



Amanda Eyer (left), UN Youth Volunteer with UN-Habitat in Ecuador, during a workshop about urban planning with the community of Puerto La Cruz in the Gulf of Guayaquil. (UNV, 2014)

ENGLISH

# Overview

## ➔ UNV and Switzerland: promoting volunteering for peace and development

Switzerland is one of the key partners of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme. The strong relationship is marked by long-standing cooperation, formalized through partnership agreements. UNV mainly partners with two entities of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs: the Human Security Division (HSD) of the Political Affairs Directorate (PAD) and the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC). UNV's counterpart within SDC is the Global Institutions Division of the Directorate for Global Cooperation.

The Centre for Information, Counselling and Training for Professions relating to International Cooperation (cinfo) was established in 1990 by SDC to support

outreach and information for the Swiss public about professional opportunities in international cooperation. Therefore, cinfo is the focal agency facilitating the recruitment of UN Volunteers from Switzerland.

### Key aspects of UNV and Switzerland collaboration

#### **Special Voluntary Fund**

Switzerland is one of the top donors to UNV's Special Voluntary Fund (SVF). In 2015, the Swiss Government contributed US \$845,000 to the SVF, which is a special-purpose fund that is replenished by voluntary contributions of donor countries and organizations. This is the primary source of funding for UNV pilot initiatives that test and demonstrate the relevance and added value of volunteerism and of volunteer contributions to development. Since 2001, in line with the UNV business model, the Fund has allowed UNV to advance in the three areas of advocacy, integration and mobilization to support the overall corporate strategy. The SVF is also an expression of ownership of the programme by countries from the South as well as the North; 63 countries have contributed to the SVF since its inception, 42 of these developing countries.

#### **Volunteer funding**

Increasing the number of Swiss nationals working in the UN system has been an important strategic focus of Swiss foreign policy for many years. The Gov-



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*UN Youth Volunteer Laura Rutishauser, fully funded by Switzerland, holding a poster, while community volunteer Claudine Kelpessang (sitting on the right) explains hygiene measures to inhabitants of Walia neighborhood in N'Djamena. (Adriana Borra/ UNV, 2015)*

ernment of Switzerland has pursued this objective through various avenues, including support for UNV. In this context, in 2001, SDC, UNV and cinfo established a partnership focusing on the placement of Swiss professionals. Switzerland was one of the first partners to join the UNV Internship programme, providing young Swiss nationals with the opportunity to work with UN partners all around the world. In 2004, the Human Security Division joined in. SDC and HSD together have been funding over the past years annually 20 UN Youth Volunteer assignments.

**Centre for Information, Counselling and Training for Professions relating to International Cooperation**

cinfo offers information and advice to people interested in employment opportunities in international cooperation. It also supports institutions working in international cooperation in their search for qualified professionals for assignments in Switzerland and abroad. Hence, cinfo supports the recruitment and training of UN Youth Volunteers. UNV's Volunteer Recruitment Resources Section conducts annual outreach missions to Biel, where cinfo is located. UNV also participates in a career fair organized by cinfo every two years.

Switzerland has been targeting activities aimed at broadening opportunities for Swiss nationals within

UNV for more than 10 years. In this context, cinfo was designated as a UNV focal point and acts as a cornerstone in this strategy. It organizes an annual outreach mission and runs the preselection process for UN Volunteers Youth positions financed by the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In 2014, cinfo released a study on the impact of UN Volunteer assignments on the volunteer's career development. The survey covered 50 former UN Volunteers, with about twice as many women as men. Around 85 per cent of survey respondents joined UNV after their application was supported by cinfo. The remainder either registered through the UNV online database, or used their personal contacts. The survey showed that two years after the end of their first assignment as a UN Volunteer, more than 30 per cent of all former Swiss UN Volunteer Interns and more than 50 per cent of all UN Volunteer Specialists were still working for the UN. In addition, 49 per cent of all former UN Volunteer Interns and 41 per cent of all former UN Volunteer Specialists are active professionally in international cooperation. A total of 87 per cent of all former Swiss UN Volunteers were, two years after their assignments, still engaged in international cooperation. The positive findings of the study were presented during the Full Funding donor meeting at the UNV Partnerships Forum, held in Bonn, Germany, in 2014.

## Swiss UN Volunteers in Action

### ➤ Giving Chadian youth the opportunity to volunteer

UN Youth Volunteer Laura Rutishauser, a Swiss national, is volunteering alongside national UN Volunteer Alladoum Assidjim in support of civil society, working to support Chad's National Volunteering Programme (CNVP). Some 30 per cent of Chad's population is under 35 years old, and youth unemployment is high. The CNVP helps youth gain professional experience while fostering civic responsibility.

As of mid-2015, Laura and Alladoum had helped recruit and train 13 CNVP volunteers. Of these, 10 are working with local communities in Chad's capital city to raise awareness of water, sanitation and health issues, and the remaining three are teaching citizenship to teenagers at community centres. Over 400 young people have applied to become CNVP volunteers, indicating a growing interest in the programme. Their work is challenging, but Laura and Alladoum learn from each other every day.

### ➤ Coordinating UN communications

Swiss national Laura Gees served in Tajikistan as a UN Youth Volunteer in communications with the UN Communication Group. She helped bring UN agencies in Tajikistan together to collaborate on joint activities and to more fully engage with each other.

During her time as a UN Youth Volunteer, Laura produced UN communication materials and refreshed the country office website to make it more user friendly. She participated in a career fair on International Youth Day, speaking to local youth about job interview skills. For UN Day 2013, Laura coordinated an exhibition of UN agencies and a film festival that attracted about 300 student participants. Laura reports that she learned a great deal during her time in Tajikistan. She continues to value her UN colleagues' expressions of appreciation for her work.

## Number of UN Volunteers from Switzerland, 2011-2014

Year	Fully Funded UN Volunteers	Total Swiss UN Volunteers	Online Volunteers
2014	39	63	17
2013	45	70	27
2012	39	65	26
2011	37	68	26

The figures represent numbers of UN Volunteers serving in the respective year and are non-cumulative. 'Fully funded' refers to those Swiss UN Volunteers whose assignments have been funded by the Government of Switzerland.

## Financial contributions from the Government of Switzerland to UNV, 2011-2014 (in US \$)

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Full Funding (HSD*)	320,158	322,803	679,172	402,234
Full Funding (SDC**)	63,427	443,993	497,028	344,711
Special Voluntary Fund	1,016,389	872,505	856,622	911,369

\*HSD: Human Security Division

\*\*SDC: Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation

As a UN Youth Volunteer in communications, Laura Gees was often asked to take photographs during events. (UNV, 2013)



## Online volunteering

The first UN Online Volunteer assignment completed by a Swiss national was in 2000. Since then and up to the end of October 2015, 226 individuals from Switzerland were engaged in 354 online volunteering assignments.

Some 57 organizations (27 civil society and 30 UN entities) based in Switzerland are registered with the UN Online Volunteering service. These organizations have published 346 opportunities on the Online Volunteering service website to date. Organizations include, for example, the World Resources Forum, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, International Labour Organization and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

## About UNV

*The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that promotes volunteerism to support peace and development worldwide. Volunteerism can transform the pace and nature of development, and it benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer. UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for volunteerism globally, encouraging partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing volunteers.*

*UNV is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).  
For more information about UNV, please visit [www.unv.org](http://www.unv.org).*



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