

## UNV SPECIAL VOLUNTARY FUND REPORT 2018



We are  
inspiration  
in action



*Volunteer researchers consult with local community in Guatemala on volunteerism and resilience. (UNV/2017)*

The Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) – an open, flexible use, non-earmarked trust fund of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme – consists of contributions from Member States and other partners. The SVF is a critical resource for UNV in carrying out its dual mandate: to advocate for volunteerism and to deploy volunteers in support of United Nations efforts to achieve peace and development results. The fund helps strengthen volunteer policy and infrastructure worldwide, with a focus on integrating volunteerism into the 2030 Agenda, and it supports research and evidence on volunteerism – as the results in this report highlight.

Bolstered by SVF funding, and with the strong support of its partners, UNV achieved significant results in 2018 in the two outcome areas of its Strategic Framework 2018–2021:

**Outcome 1:**

*The efforts of Member States to deliver on the 2030 Agenda are supported through volunteerism as an effective means of implementation and people engagement.*

**Outcome 2:**

*The United Nations system is supported to deliver on the 2030 Agenda through the engagement of UN Volunteers and integration of volunteerism.*

In 2018, SVF resources supported UNV's focus on providing evidence-based expertise to Member States on integrating volunteering into their strategies for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. One key result this year was the research and analysis on volunteerism published in the State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR). Every day, in over 80 countries, SVF funding assists UNV in providing support to the United Nations system in multiple functional and thematic areas.

The SVF is and will remain an expression of ownership of UNV by countries from the South as well as the North: 63 countries have contributed to the fund since its inception in 1970, of which 42 are countries from the Global South.

## Strengthening volunteer policy and infrastructure worldwide

With close collaboration between UNV and its partners, in 2018 the SVF supported volunteer initiatives to facilitate the participation of diverse groups, especially women and young people, to achieve national development outcomes. Through UNV's headquarters in Bonn, the regional offices in Amman, Bangkok, Dakar, Nairobi and Panama and associated field units, UNV managed UN Volunteer assignments and integrated volunteerism into various stages of national development plans throughout the world.

### Cambodia

With the support of UNV, the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports launched a national youth volunteering implementation plan. Complementing Cambodia's National Policy on Youth Development, the implementation plan includes three interlinked pilot volunteering programmes in the areas of community services, entrepreneurship and volunteering during school holidays.

### China

UN Volunteers deployed to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in China helped to set up a centre of excellence in youth volunteer training, which will ultimately lead on to the establishment of an international youth volunteer service training centre in Beijing to train and certify volunteers. UN Volunteers assisted with the training methodology and developed tools to document youth volunteer contributions to the achievement of the SDGs in China.

### Côte d'Ivoire

UNV supports the implementation of a national volunteer programme in Côte d'Ivoire. A law on civic service incorporating volunteerism was introduced at the National Assembly, and this legal framework will enable the government and all development actors to:

- have a definition of national volunteering and give volunteering its place alongside the salaried, the civil service and international volunteer work;
- accord volunteer-involving activities an appropriate legislative status, protecting both the volunteer and the host organization; and
- create conditions favourable to the development of volunteerism in Côte d'Ivoire.

### India

In India, a draft state youth policy was formulated and shared with three states: Tripura, Uttarakhand and Gujarat. In partnership with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, UNV supported the strengthening of national volunteer infrastructure in 29 districts through a network of youth clubs. This included thematic debates on the SDGs, skills training programmes, community awareness campaigns, district youth conventions and sports competitions. In addition, large numbers of youth volunteers were mobilized to support programmes being implemented by district authorities in the areas of health, sanitation, education, nutrition, women's empowerment, child protection, and digital and financial literacy.



Volunteers assigned to a hospital in Côte d'Ivoire under the national volunteer programme. (Bertrand GUEU, UNV 2018)

## Integrating volunteerism into the 2030 Agenda

Throughout 2018, UNV continued to work with UN Member States and development partners on the recognition and promotion of volunteering for the Sustainable Development Goals. With the support of the SVF, UNV oversaw the development of the Secretary-General's Report on Volunteering (A/73/254), based on inputs from 31 governments, 13 UN entities and 114 civil society organizations, as well as from private sector and academia. The report was presented at the 73rd UN General Assembly, forming a basis for the adoption of a UN General Assembly resolution (A/Res/73/140) co-facilitated by Brazil and Japan, and co-sponsored by 124 Member States in December 2018. The resolution reaffirmed the institutional arrangements to implement the plan of action to integrate volunteering into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the Plan of Action), which are consistent with and complement existing global review mechanisms on the SDGs. These include regional consultations to be organized throughout 2019 and a global technical meeting to be held in July 2020 at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

During 2018, UNV set up the Secretariat for the Plan of Action, developing partnerships with the United Nations Regional Economic Commissions for Europe (UNECE), Asia-Pacific (UNESCAP), Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Western Asia (ESCWA) and Africa (ECA) to integrate volunteerism in regional SDG processes, including placement of UN Volunteers in three out of the five Commissions. Thirty-five Member States responded to a call from UNV to submit national situation analyses on their volunteer infrastructure. Again, with financial resources made available through the SVF, UNV consolidated regional synthesis reports to serve as valuable inputs during the regional sustainable development forums to be held in 2019.

Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) on the SDGs are prepared by governments to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. During 2018, UNV produced guidance on integrating volunteer data and efforts into these national reviews and hosted two events at regional preparatory fora in Geneva and

Chile. UNV also directly supported eleven governments on volunteer stakeholder engagement and data as they prepared their reviews. Out of the 46 VNRs that Member States presented during the High-Level Political Forum in 2018, 29 recognized and mentioned volunteerism, and 19 (41 per cent) reported on the positive contribution of volunteerism to the SDGs – an increase from 40 per cent in 2017 and just 9 per cent in 2016. As a result, volunteer efforts were also highlighted in the synthesis reports produced by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs for the first time.

## SVF funding 2018

Through SVF contributions, UNV partners demonstrate support and solidarity with UNV as an organization and with the broader principles of volunteerism. The SVF is critical to UNV's ability to deliver its mandate, including contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In 2018, contributions to the SVF amounted to US\$ 5,199,000 received from 11 United Nations Member States.

### PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS IN 2018

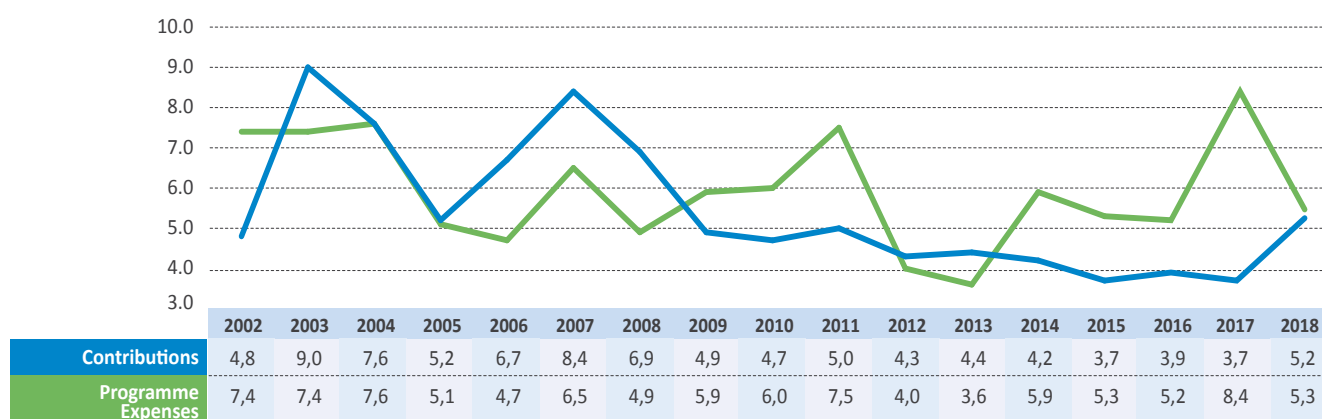
PARTNER COUNTRIES*	Programme funding received (US\$)
GERMANY	2,091
SWEDEN**	1,985
SWITZERLAND	794
FRANCE	200
IRELAND	58
CHINA	30
INDIA	20
CZECH REPUBLIC	14
BANGLADESH	3
KAZAKHSTAN	2
THAILAND	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,199</b>

Amounts rounded to US\$ thousands.

\*Funding partners are ordered by magnitude of SVF contributions received in 2018.

\*\*Contribution for 2018 and 2019.

### SVF CONTRIBUTIONS AND PROGRAMME EXPENSES 2002-2018



Note: The introduction of the Global Programmes in the Strategic Framework 2014-2017 allowed UNV to increase delivery of SVF.

## Research and evidence on volunteerism

In 2018, UNV continued to undertake research and policy work to highlight the distinctive value of volunteerism and to enumerate the factors that influence its relevance, impact and inclusiveness across social and political realities.

With funding from the SVF, UNV produced its third State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR), a triennial flagship United Nations publication designed to strengthen the understanding of volunteerism and to demonstrate its universality. *The Thread that Binds: Volunteerism and Community Resilience*, looks at how the distinctive characteristics of local volunteerism help or hinder communities in crisis. It also explores how governments and other development actors can partner with locally owned action to strengthen community resilience.

For the first time, the report drew on field research carried out by volunteers among 1,200 participants in 15 countries across five continents to understand how communities experience and view volunteering. Focus groups and policy discussions were held in Bolivia, Burundi, China, Egypt, Greece, Guatemala, Madagascar, Malawi, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Philippines, Russia, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Tanzania. The report, together with additional videos, blog posts and infographics, was translated into Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish. The results continue to be disseminated widely, following the report's launch at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2018 and a total of 40 ensuing regional and country-level launches held around the globe.

During 2018, UNV and the International Labour Organization (ILO) worked to understand Member States' capacities, plans and levels of interest in relation to the measurement of volunteer work. Feedback on barriers and challenges has been compiled and used to develop new survey tools that are more applicable to volunteering in the Global South, where very little data exists and where most volunteering happens informally.

In addition, with support of the SVF, UNV published a report on national experiences of measuring volunteer work for the 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians in Geneva, Switzerland. The report describes the evolution of the official measurement of volunteer work and the current practices around quantitative and qualitative analysis. UNV and ILO jointly organized a plenary session and side event on the measurement of volunteer work, which attracted around 200 participants.

## The way forward

The SVF allows UNV and its partners to make long-term investments in volunteerism for peace and development. Increased and predictable investments enable UNV to continue to promote volunteerism and to scale up the impact of UN Volunteers' work globally, while expanding opportunities for marginalized groups to participate in and benefit from volunteering so that no one is left behind.

Looking to the future, UNV will, with the support of SVF funding, continue to deliver ever-improving volunteer solutions to United Nations partners, particularly in the context of the overall reform of the United Nations system. With the completion of UNV's own internal strategic and organizational transformation, UNV has expanded and diversified its services to the United Nations system and is also well positioned to support the new United Nations Development System in the following key areas:

- strengthening collaboration through the memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Secretariat;
- supporting UNDP country support platforms through UN Volunteers and the promotion of volunteerism more broadly; and
- reviewing UN Volunteers' conditions of service to align with the report of the cross-functional taskforce on the duty of care for personnel in high-risk environments.

UNV will continue its efforts around cost containment and pursue additional efficiency gains. In line with UNDP policy and practice, UNV will ensure that the costs of the organization are attributed to the appropriate funding source, proportionally between core and non-core, in a simple, transparent and harmonized manner.

UNV has also embarked on a digital transformation plan which will look at how automation, artificial intelligence, smart contracts, blockchain technology and the dynamic use of new online platforms can transform and modernize the ways in which UNV currently operates to better serve its United Nations partners and effectively support the delivery of the 2030 Agenda.