

We are inspiration in action

# VOLUNTEERS FOR EVENTS

UNV Core Team
Onboarding





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The Volunteers for Events (V4E) service line is a professional, systematic approach to volunteer mobilization and management for international, national and regional events organized by United Nations Entities and the Member States.

The V4E implementation includes a motivated and trained Core Team of UN Volunteers to handle various substantive, technical and logistical arrangements to ensure successful mobilization and management of Event Volunteers, who are the fundamental piece in the development of any large-scale event.



## PURPOSE

The purpose of this note is to support you, member of the UNV Core Team, in your event volunteering journey and help you to better understand what you are part of and how you will contribute through this event to UNV's efforts for peace and development.

Therefore, this note will first introduce you to the UNV programme, and volunteerism in general, to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of the context this service line is based on. Secondly, you will be briefed on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its connection to volunteerism, so you can see the bigger picture and understand what you are contributing. Thirdly, you will learn a bit about how conferences contribute to the SDGs and volunteerism, why they are important to our cause and how the service line fits into this. Finally, you will learn more about your role in this service line, what you can expect and how you can use your knowledge and skills to contribute to our efforts.

We hope you enjoy reading this document and find it helpful for the journey you are about to begin.



## ABOUT UNV AND VOLUNTEERISM

#### 3.1. UNV Introduction

The United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV) is a United Nations (UN) organization contributing to peace and development by promoting and supporting volunteerism worldwide. UNV works with partners to integrate qualified, highly motivated and well-supported UN Volunteers into development programming and promote the value and global recognition of volunteerism.



#### 3.2. Volunteerism and Volunteering

What is volunteerism? Volunteerism is basically an expression of people's willingness and capacity to freely help others and improve their society. In most cultures, voluntary action is deeply embedded in the long-established traditions of sharing. It brings significant benefits to individuals and communities by addressing specific needs and helping to nurture and sustain a rich social texture and a strong sense of mutual trust and cohesion. Both are essential for a society's stability.

"Volunteerism is a global phenomenon that transcends boundaries, religions and cultural divides. Volunteers embody the fundamental values of commitment, inclusiveness, civic engagement and a sense of solidarity".

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon International Volunteer Day December 5, 2015

Why volunteer? Being a volunteer means different things. You can use your knowledge and experience to contribute to many activities; you are able to give a voice to young people and other groups' interests that otherwise might not be heard; you can contribute to personal development and training of youth leaders who will, later on, assume responsibilities to help improve other people's lives; you will have access to new opportunities and improve your capacity to get a job. But most importantly, you will promote social cohesion and breed respect for diversity and equality.

Volunteering provides an opportunity for everyone to participate in decision-making processes and is a way to engage in civil society by shaping conversations, questioning social norms, and promoting progressive values.

Source: UN News. December, 2016





### THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

You probably have heard about the 2030 Agenda and what the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) are all about. Nevertheless, we would like to give you a quick refresher to enable you to see the bigger picture of what we are doing and what you will be contributing to.

The 17 SDGs and their 169 targets are part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which guides policy and funding until 2030.

The 2030 Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity, strengthening peace and requiring partnership for implementation. These five elements of sustainable development are all connected.

Building on the successes, but also the shortcomings, of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SDGs focus on new areas such as economic inequality, innovation, climate change, sustainable consumption and peace, and justice, among others.

The SDGs are universal, inclusive and a bold commitment to people and the planet. The SDGs are also referred to as the Global Goals for sustainable development.

Figure 1/ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



#### **UNV TIP**

Every country has its own information about SDG. In order to be prepared for your role, we encourage you to find more information about your own country. You would be surprised about all you can learn and share with the volunteers.



#### 4.1. Volunteerism and SDGs

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly recognizes volunteer groups as stakeholders to achieve the 17 SDGs. Volunteerism can be a powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation to build capacities and help the new agenda take root. It can help to expand and mobilize constituencies and engage people in national planning and implementation for the SDGs. Volunteer groups can also help to localize the new agenda by providing new spaces of interaction between governments and people for concrete and scalable actions.

It is not possible to attain the SDGs without a wide range of people engaged in all stages, at all levels, always. Volunteerism is a powerful means for bringing more people into the fold. Volunteerism and volunteers are already expanding the capability to achieve the future we want by engaging greater numbers of people in local and national planning and action for achieving the Agenda 2030.

By its nature, volunteerism is an important vehicle for sustainable development. Volunteerism lets people and communities participate in their own growth. Through volunteering, citizens build their resilience, enhance their knowledge base and gain a sense of responsibility for their own community. Social cohesion and trust are strengthened through individual and collective volunteer action, leading to sustainable outcomes for people, by the people.

Volunteerism strengthens civic engagement, safeguards social inclusion, deepens solidarity and solidifies ownership of development results. Importantly, volunteering has a ripple effect. It inspires others and advances the transformations required for the SDGs to take root in communities.

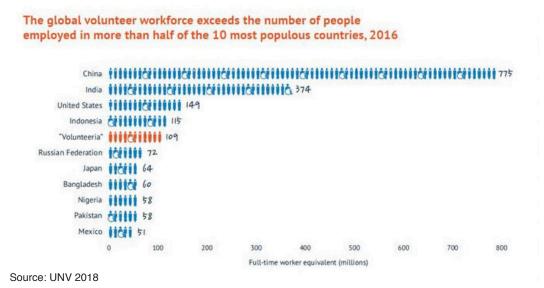
Volunteers can provide technical support and enhance capacity in all thematic goal areas. They deliver basic services, help transfer skills, foster exchanges of good practices and add valuable international and local expertise through domestic, South-South, South-North and North-South exchanges. Corporate volunteers can play a role in this regard, by making their expertise available to public institutions as well as to fragile communities. Volunteers help leave no one behind by reaching out to people, including those marginalized or difficult to reach, to bring people's voices and knowledge into collective actions. This is crucial to build ownership and localize the SDGs. Volunteer organizations can serve as brokers of engagement, connecting governmental strategies and initiatives with complementary, yet essential, community voluntary action.

Many of the SDGs call for long-term attitudes and behavior changes – for example, in the way we live together or in the way we consume. Volunteers facilitate changes in mindsets by raising awareness or championing those changes and inspiring others.

Finally, the SDGs require a "data revolution" to collect and analyze disaggregated data to monitor progress. Volunteers can help measure progress on SDG implementation by collecting data, providing expertise and supporting participatory forms of planning and monitoring. Volunteerism, as a form of civic engagement, is a way to strengthen state-citizen accountability mechanisms for the coming decades.







#### Did you know that...?

The global volunteer workforce exceeds the number of people employed in more than half of the 10 most populous countries, 2016



## **EVENTS AND THE SDG**

Large-scale events and international, national and regional conferences and events represent an **important driver for opportunities to accelerate the implementation and achievement of the SDGs**. Between 15-20 mass events take place yearly and approximately 20-30 conferences take place every month. Such conferences and events are often the drivers for contributions towards the Sustainable Development Goals by bringing together representatives of international organizations, national governments, academia, civil society and businesses to review progress, examine obstacles, exchange best practices and recommend new actions to achieve the goals, thereby bolstering sustainable development, poverty reduction, improved health and well-being, youth empowerment, climate action, disaster prevention and management, social integration, humanitarian action and peacebuilding, inter alia.

Furthermore, such events rely on hundreds or even thousands of volunteers to support organizational and operational management and to fill frontline substantive roles. Volunteerism on this scale holds the possibility of creating a legion of citizens committed to the SDGs while maximizing civic engagement – and you will be part of it. Your role is very important. Always remember this while preparing for it.





## **VOLUNTEERS FOR EVENTS SERVICE LINE**

Based on UNV's Strategic Framework, volunteering for events paves the way to enlarge the scope of support, facilitation, and integration of volunteerism into international, national and regional events and into national practices and policies. A talent solution such as volunteering for events expands the opportunities for people to contribute to the work of UN partners by responding rapidly and effectively to meet the needs and interests of UN partners through the deployment of Event Volunteers to support events organized by UN Entities and governments and enhancing UN partners' capacities by supplementing existing volunteer talent solutions.

In this context, 'Volunteers for Events' (V4E) is a service that provides partners with management and organizational support for large-scale events and international, national and regional conferences. The service line follows three main objectives:

Figure 3 /
Main objectives of the
Service Line Volunteers
for Events



STRENGTHEN THE VOLUNTEER INFRASTRUCTURE INCREASE VOLUNTEER MOBILIZATION

#### 6.1. UNV's Experience

Our service line builds on a history of success. We have successfully supported the management of major international events and conferences through volunteers.

Examples are:

Figure 4/

Examples of international events and conferences with UNV





#### 6.2. How It Works

The V4E service line is a professional, systematic approach to volunteer mobilization and management for international, national and regional events organized by UN Entities and the Member States. It includes a motivated and trained Core Team of UN Volunteers to handle various substantive, technical and logistical arrangements to ensure successful mobilization and management of Event Volunteers.

The diverse menu of services offered to partners ranges from advisory services, to transfer of knowledge, to implementation by UNV. UNV can provide a comprehensive package of services or inject a specialized service into the overall event logistics.

In an ideal and successful scenario, the advisory services lead to the transfer of knowledge, and finally to the implementation of the event volunteer management component. Each of the services is designed to contribute to UNV's agenda to promote volunteerism and assist its partners in delivering towards the SDGs.

In regard to the provision of services for the volunteer management component implementation, the regional offices or field units are responsible for the recruitment of the Core Team Members, who assist partners, under specific terms of responsibilities, to organize their events and coordinate the Event Volunteers during the events. The Core Team will work closely with the regional offices/field units and, when needed, VSS and management in the headquarters will also advise and support. As you can see, you are not alone! We are a team – your success is ours, and the UN's success as a whole.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Seen as programmatic technical input, the advisory services will be provided by the UNV Volunteer Advisory Services (VASS) Team in the headquarters and regional offices. The ecosystem was developed by the Volunteers Solutions Section (VSS) during the V4E project and is catered to clients through UNV's regional offices and field units.





## **VOLUNTEERS IN EVENTS**

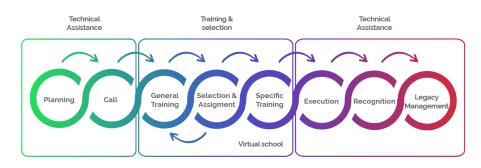
#### 7.1. Your Role

You are part of our motivated Core Team of UN Volunteers selected to handle various substantive, technical and logistical arrangements before, during and after the conference/event. Your role is crucial, not only to the delivery and smooth implementation of our service line, but to enhance the Event Volunteers' experience and contribution to the event. You and your team will be responsible for the design, development, coordination, and implementation of volunteer management.

For this, we will help and guide you through the process and provide you with useful tips, information, and materials that will support you at every step. These guidelines should support a smooth and efficient implementation to provide excellent service to both our partners and volunteers.

The implementation of the volunteer management cycle consists of eight steps:

Figure 5 /
Event volunteer management cycle



Depending on the services requested by our partner, you and your team will be responsible for each of these steps, always working in close collaboration with the assigned focal points. While dedicated specialists are assigned to each phase, **you should always work as a team and support each other throughout the whole process.** 

#### 7.2. Design and Planning

The first step is to design and plan the volunteer management process in accordance with the event and partner needs. During this phase, you will have at least one dedicated volunteer who acts as the coordinator of the Core Team. In close collaboration with you and the other team members, she/he will be responsible for planning the activities of the entire team, clustered around various categories of work, as well as the preparation of the actual budget.



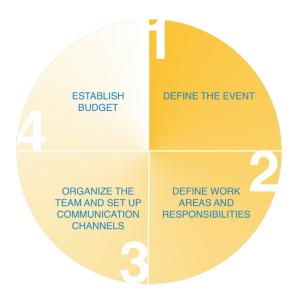
After the team composition is established, the event needs to be identified. For this, it is recommended to consult the event organizer and carry out field visits in order to gather necessary information. Afterward, the team should be organized into working groups to coordinate activities in the working areas that are important for the implementation. We suggest organizing the team into these areas: call and selection, training, and logistics and communication, among others depending on the event.

To create a budget, you will need to consider the expenses you will have. Major expenses might include:



Figure 6/

Suggested steps for the Design and planning phase



#### 7.3. Call and Selection

In this step, a call strategy (outreach) will be designed and planned. You will need to include the budget allocation and expected time for the process on the one hand, and the characteristics that mobilized volunteers must meet on the other hand.

The call is intended to attract and recruit the necessary number of Event Volunteers to perform operational tasks at the planned event. Make sure that the inclusion of vulnerable groups underpins the outreach efforts and that representation extends across gender, age, ethnicity, disability, and refugee status. Once you have designed the call, your work in the external outreach will begin.

You can channel the outreach in two ways: online, through social media platforms of the event stakeholders or newly created platforms; and on-site, as informative talks within institutions of the public and private sector, academia, and civil society.



The following on-site outreach activities can be taken into consideration:

Figure 7/

On-site outreach activities examples

## ESTABLISH STRATEGIC ALLIANCES WITH:

Local universities and businesses, community, NGOs, organizations working with vulnerable groups /e.g. discussing with universities offering volunteering as recognized hours of professional practice/.

#### **FOCUS ON:**

The faculties related to environmental studies, engeneering, sociology, communications, architecture, environmental engeneering, geology etc.

/The choice of faculties depends on the event./

# PROVIDE INFORMATION SESSIONS:

For public, private companies and universities.

You should primarily target residents in close vicinity to the event, with a view to ensure volunteers' availability and attendance and reduce the procedural burden on the security entities and the hotel industry at the event location.

For the online outreach, we highly recommend you promote the volunteer outreach on the official website of the host agency and other participating organizers, as well as the city portal and event website, if applicable. You can always consider an advertisement in local newspapers and other media as well.

For the recruitment of Event Volunteers, existing tools available in-house and/or purchased based on specific needs will be used, similar to what was used during COP 23, the annual meetings of the Boards of Governors of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund in 2015, and COP 20 in Lima in 2014.

After the successful outreach campaign, the selection process should begin. From the applications received, the most suitable candidates for the event should be selected based on their availability (with preference to those who can volunteer for the entire event period), professional and educational profiles and proximity to the event venues.

#### **UNV TIP**

We recommend you put a lot of effort in this step. A good call strategy will guarantee good participation in the training. It is important to raise interest so that people will attend.



#### 7.4. General and Task-specific Training

This step consists of the development and implementation of the training. To develop the content of the training, which is based on activities with specific objectives to address partners' needs and the overall event setting, you need to cover three main components:

Figure 8 /
Training components



But don't worry, we have developed guidance that supports you in the design and development of the whole training process (training guidance). You will not only find an introduction to the training set but useful tips and examples of previous events that help you with the design.

The first component, volunteer engagement, is framed as motivational training to encourage the invited participants to successfully support the event. You need to standardize the content covering topics on volunteerism, civic engagement, and the SDGs, among others. In addition, the module includes an evaluation process for the subsequent selection of suitable candidates who will become Event Volunteers.

The second component, the event-specific training, is framed as an informative talk. You should introduce volunteers to the event and its overall framework.

The third component is the role-specific training, where you need to focus on the roles and tasks volunteers will assume during their assignment at the event. It should be designed with the purpose of dividing the work between the volunteers, according to the specific working areas that will be developed by you and the event organizer.

Once you have finished the design of the training content, you are ready for the next phase: the training implementation. Depending on the number of volunteers, implementation will follow the cascade-model, where you train the trainers who will then commence the training of the Event Volunteers. This is a very exciting part where you start to see how all the ideas you have in mind will materialize.



#### The Cascade-Model:

This model "is a top-down model of professional learning where there is a flow of information from 'expert' teachers or trainers to secondary trainers or multipliers at different levels. (...) secondary trainers receive an initial training and skills via a workshop from the expert teachers. These secondary trainers in turn train other trainers on the lower levels (...). This model relies on people to pass on their newly procured understanding and expertise (...).

To support the training components, you can make use of an e-learning platform (e.g. <u>Lima 2019 Virtual School</u>). The platform can either replace parts of the on-site training entirely (for events with a high number of volunteers to be trained) or can be a complementary tool to the on-site training with context-specific modules. Comprehensive guidelines to help you design and deliver the training of Event Volunteers are available for you.

#### **UNV TIP**

We suggest you follow the guide and steps in the Training Guidance for Event Volunteers. You will find it very useful!

#### 7.5. Execution. Volunteer Activation and Coordination During the Event

This is one of the most important steps in volunteer management. You will have to be on post the whole time during the event. You will oversee the different groups of volunteers, in collaboration with the area managers designated by the event organizer, and you will need to ensure that everything runs smoothly while rules and regulations are followed.

Make sure volunteers support the event in shifts of no more than 6 hours. Furthermore, you, in collaboration with the partners, should put a system in place that ensures swift mobilization of volunteers in large numbers to a certain event area in case the need arises, as well as a stand-by rapidly deployable group of volunteers.

The volunteers will follow the protocol explained during the task-specific training sessions, but you need to be prepared for any case. Therefore, the distribution of roles and clarity on the reporting lines are critical for the delivery of a successful event. Proper preparation during the training sessions is of utmost importance for this step.

For the activation and deployment, volunteers should be assigned to work areas according to their experience and suitability for the required roles. See an example from the COP 23 Volunteer Initiative for reference below:

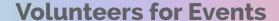




Figure 9/

Volunteers' roles

#### **BULA ZONE**

- 1. Protocol assistant
- 2. Secretaries
- Ushers
- 4. Social media assistant
- 5. Press conference assistant
- Action for Climate Empowerment assistants
- 7. Miscellaneous

#### **BULA / BONN ZONE**

- 1. Conference clerks
- 2. ICT clerks
- 3. Information desk clerks
- 4. Registration desk clerks
- 5. Data entry clerks
- 6. Lost and found assistant
- 7. Miscellaneous

#### **BONN ZONE**

- 1. ICT support assistants
- Registration and accreditation assistants
- 3. Helpdesk assistants
- 4. Conference service assistant
- 5. Observer liaison officer
- 6. Exhibit assistants
- 7. Miscellaneous

#### **UNV TIP**

The credentials are not something you should forget. Access is often restricted in these types of events. That is why it is very important to maintain a fluid relationship with the organization and define what type of credentials you will need as a team and as volunteers.

#### 7.6. Volunteer Recognition

**Without volunteers, there is no event.** In many events, volunteers are the largest workforce and in numbers, they represent a greater amount than paid staff. To acknowledge the support and contributions of Event Volunteers, it is recommended to hold a recognition ceremony at the end of every large-scale event supported by UNV.

The ceremony should ideally be addressed by a high-level representative of organizers and partners to recognize the importance of volunteering and the support and contribution to the event that volunteers bring. You should address this to the organizers and partners during the design and planning step to ensure adequate time and budget for proper preparation. Depending on the partner, you might support the preparation of the ceremony with logistics and other duties.

You should ensure that the main objectives of acknowledging the volunteers who participated in the event are:

Ensure that the main objectives of acknowledging the volunteers who participated in the event are:

To recognize the work of the volunteers who, during many days, supported the development of commissioned tasks with solidarity and dedication;

To strengthen the ties in a non-labor space;

To encourage volunteers to continue their effort, participation and contribution in collective action for achieving the SDGs.



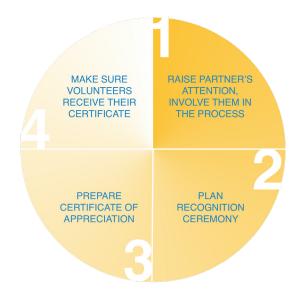
All volunteers should receive a Certificate of Appreciation to formally recognize their contribution. How to deliver and/or submit the certificate should be discussed with the partner during the design and planning phase. **Depending on the number of volunteers, the certificate could be handed out during a ceremony, sent via email or downloaded through a platform.** For the certificate itself, you can use or alter this <u>sample</u> or create a brand new design.

Furthermore, the recognition ceremony can be an opportunity to acknowledge and reward the event legacy projects with SDG impact.

#### Suggested steps:

Figure 10 /

Suggested steps for Volunteer recognition phase



#### 7.7. Legacy Projects

The end of the event is not the end of the volunteer's work - it is the start! In the final step of the volunteer management component, you will need to encourage volunteers to participate in a thematic challenge (event-related theme) geared towards developing innovative solutions to address critical development issues in their own communities. They will remain connected through social media platforms, which will constitute an important part of the event's legacy.

Your role is to design and develop those legacy projects in close collaboration with the partner. Ensure that the projects are SDG and event-related and help volunteers apply the event legacy to their communities. Therefore, you will make sure that social media platforms are used to document follow-up activities of volunteers. As agents of change in their local communities, volunteers will highlight the sustainable impact of the event and even the SDGs by sharing their success stories and efforts through developing SDGs impact projects, holding information sessions in their universities or workplaces, etc.



#### **SOMETHING TO REMEMBER**

How and what you create as legacy project will ensure volunteers are ambassadors for the event and the Sustainable Development Goals in their communities, to be critical observers of the global engagement to learn, innovate and share ideas, celebrate cultures and work together on achieving the SDGs.



Well-planned logistics processes are crucial to ensure smooth implementation and guarantee the operational success of the event. We recommend you develop different strategies to comply with the process in the acquisition. You should consider the following



Once all the requirements of each group were established you are advised to design a timeline with steps to follow for the work areas (e.g. carrying our field visits, market research, procurement management, costing, etc.).





## CONCLUSIONS

You made it! If you are reading this document, it is because you are passionate and committed to change in our society. We hope you now have a better understanding of what to expect in your volunteer journey and what your role will be. What you are about to start will have an impact beyond the event in time and frontiers. For many people, it will be their first experience as volunteers, and you will be their motivation to engage and transform their society into a better world. You and other volunteers are an integral part of events like this because you offer experience, knowledge and a wide range of skills that are not only vital to the events' success but to its legacy and how the volunteers will carry out the message in their communities.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for joining UNV and using your skills and experience to contribute to our mission. But please keep in mind that you are not only contributing to the success of this particular event, but to social change in your community and society, as well as your own development.





#### **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

Agenda 2030 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

**COP** Conference of Parties

ICT Information and Communication Technologies

**Lima 2019** Pan-American and Parapan-American Games Lima 2019

MDGs Millennium Development Goals

**ONY** Office in New York

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

**UN** United Nations

**UNDP** United Nations Development Programme

**UNFPA** United Nations Fund for Population Activities

**UNOPS** United Nations Office for Project Services

**UNV** United Nations Volunteers Programme

V4E Volunteer for Events

VSS Volunteer Solutions Section



