

VOLUNTEERING FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



“Volunteering fosters creativity, draws strength from our passions and connects us to those who need us most. 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 [...] The newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals offer another opportunity for individuals to show solidarity through volunteerism. All of us can contribute to realizing the 2030 Agenda’s vision of ending poverty.”

VOLUNTEERISM AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

At the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. The SDGs, also known as the Global Goals, are universal, inclusive and a bold commitment to people and the planet.

The 2030 Agenda recognizes that traditional means of implementation need to be complemented by participatory mechanisms that facilitate people's engagement and capacity to benefit other people and the planet.

Volunteer groups and associations can be brokers of for engagement, connecting institutional initiatives with volunteer action at community level. It is crucial that volunteerism is integrated into policies and plans involved from the planning stage when governments and institutions align their plans to the SDGs.

Volunteerism strengthens civic engagement, social inclusion, solidarity and ownership. It increases the reach, scale and inclusiveness of action from the local to the national level and beyond, by building capacities, ownership and connections between local communities and national authorities for achieving the SDGs.



The 2030 agenda is:

- transformative
- universal and inclusive in nature
- applicable to all countries and stakeholders

“Can you imagine a world without volunteers? It would be a poorer world because... volunteering is about action and service, about active citizenship, social cohesion, partnership and relationships. Its impact on local, national and global development can be transformational.”

Dr Gill Greer, CEO, Volunteer Service Abroad (New Zealand)

MILESTONES: INTEGRATING VOLUNTEERISM IN KEY GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

2011

The 10th anniversary of the international Year of Volunteers (IYV+10): UNV mobilizes a wide range of stakeholders and UN partners around volunteering and civic participation, leading to resolution A/Res/66/67.

The Declaration of the 64th DPI/NGO Conference of 1,300 NGO representatives, underlines the need to incorporate citizen engagement and volunteering in all plans for sustainable development.

2012

The RIO+20 Outcome Document: sustainable development requires the meaningful involvement and active participation of all major groups...including volunteer groups (A/Res/66/288).

The Report of the Secretary-General to the 67th UNGA: volunteering can significantly contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), foster social cohesion and enhance social inclusion[...]. Volunteerism should be an integral part of the post-2015 development framework (A/67/153).

The UNGA resolution “Integrating volunteering in the next decade” requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its 70th session [in 2015], on...a plan of action to be developed by [UNV] to integrate volunteering in peace and development in the next decade and beyond... (A/Res/67/138).

2013

The UNGA resolution that sets up the **High Level Political Forum (HLPF)** recognizes volunteer groups as relevant stakeholders with whom Member States will interact in their discussions about achieving sustainable development (A/Res/67/290).

The Report of the Secretary-General to the 68th UNGA mentions volunteer groups for implementing the transformative actions of the post-2015 development agenda (A/68/202).

The final report of the consultations on the post-2015 development agenda, “A Million Voices”, contains numerous references to the relevance of volunteering for the post-2015 framework.

The final report of the UNDG II round dialogues, “Delivering the Post-2015 Development Agenda”, highlights **volunteerism** as a complementary means of implementation.

The Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General, The Road to Dignity by 2030: “As we seek to build capacities and to help the new agenda to take root, **volunteerism** can be another powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation. **Volunteerism** can help to expand and mobilize constituencies, and to engage people in national planning and implementation for sustainable development goals. And **volunteer** groups can help to localize the new agenda by providing new spaces of interaction between governments and people for concrete and scalable actions.” (A/69/700).

2014

2015

The UNGA resolution “Integration volunteering in peace and development: the Plan of Action for the next decade and beyond” (A/RES/70/129) welcomes the Secretary-General report (A/70/118), including the Plan of Action (section IV of the report).

The UN post-2015 Summit adopts the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs. Volunteer groups are mentioned among the means of implementation of the new agenda (A/70/L.1, op45).

The UNGA resolution on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda mentions volunteers among the contributors to the implementation of the post 2015 agenda within a new global partnership for sustainable development (A/RES/69/313).

ADDED VALUE OF VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

Volunteers can contribute to SDG achievement by...

...**raising awareness** about the 2030 Agenda through local campaigns and creative approaches, including in remote areas and with marginalized populations

...**delivering technical expertise**

...**facilitating spaces** for dialogue and action through **participatory forms of engagement** during planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Agenda at local and national level

...**monitoring SDG progress** through citizen driven qualitative and quantitative data collection

...**facilitating knowledge sharing** and transfer and **leveraging local expertise**

...**complementing essential basic services** where they are lacking or where they are insufficient

...**modelling behaviours** to inspire others and enhance willingness to contribute to SDGs locally

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

...**widening inclusive spaces for engagement**, including for remote and marginalized populations, as well as for youth and women

...**enhancing capacities and developing skills**

...**building trust** as well as 'bridging social capital' between diverse people who are not used to interacting with each other

...**developing a sense of opportunity and ownership** for local challenges, leveraging collective engagement

...**strengthening local governance and accountability** through increased people's participation

...**building resilience and preparedness**, enhancing knowledge and a sense of responsibility for one's community

...**building an enabling environment** for volunteerism as a form of civic engagement

Volunteerism mobilizes people to leverage collective action and engagement across all Goals. It is intrinsically rooted in Goal 17 and contributes, inter alia, to:



Volunteers provide technical assistance



Volunteers build capacity



Volunteers develop skills



Volunteers enhance awareness



Volunteers catalyze change

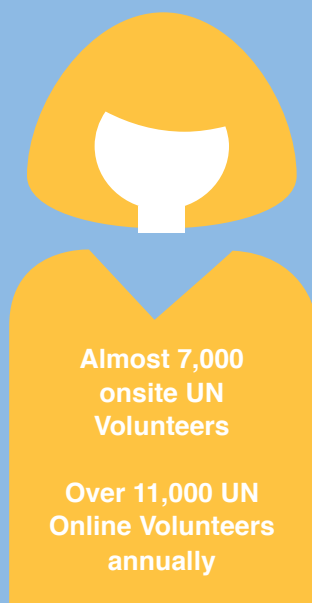


POTENTIAL OF UNV

The Sustainable Development Goals call for a paradigm shift, and UNV has unparalleled relevance in fostering participation in and ownership for the new agenda. The 2030 Agenda recognizes that traditional means of implementation need to be complemented. This is where UNV's relevance is key.

Through UNV's different volunteer modalities and initiatives, UNV has contributed to UN dialogues and consultations by widening community-based participation and supporting volunteer groups in achieving recognition and integration of volunteerism in the post-2015 context.

The combined action of international, national and community volunteers strengthens international exchanges, South-South and regional cooperation; and can trigger a ripple effect, inspiring others and reaching the most remote communities.



UN Volunteers increase the reach and inclusiveness of UN and governmental action.

- ▶ **In 2015, 46,263 other volunteers not directly contracted by UNV were mobilized as a result of UNV/UN joint programmes**
- ▶ **In 2015, UNV had a positive impact on 5.7 million beneficiaries**

“The Inequalities discussions have also highlighted the important role of civic engagement and volunteering as a way for all people, and particularly the most vulnerable, to foster their sense of responsibility and self-worth, and provide opportunities for them to concretely impact their livelihoods and play a constructive role in their communities.”

United Nations Development Group, A Million Voices: The World We Want, 2013

UNV AND THE 2030 AGENDA

Never has UNV's mandate been closer to the priorities of a global development framework than with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals. The world is realizing that sustainable development is only possible when development gains 'leave no one behind'. The very nature of volunteerism is a vehicle for achieving sustainable development. Volunteerism **enables people to participate** in their own development, **strengthening social cohesion and trust** by **promoting individual and collective action**, leading to sustainable development for people by people.

Over the next fifteen years, UNV will ensure that volunteerism moves from the 'nice-to-have' periphery into the centre of development practice by

ensuring volunteerism is applied by decision-makers and practitioners, including UNV's own internal and external audiences

honing its value proposition for the achievement of the SDGs to the UN system and specific agencies

co-creating solutions through volunteer modalities and initiatives with development partners

Upon mandate by the UN General Assembly, UNV developed a plan of action to integrate volunteering into peace and development policies and programmes for the next decade and beyond, 2016-2030 (A/RES/70/129). The plan strategically aims to

strengthen people's ownership of the development agenda through enhanced civic engagement and enabling environments for citizen action;

integrate volunteerism into national and global implementation strategies for the post-2015 development agenda; and

measure volunteerism to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the engagement of people and their well-being and be part of the monitoring of the SDGs.

“UNV will support the implementation of the plan of action [...] coordinate the work to consolidate and disseminate good practices and lessons learned, promote successful volunteer actions and ensure that the differentiated impact of volunteers on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is documented as part of regular national policy, planning and implementation practices.”

A/RES/70/129: Integrating volunteering into peace and development: the plan of action for the next decade and beyond