person or digital, local or cross-border, every act of volunteering counts. Volunteerism takes many forms, including mutual aid, caregiving, skill-sharing and civic engagement. Each deserves visibility and support. A holistic view of volunteerism ensures no contribution is overlooked.

Removing barriers to volunteering is key

Volunteering must be open to all, regardless of gender identity, race, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion or lived experience. To unlock full participation, governments and organizations must remove social, legal and economic barriers that limit access – especially for those facing discrimination or marginalization.

Volunteers strengthen societies in times of crisis and peace

From pandemic response and disaster relief to peacebuilding and long-term development, volunteers are often first to act and last to leave. Their efforts provide immediate support and build resilience. Supporting volunteers through safe, enabling environments and inclusive policies means investing in communities' ability to adapt, recover and thrive.

Volunteerism is evolving

Digital, skills-based and cross-border volunteering are expanding opportunities for engagement – especially in underserved or remote areas. To harness this potential, stakeholders must promote and support new and emerging forms of volunteering through knowledge and information platforms.

Evidence matters

Robust research, data and measurement frameworks are essential to understanding the impact of volunteerism. Evidence helps identify what works, where and for whom. Measuring volunteer contributions ensures they are counted and valued in decision-making, leading to smarter strategies and more effective policies.

A stylized plant graphic with a central stem and several leaves, rendered in a light blue/purple color. It is positioned behind the large number '03' and the main title text.

03

Taking Action for the International Volunteer Year (IVY 2026)



A set of possible actions has been developed for diverse stakeholders to support and strengthen volunteerism for sustainable development during IVY 2026 and beyond. This list is not exhaustive: if you come up with additional actions, we would love to hear about them!

3.1 Governments

- **Integrate volunteerism into national development plans, legal frameworks and sectoral policies.** Ensure these reflect the diversity and value of volunteer efforts and promote safe, fair and supportive conditions for participation.
- **Create enabling environments for all forms of volunteering.** Recognize and support formal and informal volunteering by ensuring diverse forms of participation are recognized, measured and protected through safe, fair and inclusive policies.
- **Remove legal, social and economic barriers to volunteering.** Remove inequalities and risks to volunteering by guaranteeing that everyone, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion and lived experiences can volunteer.
- **Collect and share data on volunteer contributions.** Establish or strengthen systems to measure the impact of volunteerism across sectors. Use evidence to inform policies, promote innovation and highlight the contributions of volunteers across sectors.
- **Allocate financial, institutional and technical resources to support volunteer initiatives.** Invest in building and strengthening volunteer infrastructure.
- **Foster innovation in volunteering.** Encourage flexible, adaptive models that respond to evolving needs, such as digital, corporate, intergenerational and skill-based volunteering.

3.2 United Nations Entities

- **Mainstream volunteerism across your operations.** Embed a culture of volunteerism within programming, partnerships and institutional strategies, ensuring that volunteer engagement is not an add-on but a core approach.
- **Foster collaboration within the United Nations system and beyond.** Strengthen collaboration between United Nations entities and with external partners, including civil society, academic institutions, the private sector and volunteer organizations, to enhance the collective impact of volunteerism.
- **Invest in research and data on volunteerism.** Uncover hidden contributions, identify systemic barriers to inform the development of inclusive, evidence-based and responsive volunteerism policies and programmes.

- **Explore and champion new models of volunteer engagement.** Investigate and scale-up new forms of engagement, such as digital, cross-border, intergenerational and skills-based volunteering to help address current challenges.
- **Mobilize resources to support volunteerism.** Advocate for increased and sustained investment in volunteer-driven solutions, including voluntary contributions from governments, donors and the private sector.

3.3 Civil Society Organizations

- **Expand inclusive and accessible volunteer opportunities.** Ensure volunteer roles reflect community diversity and address structural inequalities. Tailor engagement for people with disabilities and other underrepresented groups.
- **Measure, document and share volunteer impact.** Use stories, data and research to highlight the power of volunteers, inform programming and advocate for supportive policies and funding.
- **Innovate how you engage.** Embrace creative outreach methods, including digital tools, hybrid participation models and peer-to-peer learning, to reach new audiences and sustain engagement.
- **Collaborate across sectors.** Partner with governments, academia, the private sector and other organizations to build a shared vision for inclusive, impactful volunteerism.

3.4 Academia and Research Institutions

- **Integrate volunteerism into education and civic learning.** Promote community service, service-learning programs and volunteering opportunities as part of formal education.
- **Conduct inclusive, participatory research.** Study the contributions of all forms of volunteerism, namely formal, informal, online, cross-border, while ensuring that marginalized voices are represented.
- **Bridge research and policy.** Work with governments, United Nations entities and civil society organizations to turn findings into action, helping shape inclusive and evidence-based volunteer strategies.
- **Promote volunteer-based academic partnerships.** Engage with student organizations, volunteer networks and international programs to co-create new models of volunteer engagement.

3.5 Private Sector

- **Launch employee volunteering programs.** Support both in-person and digital volunteering and create opportunities that are flexible, family-friendly and accessible to all employees.

- **Champion skills-based volunteering.** Leverage company expertise, such as in IT, finance, logistics and marketing to support civil society organizations.
- **Partner with local and global initiatives.** Collaborate with governments, United Nations entities, civil society organizations and academia to co-create projects that benefit communities and align with corporate social responsibility goals.
- **Recognize and celebrate employee volunteers.** Spotlight their efforts internally and externally to foster a culture of volunteerism and mutual engagement.



3.6 General Public



- **Take the first step.** Find a cause you care about, whether it is gender equality, education, climate change, health or youth empowerment and offer your time, skills or resources.
- **Get involved in your local community.** Volunteer at schools, clinics, food banks, sports clubs or environmental groups. Small, consistent actions make a lasting impact.
- **Share your story.** Talk about your volunteer experience with friends, family or online to inspire and encourage others to start volunteering.
- **Support others to participate.** Encourage and help people around you, especially those who may face barriers, to get involved in volunteer opportunities.

04

Communications toolkit



4.1 Visual Identity

The [IVY 2026 logo](#) forms the basis of the Year's overall visual identity. To maximize the visibility and impact of IVY 2026, we encourage you and all IVY partners to consistently apply the IVY 2026 visual identity across your activities, events, and digital platforms.

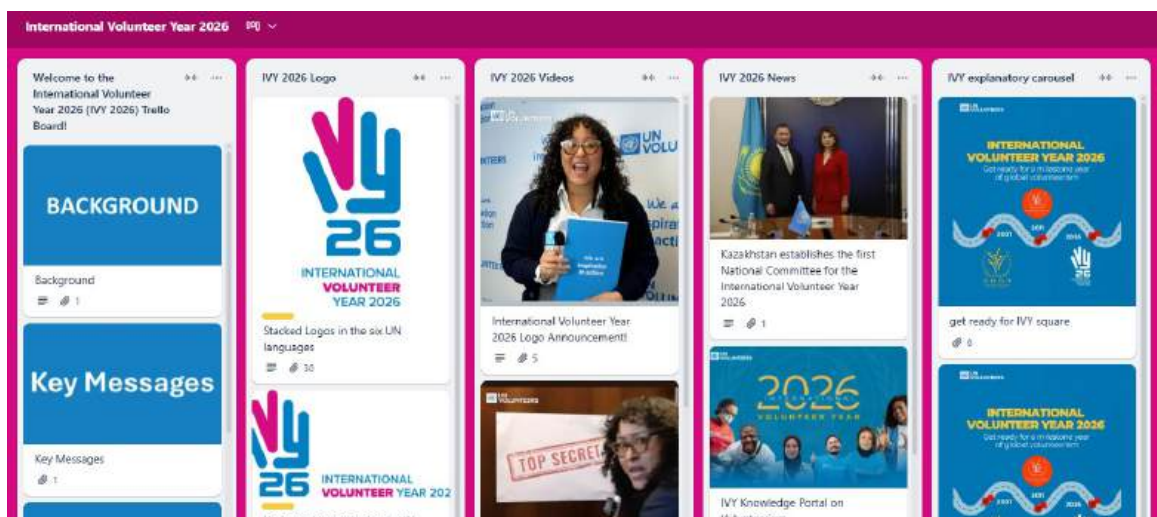
To facilitate consistent use of the IVY 2026 visual identity, we have prepared the [IVY 2026 Logo Guidance](#): A comprehensive guide on how to apply the IVY 2026 logo in your communications and outreach materials.



Do you need the IVY 2026 logo in other languages? We can guide you in creating localized versions of the visual identity. You can send a request to IVY@unv.org. Our team can advise you on any additional issues you may have when using the visual identity, from logo arrangements to format requirements, such as size or layout.

4.2 Where to find IVY 2026 Communications Materials

The [IVY 2026 Trello board](#) contains a wide range of digital and print-ready communication resources to help you promote IVY 2026. These materials include visual identity assets, templates, and guides, and can be adapted for use in your national language. If you experience any difficulties accessing the files, please contact us at IVY@unv.org.



4.3 Knowledge Portal

The [IVY 2026 Knowledge Portal](#) is designed to provide information and support your promotional efforts with practical, action-oriented resources.

The portal also serves as a space to share useful information about IVY 2026 and highlight what governments, international and regional organizations, civil society, the private sector and academia can do – and are already doing – to observe it. In addition to adding your IVY-related events to the portal's global map, you are invited to submit resources such as articles, reports, or other publications produced as part of IVY 2026.

To **add your events or share resources related to IVY 2026**, fill in the relevant form on the IVY 2026 Knowledge Portal or contact IVY@unv.org.

4.4 Poster

The IVY 2026 poster can be downloaded from the [Trello board](#). The standard measurement is 700 x 500 cm with both horizontal and vertical formats available.

4.5 Virtual backgrounds for meetings or events

Virtual backgrounds for IVY 2026 events are provided on the [Trello board](#). If you need help with in-person events, contact us at IVY@unv.org, and we can send digital files for simple roll-up banners or backdrops.

05

How to participate





5.1 Plan your event or outreach activity

You play a key role in driving IVY 2026 forward. Start by reading the proposed actions for governments, United Nations entities, civil society, the private sector, academia, and the general public (see Section 3), and encourage partners to get involved.

Launching an outreach activity or hosting an event is a powerful way to support IVY 2026 and promote volunteerism. To help bring your ideas to life, we offer resources and practical tips. Our promotional materials are available on the [IVY 2026 Trello board](#), while you will find the latest campaign updates, roadmaps, and tools on the [IVY 2026 Knowledge Portal](#).

5.1.1 Spread the word online

Help build global excitement for IVY 2026 by sharing the message across your social media and media channels. The [IVY 2026 Trello board](#) is your go-to source for multilingual creative assets – ready to energize your posts and engage diverse audiences. Whether you are posting visuals, sharing stories or collaborating with partners and influencers, every online action helps build momentum for IVY 2026 and inspire others to join. Be sure to include the official hashtags: **#IVY2026** **#VolunteerYear** to connect your content to the global conversation and help the campaign trend in every language.

5.1.2 Organize an event or activity

You can help to make IVY 2026 unforgettable! Highlight the International Year and bring volunteer stories to life by planning your event in a creative and engaging way. Organize conferences or forums to bring together thought leaders, policymakers, and volunteers for meaningful dialogue and knowledge sharing. Spark excitement and reach new audiences with sports games, film festivals, cultural performances, exhibitions, contests, or concerts. Whatever you choose, **make your event meaningful** – and be sure it visually aligns with the IVY 2026 identity to amplify its impact.

We encourage IVY 2026 partners to consider ways to make events and outreach efforts accessible, inclusive, and reflective of the diverse communities you serve. To support you, explore our [Inclusive Event Accessibility 1-Pager and Checklist](#), which offer practical tips for creating welcoming experiences for all participants.

5.1.3 Lectures, panels and roundtables

Organize, sponsor or participate in public talks and interactive sessions featuring researchers, changemakers and volunteers and other thought leaders. Promote the key messages of IVY 2026 and spark insightful conversations. Interactive formats such as panel discussions, Q&A sessions, short lectures and workshops are great ways to inspire action and deepen engagement.



5.1.4 Involve the media and brand your city

Engage with journalists, advertising contacts, TV stations, outdoor advertising agencies or municipalities as early as possible to promote IVY in 2026. Share key promotional materials such as the IVY 2026 poster and social media assets to build awareness and interest.

5.1.5 Are you an influencer?

If volunteering is close to your heart, use your voice and platform to highlight its impact on sustainable development. By sharing your experiences and leading by example, you can motivate others to learn more, get involved, and make a difference in their communities.

5.1.6 Let us know about your IVY 2026 event

There are many ways to contribute to the success of IVY 2026! Let us know what you are planning by submitting information on your events and efforts via the [IVY 2026 Knowledge Portal](#) – we are excited to spotlight your efforts and help amplify your impact!

Remember to capture your activities through photos or videos and send us your best high-resolution images, along with photo credits and a brief description of the event, for a chance to be featured in the IVY 2026 Newsletter or other publications.

Make sure to incorporate IVY 2026 visuals prominently in your events and materials to strengthen the International Year's identity and visibility.

5.2 Partnerships

The success of IVY 2026 relies on the active engagement and collaboration of all involved – governments, United Nations entities, civil society, the private sector, academia, as well as media and public figures ready to help spread the word. To make the International Year truly impactful, partners are encouraged to coordinate joint outreach, share best practices and adapt communication efforts to local contexts. By working together, sharing resources, and amplifying the message of volunteerism, all can help ensure that IVY 2026 inspires action and reaches communities everywhere.

Here are ideas of what you can do together with others:



Feature the IVY 2026 logo at partner-hosted conferences and events to enhance awareness and branding;



Promote IVY 2026 videos, animations and other communications materials across partner platforms to increase visibility;



Co-brand initiatives or products by exchanging logos or visual identities on key communication materials;



Leverage each other's social media channels, including reposts, retweets and influencer engagement to amplify IVY 2026 messaging;



Log and submit partner initiatives for IVY 2026 in the [IVY 2026 Knowledge Portal](#).

IVY 2026 comes alive through dynamic partnerships – media sharing volunteer stories, cities hosting branded festivals, companies launching employee volunteer programmes or transit spaces promoting IVY 2026. Contribute to sparking a global celebration of volunteerism that is visible, vibrant and relatable!

5.3 Traditional media outreach

Share information and materials about your efforts for IVY 2026 with national and regional media contacts and alert them about **events and activities** you are organizing in 2026.

Engaging media and influencers is essential for generating public interest in volunteerism. To amplify the visibility of IVY 2026, consider organizing a variety of media-focused activities, such as:

- Talk shows and panel discussions
- Press conferences and media briefings
- Interviews, including for radio and TV

5.4 Digital outreach

Use digital platforms to help make IVY 2026 a powerful tool for raising awareness about how volunteers support real-world goals – like ending poverty, improving health and education, protecting the environment and building peaceful communities.

Before you begin, check out section 2.4 on the IVY 2026 key messages to get inspired. When posting on social media, always include the official IVY 2026 hashtags to boost visibility and connect with the global conversation.

For the full list of hashtags in the six official languages of the United Nations, please see here:

EN: #VolunteerYear

AR: #عام_التطوع

ZH: #志愿者年


ES: #AñoDelVoluntariado

FR: #Annéeduvolontariat

RU: #ГодДобровольцев

#IYY2026 is the second hashtag for the Year and remains the same in all languages.

You can start now by using the graphics provided on the [IVY 2026 Trello board](#)



06

Useful Links, Role of UNV and Contacts

Useful links

UNV [page on IVY 2026](#)

IVY 2026 [Knowledge Portal](#)

IVY 2026 [Trello board](#)

IVY 2026 [logo guidance](#)

UNV is dedicated to implementing [United Nations General Assembly resolution 78/127](#), which proclaimed IVY 2026. The General Assembly has specifically tasked UNV with facilitating the implementation of IVY 2026 in cooperation with governments and United Nations system organizations.

Through a dedicated IVY 2026 team, UNV helps coordinate the global observance of the Year, provides guidance and disseminates materials. The team consists of four staff members at UNV headquarters in Bonn, Germany, and six IVY 2026 Regional Coordinators across UNV's Regional Offices, covering the Arab States (UNV Regional Office in Amman), Asia and the Pacific (UNV Regional Office in Bangkok), West and Central Africa (UNV Regional Office in Dakar), Europe and Central Asia (UNV Regional Office in Istanbul), and East and Southern Africa (UNV Regional Office in Nairobi).

The IVY 2026 team maintains close working relationships with focal points designated by United Nations Member States and United Nations entities and remains available for consultation with representatives of other international and regional organizations, civil society, the private sector, and academia.

Contact for general information: IVY@unv.org



<https://www.facebook.com/unvolunteers>



<https://x.com/UNVolunteers>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/united-nations-volunteers/>



<https://www.instagram.com/unvolunteers/>



<https://www.youtube.com/user/unv>

International Volunteer Year (IVY 2026)
<https://knowledge.unv.org/international-volunteer-year>
Email: IVY@unv.org

United Nations Volunteers programme,
Bonn, Germany



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