

# Volunteering during a global crisis



**UN  
VOLUNTEERS**

# UNV facts and figures, 2020

**9,459**  
UN Volunteers

from over **100**  
different professions

served with **60**  
United Nations  
partners worldwide



**2,068**  
online volunteering **opportunities**

**68,173**  
Online Volunteer **applications**



*Cover: UN Volunteers Tabitha Shali (left), Nursing Officer, and Alex Munguti, Laboratory Technologist, prepare COVID-19 swabs for laboratory processing and analysis at Moi County Referral Hospital in Kenya. (UNDP, 2020)*

*This page: Fawad Arshad (left), national UN University Volunteer with UNDP, promotes civic and voter education in rural communities to strengthen the engagement of citizens, particularly women and youth, in electoral processes in Pakistan. (UNV, 2020)*



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# Welcome

Dear reader,

Because of the global pandemic, in 2020, I met fewer UN Volunteers than before. Yet, in 2020, I was most inspired by them and their critical role for the UN and in communities around the world. This report gives you a panoramic view of the achievements of UN Volunteers during the year.

On pages 2-5, you will read about UN Volunteers' contributions to COVID-19 response. Whether as frontline workers or online experts, they helped safeguard health in their communities.

The report, on pages 6-10, also tells the broader story of UN Volunteers supporting peace and development. This includes hard work to improve gender equality and a more inclusive UN.

One of UNV's priorities is the global promotion of volunteerism under the 2030 Agenda. On pages 11-14, you will find the examples of UNV advocacy, partnerships and research work in this area.

Finally, "in God we trust, but all others must bring data". Check out the annexes for detailed financial and statistical information.



*UNV Executive Coordinator Toily Kurbanov addresses youth in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (UNV, 2020)*

The real authors and protagonists of this annual report are manifold:

Thank you, UN Volunteers, for being inspiration in action. You stepped up and stepped forward during the pandemic.

Thank you, UN partners around the world. You empowered UN Volunteers and enabled their results.

Thank you, governments, and other partners. Your confidence in UNV, guidance and contributions gave us strength.

And to all UNV staff: your talents, hard work and dedication shone through in 2020 and made things work; thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Toily Kurbanov".

**Toily Kurbanov, Executive Coordinator  
United Nations Volunteers**



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# Countering COVID-19

COVID-19 presented unprecedented global challenges in 2020, but individuals around the world continued to volunteer their time and technical expertise through the range of UN Volunteer assignments. United Nations agencies were well served by UNV's growing talent pool of national, international and online volunteers. UNV acted fast to equip itself, its volunteers and its partners with the infrastructure and resources needed to deal with the impacts of the pandemic.

## Scaling up the response to COVID-19

With the pandemic unfolding, partners turned to UNV to help scale up preparedness and response efforts and enhance local capacity. UNV increased recruitment of local expertise through new and existing categories of volunteers, and it expanded its online volunteering service to meet unprecedented demand.

By year end, UNV had mobilized over 1,000 volunteers in 105 countries to serve with 26 entities on COVID-related assignments. Of these, 85 per cent were national UN Volunteers, and 54 per cent were women. The United Nations Development Programme (**UNDP**), enlisted half of these UN Volunteers in support of emergency mitigation and response measures.

Even before COVID-19, there was a long-term trend towards increased demand for national UN Volunteers. This was accelerated in 2020, in part due to international travel restrictions. The proportion of national to international

UN Volunteers grew from 48 per cent in 2019 to 56 per cent in 2020.

In 13 countries across **West and Central Africa**, UN Volunteers reached more than 736,000 people through awareness campaigns, mask production and distribution, and supply of soap and handwashing facilities.

In the **Arab States**, UN Volunteers supported the World Health Organizations' (**WHO**) epidemiological teams and helped prepare refugees in Sudan for the onset of the pandemic. They provided logistical support in the delivery of humanitarian aid in **Yemen** and helped to counter the unequal gender impact of COVID-19 in **Morocco**.

Across **Asia and the Pacific**, 15 United Nations entities recruited or repurposed 242 UN Volunteer assignments in 24 countries to address COVID-19 related challenges. There were 109 assignments with **UNDP**, 34 with the United Nations Children's Fund (**UNICEF**) and 28 with the International Organization for Migration (**IOM**), contributing capacity to community development, coordination, medicine and nursing.





*Bagila Ispanova, volunteering with the community awareness campaign of UNV and UNDP, is conducting an information session on COVID-19 prevention to villagers of the Shumanay district in the Uzbekistan. (UNDP, 2020)*

## Access to local expertise

In 2020, United Nations entities and national governments accessed existing volunteer infrastructure to efficiently activate local volunteers for their COVID-19 response.

In **Burkina Faso**, **UNDP**, the United Nations Population Fund (**UNFPA**) and **UNICEF** tapped into the national volunteer scheme, rapidly deploying 9,019 local volunteers to undertake COVID-19 information campaigns. In **Mali**, UN Community Volunteers were recruited for similar activities. In **Kenya**, 50 UN Expert Volunteers in health worked across 14 vulnerable counties as part of a joint UN COVID-19 response programme.

In **India**, UN Volunteers conducted COVID-19 awareness campaigns in 58 districts and trained community volunteers to reduce the burden on front-line health-care workers. In **Uzbekistan**, 2,000 community health volunteers trained by UNV through a UN joint programme reached 200,000 people in the Aral Sea region, improving hygiene awareness and providing access to psychological support.

## Maximizing reach through online volunteering

UNV received a high number of applications for the 320 online COVID-19 related assignments posted. Online volunteering opportunities increased by 133 per cent from 2019, with United Nations entities putting forward a total of 1,240 online assignments. UNV partners sourced expertise in areas such as translation, graphic design and information management, primarily for community outreach and advocacy. UNV's worldwide reach to highly motivated professionals unlocked significant capacity for partners and resulted in unprecedented online volunteer engagement.

In **Turkey**, data scientists specializing in machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) volunteered online with **UNDP's** SDG AI Lab, delivering social media analysis and software to enhance programme efficiency.

In **Sudan**, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (**UNOCHA**) used Online Volunteers to translate 20,000 names of schools, enabling the effective planning of education programmes by **UNICEF** and the Ministry of Education.

Online Volunteers with the **UNDP** Pacific Accelerator Lab in **Fiji** visualized pandemic-related data to inform the health system and crisis management responses. Online Volunteers also modelled the impact of COVID-19 on Small Island Developing States, leading to innovative solutions and interventions.

## Duty of care to UN Volunteers

The duty of care of volunteers is central to the planning and coordination of all UNV assignments. In 2020 UNV placed even greater emphasis on the health, safety and well-being of all UN Volunteers. Volunteers were medically evacuated when required, and dedicated logistical support was provided where travel was disrupted.

UNV furnished its United Nations Host Entities with early advice about its emergency response to COVID-19 and related restrictions, backing this up with clear communication directly to volunteers. It also quickly amended its administrative guidelines, ensuring that volunteers, host entities and employees had up-to-date organizational information at their fingertips.

*UN Volunteers with the Joint Medical Services and the Medical Emergency Response Team of United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) conduct a practice drill for the medical evacuation of a suspected COVID-19 case. (UNV, 2020)*



With safety and security the top priority, UNV facilitated telecommuting and work-from-location arrangements in order to comply with physical distancing while minimizing disruption and supporting operational continuity.

UNV launched a timely series of pandemic-related training and support materials on health and well-being of UN Volunteers. It also redesigned predeployment, youth and other training modules to be virtual workshops rather than on-site. Over 600 UN Volunteers attended 18 of these virtual workshops, featuring new topics such as remote work and mental health. Additionally, UN Volunteers took advantage of 1,000 sessions of a new remote coaching programme.

## Supporting United Nations action on COVID-19

By committing US \$2 million from the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF), UNV was able to quickly provide national UN Volunteers where additional capacities were urgently needed to strengthen the system-wide action on COVID-19. This will allow a total of 140 UN Volunteers to serve with 18 United Nations entities in 79 countries in 2020 and 2021. In 2020, 83 of these UN Volunteers participated in inter-agency coordination, joint programmes and the public health response around the globe.

UNV also helped its partners gain better insight into the impact of the pandemic on youth and volunteering. In [Latin America and the Caribbean](#), UNV supported a survey on youth and COVID-19, conducted by the Youth Interagency Group. More than 7,000 young people participated, and results revealed that one in three young people had volunteered during the pandemic.

# UN Volunteers response to COVID-19

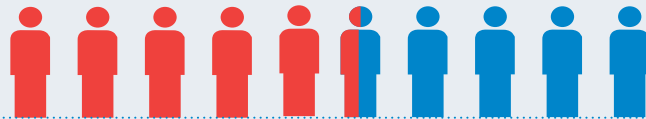


In 2020, over

**1,000 UN Volunteers**  
supported the United Nations'  
response to COVID-19  
in **105 countries**

**85%**  
were **national**  
**UN Volunteers**

**54%** were **women**



UNV invested  
**US\$ 2 million**  
from its  
**Special Voluntary Fund**  
to rapidly deploy national  
UN Volunteers to bolster the  
capacity of the United Nations.

In addition,  
there were  
**320 online**  
**volunteering**  
**assignments**  
that focused on  
**COVID-19 issues.**



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# Volunteer solutions for a changing world



In 2020, UNV activated diverse volunteers from all ages and expertise levels. In total, UNV matched 9,459 UN Volunteers, a 14 per cent increase from 2019 with 60 United Nations entities. UNV worked with seven new and returning partners, across 158 countries and territories – demonstrating a truly global reach.

## UN Volunteers as a system-wide service to the United Nations

In 2020, **UNDP**, UNV's largest partner, hosted 3,232 UN Volunteers in support of its mission to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities and exclusion. More than half of all UN Volunteers with UNDP served in Africa, UN Volunteers in **Cameroon**, **Chad** and **Niger** spurred cross-border cooperation on the Lake Chad Basin regional stabilization strategy. In Asia and the Pacific, **UNDP** hosted 763 UN Volunteers, mainly in **Afghanistan**, **Bangladesh** and **India**.

In the **State of Palestine**, five UN Volunteers, all women, were assigned to work on **UNDP's** "Solve It" platform. This initiative, of the Palestinian Accelerator Lab, fosters innovative solutions in the educational, entrepreneurial, and legal sectors.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (**UNHCR**) hosted 882 UN Volunteers supporting refugee protection, status determination and other critical functions. UN Volunteers bolstered the United Nations' efforts in **Sudan**, with women volunteers maintaining the momentum towards peace while youth volunteers worked to improve water access, health and peace in North Darfur. In Latin

America, 60 per cent of UN Volunteers who served under **UNHCR** were placed along the borders of **Ecuador** and **Venezuela**, aiding close to 2.5 million people.

In 2020, 861 UN Volunteers served with **UNICEF**, a 33 per cent increase from 2019. In **Guinea**, UN Volunteers supported a joint **UNDP/UNICEF** project on inclusive peacebuilding, focussing on the empowerment of women and the advancement of gender equality. Fifteen UN Community Volunteers were tapped to support women community leaders for the prevention of conflict related to the presidential elections.

**UNFPA** utilized UN Volunteers in **Iraq** and became a new partner in **Jamaica**, **Libya**, **Papua New Guinea**, **Tajikistan**, **Turkmenistan**, **Uzbekistan** and **Vanuatu**. Thirty-five local UN Volunteers were mobilized with **UNDP** and **UNFPA** to support the United Nations Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (**PBF**) cross-border project between **Burkina Faso** and **Mali**, which recruits young people as agents of peacebuilding and development.

In **Pakistan**, 34 national UN Youth Volunteers supported **UNDP** in strengthening electoral and legislative processes. These volunteers engaged around 40,000 people in communities, youth groups and academia to share knowledge about civic rights, voter education and related issues.

## UN Volunteers for peace

In 2020, 1,880 volunteers contributed to 17 United Nations peacekeeping and political missions in regions throughout the world: 91 per cent international and 9 per cent national UN Volunteers, with 40 per cent being women.

In 2020, 463 UN Volunteers were part of peacebuilding with the United Nations Mission in **South Sudan (UNMISS)**, supporting civil affairs, human rights, health, public information, air operations and transportation. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)** remained the second-largest United Nations mission, hosting 380 UN Volunteers in 2020. Among the special political missions, the largest number of UN Volunteers (139) served in **Colombia**, where they helped monitor the peace process and promote a culture of reconciliation.

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the **Central African Republic (MINUSCA)** hosted 327 UN Volunteers – 7 per cent more than 2019. Further to this, 40 international UN Volunteers fulfilled assignments related to logistics and civic education in support of a transparent and fair election process.

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in **Mali (MINUSMA)** expanded its team of UN Volunteers to 227 across the 50 sections of the mission. The UN Volunteer assignments included electoral advisors, air movement specialists and logisticians. Eight UN Volunteers with the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in **Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS)** supported the country's landmark legislative and presidential elections. In **Papua New Guinea**, 11 UN Volunteers with **UNDP** supported Bougainville's independence referendum.

With a focus on empowering women and youth for peace and development in the **Sahel**, 34 female UN Volunteers were recruited for assignments with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (**UNCDF**), **UNFPA**, the United

Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (**UN Women**) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**).

With funding from Germany, and in coordination with the Peacebuilding Support Office (**PBSO**) and **UN Women**, **UNV** supported gender-responsive projects in the **Central African Republic, Colombia, Niger, South Sudan** and **Sri Lanka**. UN Volunteers hosted by **UN Women**, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (**OHCHR**) and **UN-Habitat** focused on training women, particularly around political awareness, and participation of women's groups in the peacebuilding process.

For the first time in the history of the United Nations Assistance Mission in **Afghanistan (UNAMA)**, 30 national UN Youth Volunteers, exclusively women, were called up under the National Female UN Youth Volunteer Project. These volunteers played a critical role in incorporating the voices and needs of women into the mission's work.

*Honorine Niare (right), UN Volunteer Public Information Officer with MINUSCA, raises awareness about COVID-19 through the mission's radio station in Bouar, Central African Republic. Here she conducts an interview with community members on prevention measures. (MINUSCA, 2020)*



## UN Volunteers for gender equality

UNV reached gender parity among volunteers in 2019, and in 2020, women represented 52 per cent of all UN Volunteers. Targeted outreach to women professionals resulted in registrations by women in the UNV Global Talent Pool increasing by 29 per cent, from 58,254 in 2019 to 75,281 in 2020.

While achieving gender parity is an important milestone, more work needs to be done to ensure that women's representation in the numbers of mobilized volunteers is consistent across the regions. For example, in Africa in 2020, only 45 per cent of volunteers were women. Concerted efforts continue to be made by UNV and regional partners to move towards gender parity in all regions.

In 2020, 282 UN Volunteers supported **UN Women**, contributing to women's empowerment and participation. In **Afghanistan**, nine out of 10 serving UN Volunteers were women. In **Kenya**, 22 UN Volunteers supported efforts to enhance the political participation of women and to mainstream youth engagement and gender equality.

In **Burkina Faso**, 27 UN Community Volunteers and two national specialist UN Volunteers supported **UNFPA** in the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend project. The aim of the project is to accelerate the demographic transition, trigger the demographic dividend and reduce gender inequalities in the Sahel region.

In Latin America, UN Volunteers with **UNICEF** in **Bolivia** manned the Familia Segura (Safe Family) call centre. Fifty volunteers redirected callers to psychologists, psychiatrists and the police to counter gender-based violence exacerbated by COVID-19 lockdowns.

## A more inclusive United Nations system

Supporting a more inclusive United Nations system, UNV engaged 88 UN Volunteers with disabilities – 47 with



*Jean Jacques Soha (right), UN Volunteer with UNHCR, talks to Chris Charles, South Sudanese refugee in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, about measures being taken by the community to protect refugees from COVID-19. (UNHCR, 2020)*

**UNDP** and 14 other United Nations entities. The number of candidates self-reporting disabilities in the UNV Global Talent Pool increased by 38 per cent to 4,590.

The new refugee volunteer modality was further developed in 2020. After successful pilot projects in four countries (**Albania**, **Burkina Faso**, **Colombia** and **Kenya**), UNV and **UNHCR** co-created a dedicated UN Refugee Volunteer mechanism to allow refugees to become active agents of change in their communities. In 2020, UNV mobilized 10 UN Refugee Volunteers with UNHCR and two with other agencies. The most common assignments were community worker, local integration promoter, livelihoods liaison assistant and translator.



## UN Volunteers for health and well-being

Of the 3,232 UN Volunteers mobilized by **UNDP**, many supported COVID-19 global health response efforts. In **Yemen**, 11 UN Volunteer nurses and one UN Volunteer medical doctor served with **UNDP** as part of the response to the crisis in the country.

In 2020, **UNFPA** engaged 419 UN Volunteers, an increase of 11 per cent on 2019. In July, **UNFPA** and UNV launched a call for Population Data Fellows for data collection and research on female genital mutilation (FGM). In support of **UNFPA**'s global agenda for research on FGM, a cohort of UN Volunteers reduced evidence gaps in key areas pertaining to FGM in **Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria** and **Senegal**.

The number of UN Volunteers with **WHO** increased two-fold to 275 in 2020, reflecting the broader scope of health interventions accompanying the response to COVID-19. Of these, 59 per cent were women and 59 per cent national

*Sonia Almassad, UN Volunteer Field Programme Officer with UNOCHA, ensures civilians receive humanitarian aid amid the war in Yemen. (Hameed Mohammed/UNOCHA, 2020)*



UN Volunteers. Twelve UN Volunteers with the regional office of **WHO** in **Egypt** supported data management, surveillance and communications in the COVID-19 context. They also bolstered the emergency team with technical and administrative assistance.

UNV and **WHO** in Africa launched the Africa Young Women Health Champions initiative, aiming to improve health and well-being and promote gender equality on the continent. Despite operational challenges, 15 UN Volunteers started their assignments in the West and Central regions, including 13 international and two national UN Volunteers.

**WFP** hosted 243 UN Volunteers in 2020, an increase of 23 per cent on 2019. In **Mozambique**, 54 UN Volunteers supported food distribution, school feeding, nutrition, resilience and climate change.

Twenty local volunteers were mobilized in support of 'Healthier Kosovo', a joint project of **UNDP**, UNV and **WHO**. These volunteers increased awareness of environmental protection and sustainability, community empowerment and active civic engagement, while also gaining advanced skills in research through interactive training and collaboration.

<sup>1</sup> All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).



## Increased demand for national and community UN Volunteers

As UNV continued to mainstream new categories of volunteers established in 2019, 2020 saw particularly high demand for national and community volunteers. For the first time in UNV's history, the number of national UN Volunteers exceeded that of international UN Volunteers – by 12 per cent. While this does reflect the impact of pandemic-related travel restrictions on international mobility, it is also testament to UNV's increased focus on supporting national capacities and talent outreach in countries.

In 2020, UNV sent 902 UN Community Volunteers and 281 UN Expert Volunteers to the field. With their local knowledge of context and cultural understanding,

These volunteers are often the backbone of United Nations action on the ground – for example, of 243 UN Volunteers deployed with **WFP**, 30 UN Community Volunteers in **Benin** managed school canteens and food stocks and also promoted COVID-19 prevention measures.

Among international UN Volunteers, 66 per cent in 2020 were from the Global South, reflecting increased representation in the United Nations. Across the board, UN Volunteers continued to report that their assignments enhanced their personal and professional development. In a strong result under challenging conditions, almost all UN Volunteers – 96 per cent – reported being satisfied with their volunteering experience.

*Yolanda Sibiya, UN Volunteer Movement Control Assistant with the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), handling a shipping container in Abyei, Sudan. (UNV, 2020)*





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# Promoting volunteerism



UNV champions environments in which volunteerism can flourish, enabling people to contribute to peace and development results. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how volunteer action is critical for responding to and recovering from crises and for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In 2020, in the face of the pandemic, UNV continued to act as a powerful advocate for volunteerism and civic engagement in peace and development. The organization received valued contributions from its partners to the Special Voluntary Fund, which it dedicated in part to volunteerism research and advocacy, system-wide action on volunteering, rapid response and innovative solutions.

## Global Technical Meeting: Reimagining Volunteering for the 2030 Agenda

In July 2020, UNV and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies convened a Global Technical Meeting, mandated through the Plan of Action to Integrate Volunteering into the 2030 Agenda and taking place under the auspices of the 2020 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Due to COVID-19, the Global Technical Meeting, originally set to take place in New York, was held virtually, bringing together online around 70 speakers from nearly 60 countries and over 4,000 participants. Member States including [Cameroon](#), [China](#), [Cyprus](#), [Egypt](#), [Guinea](#), [Nigeria](#), [Norway](#), [Paraguay](#), [Peru](#) and [Togo](#) as well as more than 250

organizations from civil society, academia, the private sector and the United Nations system contributed. Knowledge and evidence was generated through documentation of good practices, research on innovation, sharing experiences in integrating volunteering into policy and planning, and input to the *Global Synthesis Report*.

*UN Community and Youth Volunteers with UNDP vitalize the COVID-19 response in Zambia. (UNDP Zambia, 2020)*





Ashiful Hoque (centre), UN Community Volunteer with UNDP in Bangladesh, raises awareness about COVID-19 in the Chattogram community. (UNV, 2020)

Key knowledge products developed in preparation for the meeting included: the *Global Synthesis Report: Plan of Action to Integrate Volunteering into the 2030 Agenda*, an updated framework of the dimensions and categories of volunteering practices in the 21st century; an anthology of papers on measuring volunteering and its contribution to sustainable development; and the UNV Knowledge Portal. The new portal is comprised of a volunteering database with country profiles, laws, policies, measurement data and knowledge exchange.

A global survey on volunteering implemented in partnership with the UN75 survey by the SDG Action Campaign received over 24,000 responses from across all regions.

The Global Technical Meeting culminated in a call to action on volunteering in the Decade of Action, encouraging stakeholders to:

- ensure that volunteering is supported beyond formal, organization-based opportunities;
- create new models for voluntary action to supercharge ideas to solutions;
- measure the impact on volunteer well-being and the 2030 Agenda; and
- strengthen the alignment of volunteer efforts with existing SDG gaps and challenges.

## Mainstreaming volunteerism in programmes, policies and legislation

In 2020, UNV continued to work in partnership with Member States and other stakeholders to promote a conducive environment for volunteerism and volunteers. Eleven Member States called on UNV for technical support to further embed volunteering principles in their programmes, legislation and policies.

During the year, UNV assisted **Cameroon, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, the League of Arab States, Paraguay, Sri Lanka, Zambia and Zimbabwe** in developing national policies, strategies and legislation on volunteerism.

In **Benin**, UNV provided technical assistance to develop a national volunteer programme and establish a coordination platform for volunteer organizations.

In **Kazakhstan**, UNV supported the creation of the Birgemiz Volunteer Office to facilitate collaboration among national and other Central Asian volunteer organizations.

Funded through the global initiative Generation Unlimited, **UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF** and UNV helped establish the National Volunteer Service Programme in the **State of Palestine**. This programme connects potential youth volunteers with opportunities to contribute meaningfully to their communities while gaining valuable work experience and skills for future employment.

In **Sri Lanka**, UNV facilitated the creation of the National Volunteering Secretariat and the development of an online volunteer management system.

In **China**, UNV provided technical guidance to the Beijing Volunteer Service Federation on personnel deployment and international volunteer service management to improve methods of selection, training, deployment, supervision and management of volunteers.

In **India**, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports requested the support of UNV in drafting its national policy on volunteerism. The policy aims to create and promote an enabling environment for volunteering and seeks to mainstream volunteerism in India's national development strategy.

In 2020, UNV engaged with the Government of **Bangladesh** through meetings and workshops to develop a summary proposal for the formulation of a national volunteer policy.

UNV partnered with the International Labour Organization (**ILO**) to support five Member States on the statistical measurement of the contribution of volunteering: **Colombia** on volunteer measurement; **Kazakhstan** on integrating volunteer work measurement into COVID-19 related socioeconomic assessments; **Senegal** on field testing volunteer measurement; and **Sri Lanka** and **Ukraine** on adapting survey tools. In addition, a range of new statistical measurement tools were published to support national statistical offices to measure volunteer work. Data on volunteer work from 48 countries was made available through the ILOSTAT database for the first time.



## Other evidence and partnerships

As part of its mandate to contribute to the broader discourse around the role of volunteerism in peace and development outcomes, in 2020, UNV continued to promote volunteering by engaging with Member States, civil society and academia.

On the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation, UNV launched a joint publication with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (**UNOSSC**) titled *South-South Volunteering as a Driving Force for Development: Experiences from Asia and the Pacific*. Featuring three case studies on South-South volunteerism from **Cambodia**, **China** and **Thailand**, the publication reflects UNV's belief that South-South and triangular cooperation and volunteerism are mutually reinforcing and enhance each partner's capacity to drive forward sustainable development.

A new agreement of cooperation was put into place between Red Ecuatoriana de Voluntariado and UNV. This partnership strengthens the network of organizations that work with national and international volunteers and promotes the volunteering law, in **Ecuador**.

In **Turkey**, the UNV field unit supported Istanbul University in the development of an inaugural university curriculum on volunteerism. Based on the success of the pilot, the curriculum is being adopted by other academic institutions in Turkey.



On 5 December 2020, International Volunteer Day, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres spoke of the importance of volunteers to the United Nations system and the pandemic response:

“ This year, we are highlighting the important contributions of volunteers to the response to COVID-19.

Around the world, volunteers have been assisting vulnerable groups, correcting misinformation, educating children, providing essential services to the elderly and supporting front-line health workers.

As we gradually recover from the pandemic, volunteers will have a key role to play in accelerating the transition to green, inclusive and just economies.

Indeed, volunteering is the backbone of our societies.

Often working with the United Nations, volunteers build a sense of togetherness.

They strengthen social cohesion.

And they help to protect communities, especially by reaching those most at need. That is why, on International Volunteer Day, I appeal to all governments to promote volunteering, support volunteer efforts and recognize volunteer contributions to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Volunteers deserve our heartfelt thanks. ”

# Statistical and financial information

## UN Volunteer statistics by country, 2020

	National	Sent	Received
COUNTRIES			
Afghanistan	119	9	106
Albania		3	3
Algeria	13	4	4
Angola	9	2	13
Antigua and Barbuda		1	
Argentina	4	20	1
Armenia	6	1	3
Australia		50	
Austria		7	53
Azerbaijan	4	2	5
Bahrain	2		4
Bangladesh	258	21	28
Barbados	3	1	9
Belarus	4	4	
Belgium		27	6
Belize	1		1
Benin	103	42	9
Bhutan	3	17	-
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	55	6	24
Bosnia and Herzegovina	12	13	12
Botswana	1	1	3
Brazil	186	63	4
Bulgaria		5	
Burkina Faso	219	48	27
Burundi	49	55	32
Cabo Verde	3	1	3
Cambodia	8	1	9
Cameroon	119	162	19
Canada		78	
Central African Republic	89	17	292
Chad	39	46	52
Chile	1	6	1
China	55	32	3
Colombia	342	38	161
Comoros	30	2	8
Congo	14	7	59
Costa Rica	8	6	7
Côte d'Ivoire	75	116	22
Croatia		3	
Cuba		2	1
Cyprus		1	2
Czech Republic		29	
Democratic People's Republic of Korea			1
Democratic Republic of the Congo	81	86	450
Denmark		4	9
Djibouti	7	1	18
Dominican Republic	4	3	1
Ecuador	58	18	17
Egypt	84	22	44
El Salvador	7	4	7
Eritrea		12	5
Eswatini	4		1
Ethiopia	22	68	74
Fiji	13	7	31
Finland		55	
France		212	2
Gabon	2	5	6
Gambia	11	12	11
Georgia		5	7
Germany		52	12



COUNTRIES	National	Sent	Received
Ghana	7	56	11
Greece		11	4
Grenada		1	1
Guatemala	22	8	27
Guinea	69	21	24
Guinea-Bissau	19	3	20
Guyana	4	1	2
Haiti	28	41	14
Honduras	27	4	19
Hungary		5	5
Iceland		1	
India	170	94	5
Indonesia	35	17	19
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	4	4	1
Iraq	38	2	82
Ireland		44	
Israel		3	
Italy		139	10
Jamaica	4	2	5
Japan		93	
Jordan	58	12	61
Kazakhstan	61	10	9
Kenya	223	170	117
Kiribati			1
Kosovo (UNSC 1244)	84	10	36
Kuwait	4		
Kyrgyzstan	5	19	9
Lao People's Democratic Republic	5	1	39
Latvia		1	
Lebanon	146	14	17
Lesotho	2		3
Liberia	83	75	36
Libya	1		28
Lithuania		4	
Luxembourg		8	
Madagascar	35	13	18
Malawi	17	24	15
Malaysia		5	2
Maldives			1
Mali	102	33	258
Marshall Islands			2

COUNTRIES	National	Sent	Received
Mauritania	31	10	23
Mauritius			2
Mexico	7	30	11
Micronesia (Federated States of)			3
Mongolia		4	3
Montenegro		2	2
Morocco	35	12	13
Mozambique	89	2	34
Myanmar	10	2	38
Namibia	7	3	3
Nauru			2
Nepal	56	71	22
Netherlands		18	4
New Zealand		7	
Nicaragua	2	1	
Niger	172	29	38
Nigeria	58	59	35
North Macedonia	2		2
Norway		22	
Oman	2		1
Pakistan	59	73	6
Panama	12		43
Papua New Guinea	14	2	16
Paraguay	5		
Peru	73	10	9
Philippines	4	19	10
Poland		7	
Portugal		29	1
Republic of Korea		192	
Republic of Moldova	1	5	6
Romania		8	
Russian Federation	4	59	
Rwanda	25	100	53
Samoa			5
Sao Tome and Principe	4	1	7
Saudi Arabia	11		1
Senegal	66	27	68
Serbia	34	14	2
Seychelles			2
Sierra Leone	4	29	17
Singapore		4	2

■ National ■ Sent ■ Received

COUNTRIES	National	Sent	Received
Slovakia		5	
Slovenia		4	
Solomon Islands	2		7
Somalia	10	5	116
South Africa	5	16	10
South Sudan	85	22	540
Spain		89	2
Sri Lanka	75	26	15
State of Palestine	39	15	23
Sudan	85	53	132
Suriname	2		
Sweden		118	1
Switzerland		56	4
Syrian Arab Republic		8	
Tajikistan	3	8	5
Thailand	27	6	52
Timor-Leste	30	4	23
Togo	15	25	9
Trinidad and Tobago	5	1	5
Tunisia	39	18	24
Turkey	64	9	53
Turkmenistan	1		3
Tuvalu			1
Uganda	33	166	35
Ukraine	38	18	8
United Arab Emirates			3
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland		54	1
United Republic of Tanzania	48	16	28
United States of America		93	50
Uruguay	13	3	1
Uzbekistan	4	5	10
Vanuatu		1	5
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	95	7	8
Viet Nam	19	1	12
Western Sahara			15
Yemen	107	23	2
Zambia	105	24	25
Zimbabwe	74	57	11
GRAND TOTAL	5 266	4 207	4 207

**National:** UN Volunteers serving within the country or territory. For example, during 2020 there were 119 Afghan national UN Volunteers engaged within Afghanistan.

**Sent:** UN Volunteers of the country serving abroad. For example, during 2020 there were 9 Afghan nationals on UNV assignments in other countries and territories.

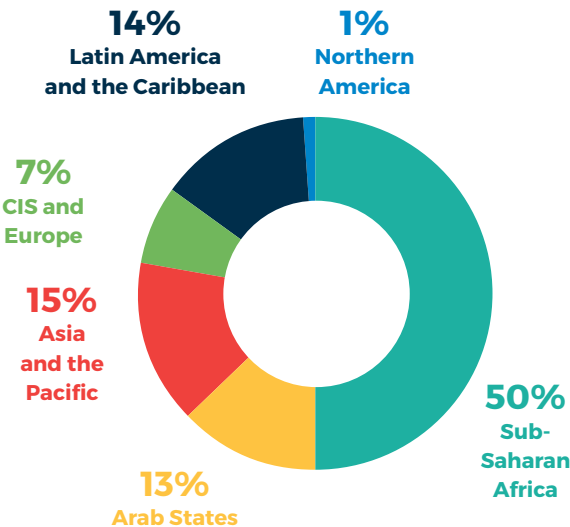
**Received:** UN Volunteers of other nationalities serving in the country or territory. For example, during 2020 there were 106 UN Volunteers working in Afghanistan. Note: One UN Volunteer can serve in multiple countries.

# UN Volunteers statistics

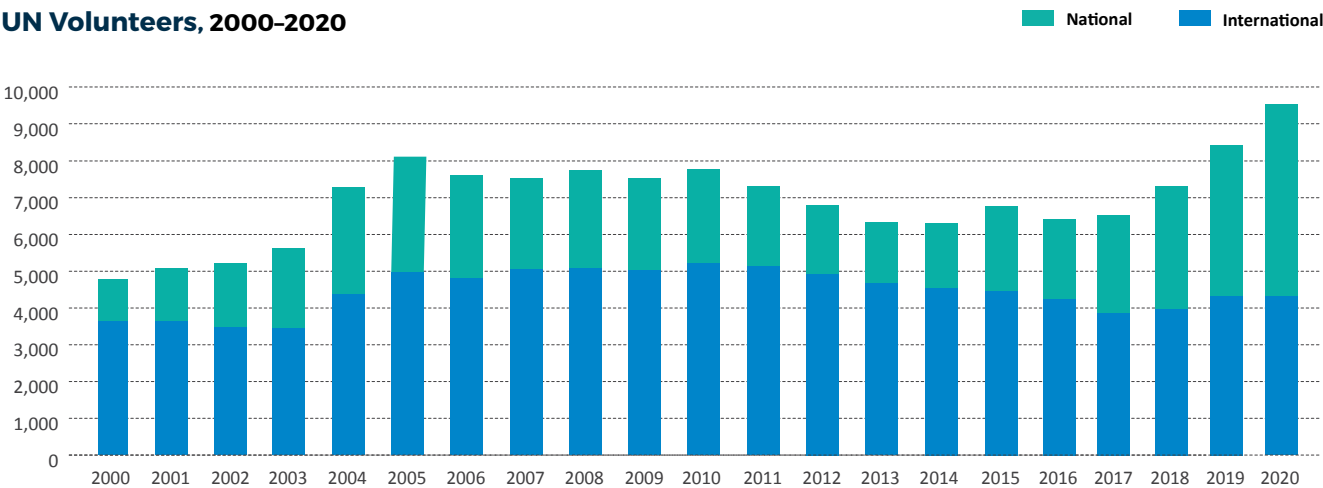
## UN Volunteers

Number of individual UN Volunteers		9,459
Countries of assignment		158
Countries of origin		168
Origin of UN Volunteers		
Countries of the Global South	7 905	84%
Countries of the Global North	1 554	16%
Sex		
Women	4 930	52%
Men	4 529	48%
Type of assignment		
International UN Volunteers	4 207	44%
National UN Volunteers	5 266	56%

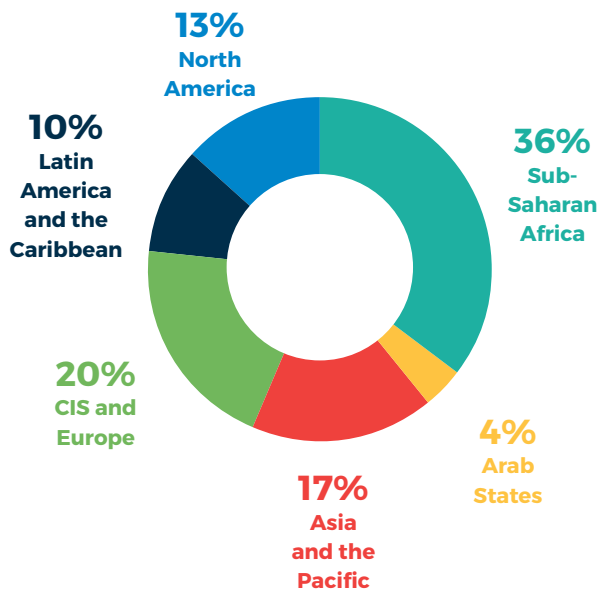
## UN Volunteers by region



## UN Volunteers, 2000–2020



## Online volunteering applications by region



UN Volunteers in the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Panama and Uruguay support biodiversity conservation and indigenous knowledge, with UNDP, under the Nagoya Protocol. (UNV, 2019)



Johanna Erroba (left), national UN Volunteer Youth Engagement Officer, serves with UNDP in the Philippines. Here, she is seen conducting data validation in households for the enrollment of citizens in a digital wallet during COVID-19. (UNV, 2020)

# UN Volunteers serving under UN entities

UNV is as strong as its partnerships. UN Volunteers deliver for our United Nations partners on sustainable development – from eliminating poverty, empowering women and youth, and playing critical roles in peacekeeping missions and humanitarian response to advocating for climate change mitigation and the rights of marginalized people.

Below are the 2020 statistics on UN Volunteers hosted per top 27 United Nations partners.







OHCHR

UN Volunteers **139** **61%** **39%**



UNAIDS

UN Volunteers **20** **60%** **40%**



UNOCHA

UN Volunteers **129** **67%** **33%**



IFAD

UN Volunteers **19** **58%** **42%**



UNCDF

UN Volunteers **60** **37%** **63%**



UNDRR

UN Volunteers **19** **53%** **47%**



UN-Habitat

UN Volunteers **57** **47%** **53%**



UN DPPA

UN Volunteers **15** **67%** **33%**



FAO

UN Volunteers **51** **63%** **37%**



UN ESCWA

UN Volunteers **14** **57%** **43%**



UNOPS

UN Volunteers **35** **77%** **23%**



UN DSS

UN Volunteers **11** **64%** **36%**



UNESCO

UN Volunteers **30** **63%** **37%**



UNRWA

UN Volunteers **10** **40%** **60%**



UNITAD

UN Volunteers **23** **70%** **30%**

# UNV key statistics, 2020

During 2020  
**9,459**  
**UN Volunteers**  
on the ground  
were hosted by  
UN entities



in **158 countries**  
**of assignment,**

and thousands of  
online volunteers  
engaged virtually  
worldwide



UN Volunteers  
were from

**168**  
**countries**

**84%**  
from the Global South

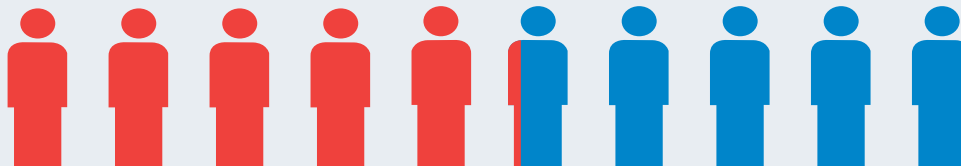


**56% national**  
**UN Volunteers**

**35% of UN**  
**Volunteers**  
**on-site were**  
**under the**  
**age of 29**



**52% of**  
**UN Volunteers**  
**on-site were**  
**women**



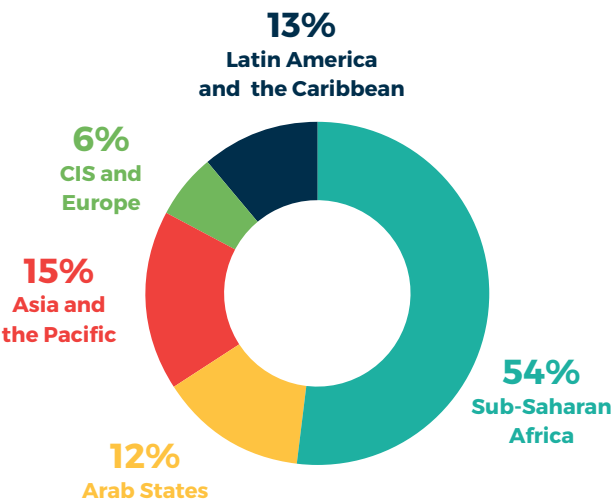
# UNV financial volume

**Total financial volume – all sources of funds** (thousands of US\$)

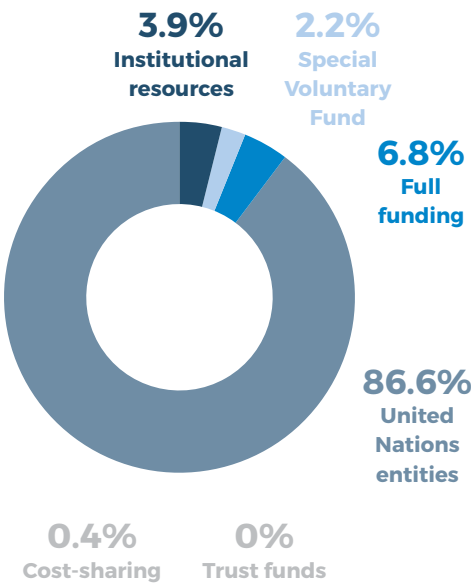
	UNV INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES	OTHER UNV RESOURCES*	RESOURCES FROM UNITED NATIONS ENTITIES	TOTAL
Total financial volume	9 184	22 584	205 645	237 413

*\*Special Voluntary Fund, cost-sharing, trust funds and full funding of UNV assignments.*

Financial volume by region



Financial volume by source of fund



## Financial volume by United Nations entity (thousands of US\$)

UNITED NATIONS ENTITIES	TOTAL
UNDFS/DPKO/DPA United Nations Department of Field Support/Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Political Affairs	84 522
UNDP United Nations Development Programme	43 339
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	24 439
UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund	13 553
UNFPA United Nations Population Fund	5 967
WHO World Health Organization	4 614
UN Women United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	4 613
UNOV United Nations Office in Vienna	4 053
WFP World Food Programme	3 559
UNEP United Nations Environment Programme	3 341
OHCHR Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights	2 771
OCHA Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	2 199
United Nations Secretariat	1 538
IOM International Organization for Migration	1 529
UN-Habitat United Nations Human Settlements Programme	926
UNCDF United Nations Capital Development Fund	913
FAO Food and Agriculture Organization	849
UNOPS United Nations Office for Project Services	784
UNOG United Nations Office at Geneva	391
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	331
IFAD International Fund for Agriculture	310
UNECA United Nations Economic Commission for Africa	206
UNAIDS Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	196
UNIC United Nations Information Centres	183
UNESCWA United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia	114
Other	405
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>205 645</b>

# Contributions to UNV

## Contributions from partners (thousands of US\$)

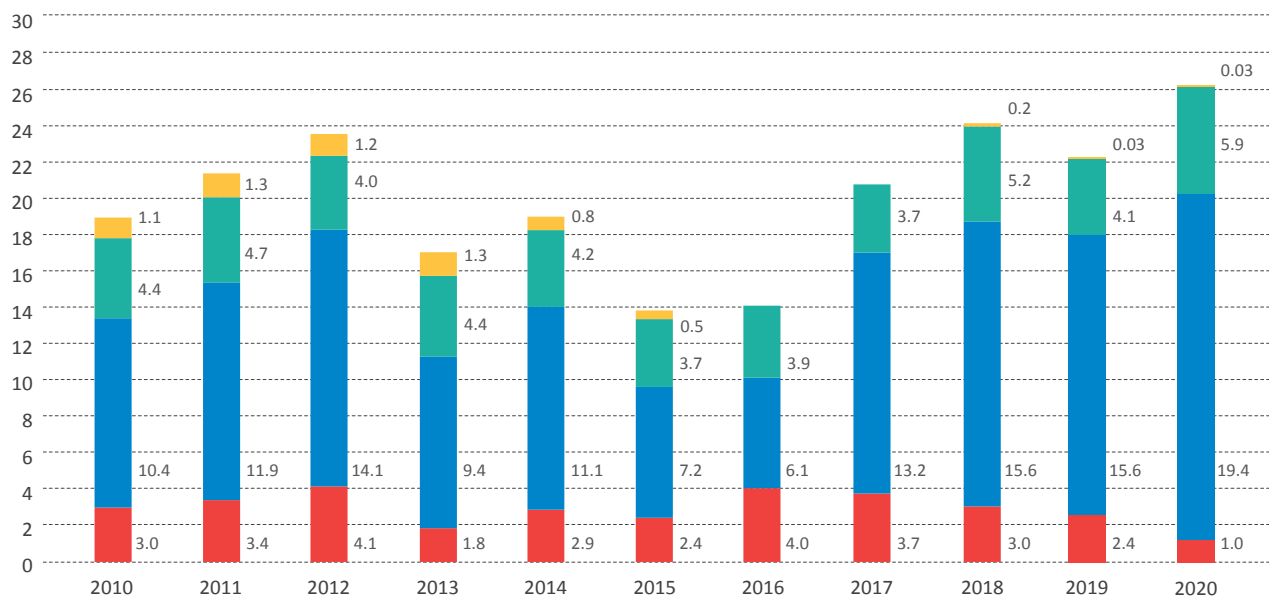
	SPECIAL VOLUNTARY FUND	OTHER RESOURCES (FULL FUNDING, TRUST FUND, COST-SHARING)	TOTAL	FUTURE DUE AS PER CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT SIGNED
<b>PARTNER COUNTRIES</b>				
Sweden	1 682	3 212	4 894	1 095
Germany	3 103	961	4 064	486
Republic of Korea		4 013	4 013	240
Japan		2 567	2 567	
Switzerland	818	1 748	2 566	1 680
France	200	1 949	2 149	
Ireland	60	1 254	1 314	
Finland		1 235	1 235	
Norway		1 150	1 150	350
Russian Federation		1 000	1 000	1 000
Kazakhstan		741	741	
Czech Republic	13	406	418	
China	30	85	115	526
India	20		20	
Turkey	10		10	
Bangladesh	2		2	650
Thailand	2		2	
Spain				1 195
<b>SUB-TOTAL PARTNER COUNTRIES</b>	<b>5 938</b>	<b>20 322</b>	<b>26 260</b>	<b>7 222</b>
<b>OTHER CONTRIBUTORS</b>				
Kwansei Gakuin University, Japan		83	83	83
Mount Kenya University		37	37	
King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand		29	29	274
PeaceNexus Foundation		22	22	22
Agency for Volunteer Service, China (Hong Kong SAR)				1 805
<b>SUB-TOTAL OTHER CONTRIBUTORS</b>		<b>171</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>2 183</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>5 938</b>	<b>20 492</b>	<b>26 430</b>	<b>9 405</b>

In addition to the above, UNV received the amount of US\$ 794k for the upgrade of the UN Campus Bonn infrastructure from the Government of Germany in 2020. As Premises Manager, UNV administers these funds in line with UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules.



## Contributions by fund type 2010 - 2020 (millions of US\$)

■ Cost-sharing
 ■ Special Voluntary Fund
 ■ Full Funding
 ■ Trust fund



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# Full Funding programme Reporting for 2020

The Full Funding programme of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme enables partners external to the United Nations, such as national governments, private sector entities, foundations and universities, to sponsor the entire cost of UN Volunteer assignments. Fully funded UN Volunteers are then deployed to serve with United Nations host entities.

In 2020, UNV deployed fully funded volunteers in partnership with the Governments of **Australia, China**, the **Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Norway**, the **Republic of Korea**, the **Russian Federation, Sweden** and **Switzerland**. These Member States funded nationals of their own countries, while Ireland, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland also offered UN Volunteer opportunities to nationals of other countries.

In addition to Member States, UNV worked with other partners on fully funded assignments, such as the **Agency for Volunteer Service** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China), the **King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi** (Thailand) and **Cisco Systems**.

## Engaging partners in the COVID-19 response

This year, some Member States funded a number of UN Volunteer assignments to address the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic. Serving across 39 countries and 12 United Nations agencies, more than 50 of the fully funded UN Volunteers deployed in 2020 served in assignments linked to the United Nations' COVID-19 response.

**Japan**, through a partnership for COVID-19 impact reduction, sponsored 13 UN Volunteers supporting COVID-19 related efforts in Africa, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and Asia and the Pacific. **Sweden's** support included sponsoring five specialist UN Volunteers in statistics, data and information management for the COVID-19 response.

Due to travel restrictions and lockdowns, flexibility was required by partners and UN Volunteers. Many assignments were carried out remotely, allowing UN Host Entities entities to continue to receive valuable support provided by fully funded UN Volunteers.

Despite the challenges caused by the pandemic, UNV continued to ensure UN Volunteers had access to dedicated learning and professional development opportunities – for example, UNV designed and delivered virtual assignment preparation training for UN Youth Volunteers.

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### 2020 UNV Full Funding programme at a glance<sup>1</sup>

**635** fully funded UN Volunteers served with  
**35** United Nations partners in **111** countries

**41%** expert and specialist UN Volunteer assignments

**59%** UN Youth and University  
Volunteer assignments

**77%** women  
**23%** men



<sup>1</sup> One UN Volunteer may serve  
in multiple assignments.

## Partnerships in support of an inclusive United Nations system

In 2020, UNV engaged a total of 88 UN Volunteers with disabilities in the United Nations system, with support from United Nations host entities along with funding partners.

The Government of **Sweden** funded three international and 12 national UN Volunteers with disabilities in 2020, while **France** and **Finland** each fully funded one assignment for an international UN Volunteer with a disability. These volunteers served with **UNDP**, **UN Women** and **UNICEF** as well as within UNV. Their assignments further embedded inclusive volunteering in the United Nations system, building on the achievements of the UNV Talent and Capacity Development Programme for an Inclusive UN System for Persons with Disabilities, funded by the Government of **Germany** since 2017.

“ Many factors motivated me to volunteer: I always wanted to be an agent of change – to change mindsets towards persons with disabilities and disability-related matters. I further wanted to prove to the world – through my actions and contributions – that disability does not mean inability. ”

**Pelgrina Shimanu Ndumba**, national UN Volunteer funded by **Sweden**, Project Officer, UNDP, **Namibia**

“ UNV gave me the opportunity to learn about the United Nations system. I have never felt so useful. I feel that my work has meaning. ”

**Guillaume Pyot**, UN Volunteer funded by **France**, Gender and Vulnerable Groups, OHCHR, **Senegal**

## Expanding collaboration with new partners

In 2020, UNV created opportunities for new partners to contribute to the delivery of the 2030 Agenda through volunteerism. For the first time, UNV deployed seven international UN Volunteers funded by the Government of **Kazakhstan** on assignments in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

UNV and the United Nations in **Kenya** initiated the process of deploying the first UN Volunteers funded by an African partner, following an agreement with **Mount Kenya University**. The deployment of these national UN University Volunteers was put on hold because of the pandemic but will resume in 2021. A new partnership agreement on fully funded international UN Volunteer assignments was signed with **Bangladesh**; however, implementation was delayed also due to the pandemic.

In a unique collaboration with **PBSO**, UNV and the **PeaceNexus Foundation** signed an agreement in December 2020 to deploy national UN Volunteers to work on a thematic review of local peacebuilding initiatives. The collaboration with **Switzerland** was expanded to include the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, posting UN Volunteers with **World Bank** country offices.



## Fully funded UN Volunteers' career trajectories

To document and analyse the post-assignment career trajectories of fully funded UN Volunteers, UNV conducted a survey reaching out to almost 2,000 fully funded UN Volunteers who had completed their assignments between 2008 and 2019. A total of 1,031 UN Volunteers had completed the survey as of February 2020.

Just under half, or 47 per cent, of former fully funded youth and specialist UN Volunteer respondents had held a subsequent position within the United Nations system. As of February 2020, 30 per cent were still working in the United Nations system.

Of all the respondents, 69 per cent indicated that they still worked in the areas of peace and human security, humanitarian assistance and/or development cooperation. In addition, 93 per cent of respondents reported that their assignments were useful in helping them secure employment opportunities.



UN Youth Volunteer Florence Homberger, funded by **Switzerland**, helps distribute personal protective equipment, in Moldova with UN Women. (UN Women, 2020)

“ The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on our work with girls and women, imposing social distancing [...] Having Michaela in our team, who shared our mission to ensure that no girls are left behind, was an immensely valuable addition. We were delighted to have her on board, to work with such an enthusiastic person and to contribute to her professional development. ”

**Zerina Mandžo**, IT Girls Project Officer with UN Women, on **Michaela Ptackova**, UN Youth Volunteer funded by the **Czech Republic**. Youth Skills Development and Entrepreneurship Officer, UNDP, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

“ I think volunteering is one of the best things one can do to contribute to improve our world, because you do it, in my opinion, from passion, because you are really dedicated to this cause that you are working for. Volunteering is something that you can get involved with at any point in life. ”

**Oscar Boije**, UN Volunteer funded by **Finland**. Education Officer, UNICEF, **Somalia**

“ **Olga Nilova**, our UN Volunteer funded by the **Government of Russia**, not only provided outstanding support to the communications and partnerships work of the United Nations in Lao PDR, but she also excelled in her support to the United Nations Country Team's preparedness and response to COVID-19. ”

**Sara Sekkenes**, United Nations Resident Coordinator, **Lao People's Democratic Republic**

## Contributions to the UNV Full Funding programme, 2017–2020 (thousands of US\$)

FUNDING PARTNER	2017	2018	2019	2020
Republic of Korea	3 669 578	4 137 367	4 001 751	4 012 649
Sweden	1 799 940	3 900 020	2 251 361	3 212 137
France	2 078 191	1 107 166	1 288 672	1 949 336
Japan	1 542 331	951 585	1 330 594	2 537 997
Switzerland	866 831	991 851	994 761	1 748 334
Finland	829 005	859 335	1 407 681	1 234 950
Ireland	479 138	517 523	935 094	1 254 480
Russian Federation		1 004 000	1 000 000	1 000 000
Norway	763 076	866 920	249 960	1 149 970
Czech Republic	323 421	346 675	462 478	405 586
Agency for Volunteer Service, China (Hong Kong, SAR)	370 037	370 037	370 037	
Australia			1 039 016	
Kazakhstan				740 970
Luxembourg		490 840		
Germany	426 174			
Chinese Young Volunteers Association			103 686	84 653
King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand		46 710	40 305	29 118
Save the Children	37 896	4 193		
Mount Kenya University				36 690
PeaceNexus Foundation				21 726
Alphabet Inc.		16 500		
AIESEC	8 245			
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>13 193 863</b>	<b>15 610 722</b>	<b>15 475 396</b>	<b>19 418 596</b>

Funding partners ordered by total contributions amount.

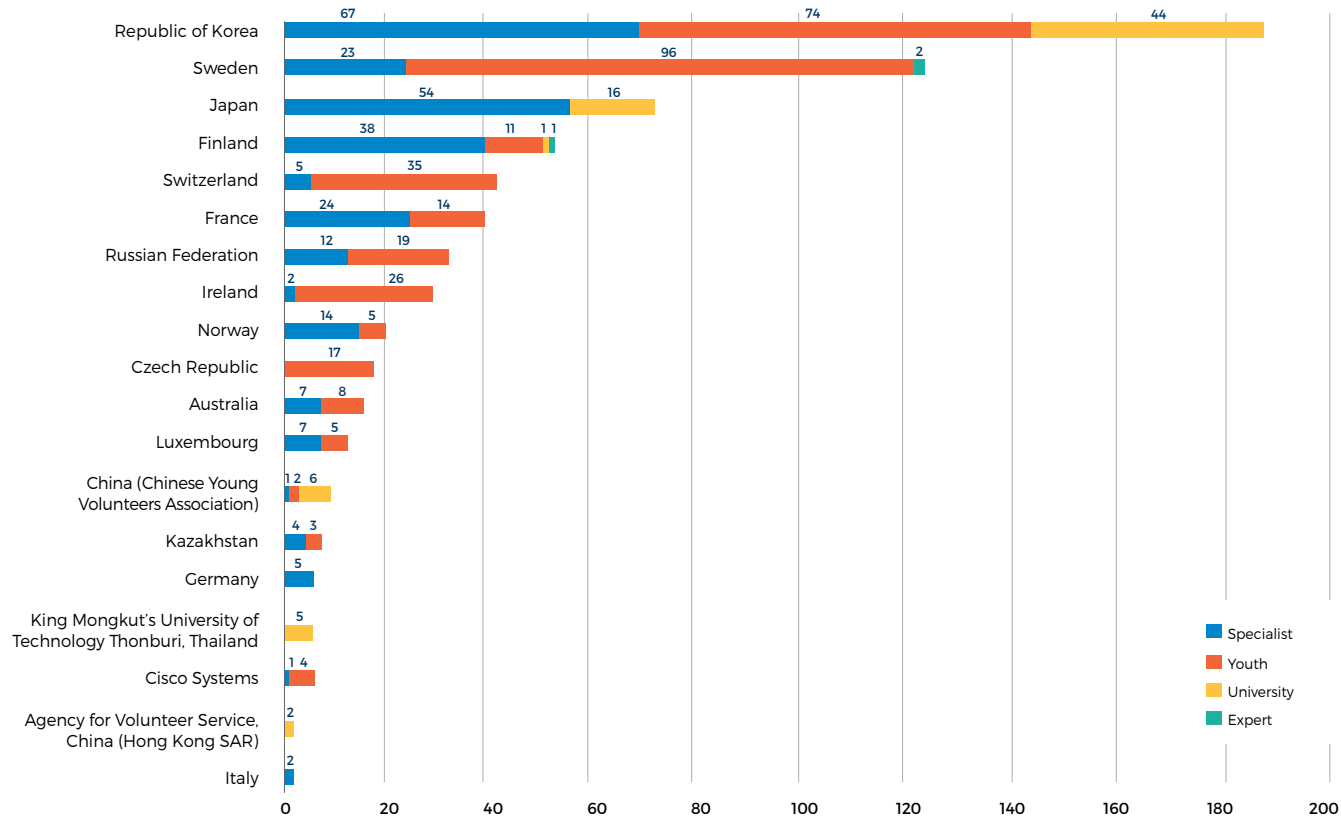
**“ My UN Youth Volunteer assignment is providing me with an outstanding opportunity to contribute actively to building more resilient societies in Small Island Developing States, facing intensifying climate change impacts and the repercussions of the pandemic [...] I value the balance between delivery and learning, which makes volunteering a very stimulating experience. ”**

**Samuel Henry**, UN Volunteer funded by **Ireland**,  
Programme Officer, UNDP, **Barbados**

**“ It is amazing to see all our efforts and energies going towards the common goal of protecting the most disadvantaged, vulnerable people in communities and society. This connectedness, oneness and solidarity is inspiring, as the COVID-19 pandemic is dividing people, society and the whole world in every aspect. ”**

**Natsuko Hatano**, UN Volunteer funded by **Japan**,  
Programme Associate in Public Health Policy, Practice  
and Management in Integrated Early Childhood  
Development, UNICEF, **Viet Nam**

# Fully funded UNV assignments by funding partner, 2020



*Ella Ballerini, a UN Youth Volunteer funded by Australia, serves with UNICEF in Fiji supporting communities with COVID-19 preparedness. (UNV, 2020)*



“ I feel honoured to have had a chance as a volunteer to participate in the ASEAN MY World 2030 programme and to help, at least a little, in terms of advocacy and research about the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 on countries in Asia and the Pacific.”

**Yuhan Yang**, UN University Volunteer funded by the **Chinese Young Volunteers Association**,  
SDG Research and Advocacy, UNDP, **Bangkok regional hub**

“ I am very happy to be one of the first international volunteers from Kazakhstan [...] This programme is a great opportunity for Kazakh professionals to try themselves in a global work environment and garner crucial international experience.”

**Dina Akylbekova**, UN Volunteer, Outreach and Partnerships Support Officer, funded by **Kazakhstan**, Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development, UNDP, **Turkey**

“ Inclusive partnerships are a source of motivation for me, because as refugees look forward, I look forward with them. The long-term recovery of refugees depends on finding a livelihood that covers the costs of health care and good nutrition, especially in a pandemic.”

**Jueun Jung**, UN Youth Volunteer funded by the **Republic of Korea**, Associate Livelihoods Officer, UNHCR, **Jordan**

## Fully funded UNV assignments by United Nations host entity, 2020

UNITED NATIONS HOST ENTITY	Total volunteers	UNITED NATIONS HOST ENTITY	Total volunteers
UNDP	161	UNFCCC	5
UNICEF	64	UNAIDS	4
UNRCO	49	ESCAP	3
UNFPA	47	IFAD	3
IOM	45	UNCDF	3
UN Women	45	DPPA	1
UNHCR	31	DSS	1
UNV	22	ILO	1
WFP	22	SRSF-CAAC	1
UNOCHA	20	UNDGC	1
FAO	18	UNDRR	1
OHCHR	17	UNFICYP	1
UNESCO	15	UNODA	1
WHO	14	UNOPS	1
UNEP	11	UN-OSCEY	1
UNODC	11	UNOSSC	1
UNRWA	9	UNOWAS	1
UN-Habitat	7		

For the full names of United Nations entities refer to [unterm.un.org](http://unterm.un.org).

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# Special Voluntary Fund of UNV Reporting for 2020

The Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) is an open trust fund comprised of financial contributions from Member States. The SVF is an essential resource for the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, allowing UNV to flexibly and strategically allocate resources to promote volunteerism for the 2030 Agenda and to deploy volunteers to support the United Nations.

In 2020, UNV continued to use the SVF to achieve results in the two outcome areas of the UNV 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 the integration of volunteerism.

In 2020, SVF resources allowed UNV to develop innovative and agile volunteer solutions, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to advocate widely for volunteering. In collaboration with Member States and other stakeholders, UNV continued to develop its specialist knowledge and evidence base on volunteerism in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, with a particular focus on gender. Internally, the use of SVF funds helped UNV to increase its agility and efficiency by accelerating the organization's digital transformation.

## Supporting the COVID-19 response

From its onset, the COVID-19 pandemic called for United Nations entities to work more closely than ever before with Member States, and throughout 2020, UNV supported Member States, United Nations host entities and UN Volunteers as well as people affected on the ground in responding to the unprecedented challenges posed by the crisis. Globally, volunteer action helped to meet the needs of governments and other stakeholders in reaching communities far and wide.

*UN Volunteer Yasmin Lapeira, (right) serving as Humanitarian Officer with OCHA Venezuela, tracks humanitarian assistance requirements in the states covered by the Maracaibo Field Coordination Hub (Trujillo, Falcón, Lara, and Zulia) (UNV, 2020)*

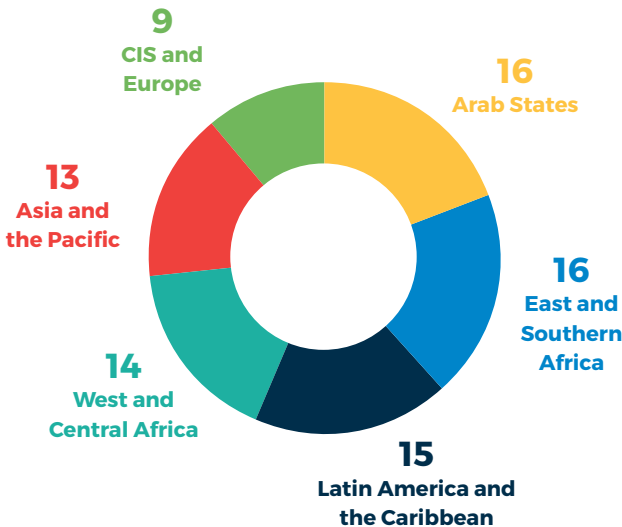


With long-standing experience as a system-wide service provider for the United Nations, UNV continued to make surge capacity available across the United Nations system to tackle the health emergency and to minimize its economic, social and health impacts. With a commitment of US\$ 2 million from the SVF, UNV was able to quickly deploy national UN Volunteers where additional resources were urgently needed to strengthen system-wide action on COVID-19.

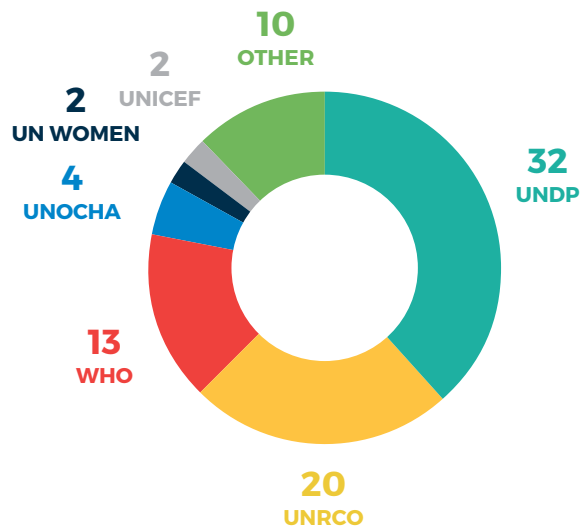
During 2020–2021, a total of 140 UN Volunteers will serve on COVID-related assignments with 18 United Nations entities in 79 countries. In 2020, 83 of these UN Volunteers were deployed to support inter-agency coordination, joint programmes and the public health response around the globe.

In **West and Central Africa**, UNV used SVF funds to support the most vulnerable in fighting COVID-19. Together with local volunteer organizations, UNV conducted awareness campaigns and provided communities with items to protect themselves from infection, including masks and handwashing kits. In **India**, UN Volunteer district youth coordinators conducted COVID-19 awareness campaigns in 58 districts to promote preventive measures and counter social discrimination experienced by those affected by the pandemic. They also trained community volunteers in an effort to reduce the burden on front-line health-care workers.

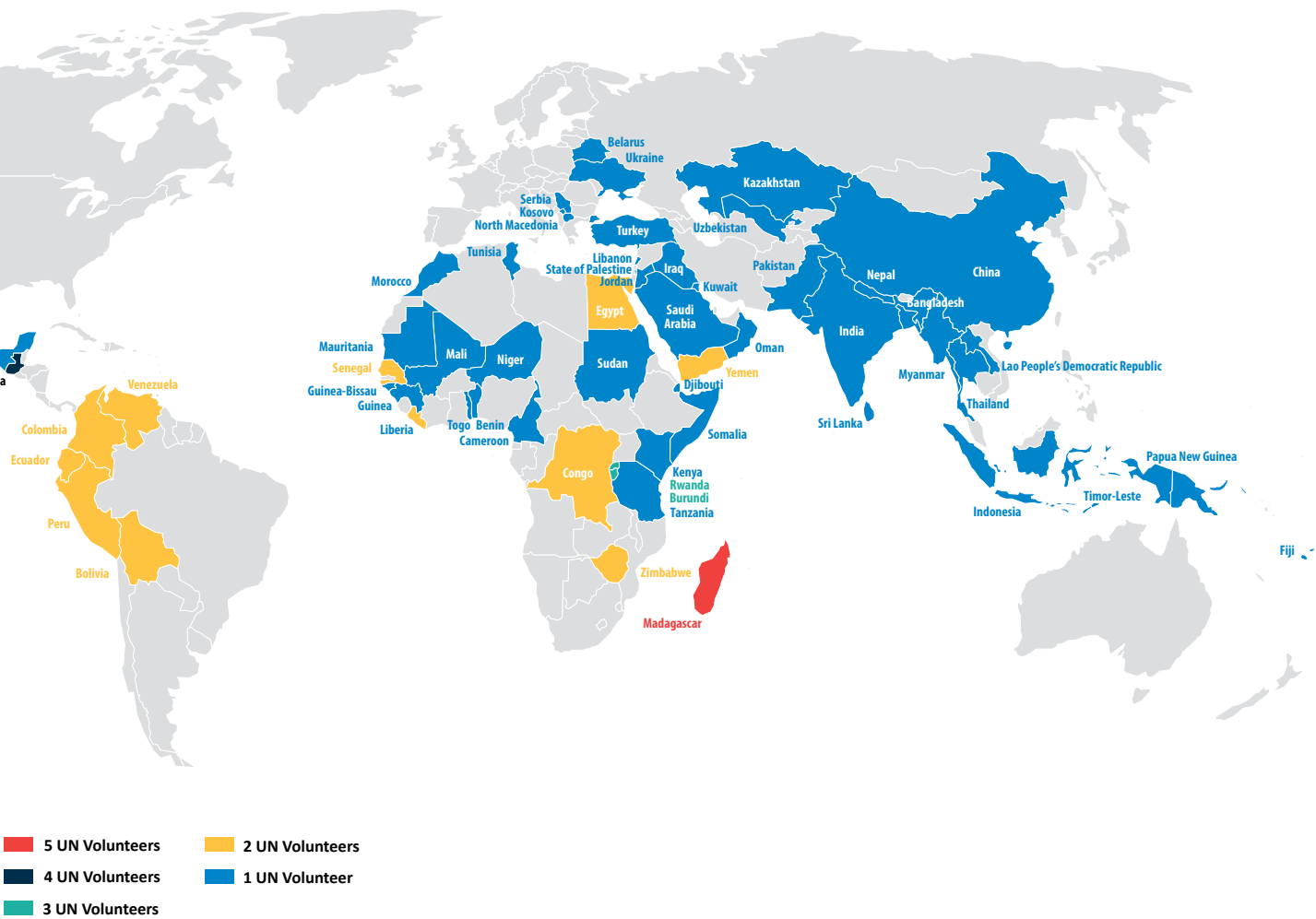
**COVID-19 related national UN Volunteer assignments funded by the SVF, per region, 2020**



**COVID-19 related national UN Volunteer assignments funded by the SVF by UN host entity, 2020**



## COVID-19 related national UN Volunteer assignments funded by the SVF by country, 2020



# SVF contributions in 2020

In 2020, contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund came from 11 funding partners: **Bangladesh, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand** and **Turkey**. The total amount of funding received was US\$ 5.9 million. Over 90 per cent came from the top four donors – **Germany, Sweden, Switzerland** and **France** – and in coming years, UNV will continue its efforts to further diversify the SVF donor base.

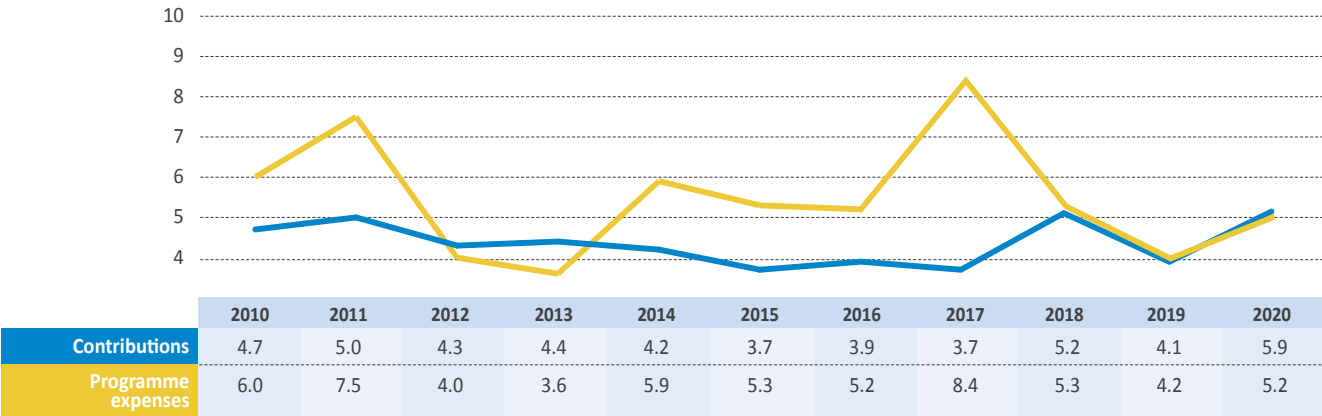
## SVF contributions, 2020

FUNDING PARTNER*	Contribution (US\$)
GERMANY	3 102 705
SWEDEN	1 681 521
SWITZERLAND	818 032
FRANCE	200 000
IRELAND	59 737
CHINA	30 000
INDIA	19 975
CZECH REPUBLIC	12 544
TURKEY	10 000
BANGLADESH	2 000
THAILAND	1 521
TOTAL**	5 938 034

\* Note: donor countries are ordered by magnitude of contributions received in 2020.

\*\* Note: contributions have been rounded up or down to the nearest whole dollar.

## SVF contributions and programme expenses, 2010–2020 (millions of US\$)



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

## About the Special Voluntary Fund

The SVF was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1970. UNV reports on the use of the SVF to the UNDP Executive Board on an annual basis. Over time, the SVF mandate has been modified and expanded, with the SVF providing seed funding to scale up successful projects where volunteerism has had a transformative impact. The SVF is also used to develop innovative volunteer-based solutions as well as undertaking research and knowledge sharing. During the development of the UNV Strategic Framework 2018–2021, UNV engaged with its partners to formalize the more flexible use of the SVF in support of the implementation of UNV's mandate.

The SVF Steering Committee, an internal UNV governance group, is responsible for the oversight and strategic direction of SVF-funded activities. This Committee ensures full integration and alignment of individual initiatives with the UNV Strategic Framework 2018–2021.

## Leading the way on volunteerism

The highly visible role that volunteers have played in the response to COVID-19, backed up by UNV's ongoing promotion of volunteerism, has increased awareness of volunteering as a powerful cross-cutting means of implementing the 2030 Agenda. For the first time, the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of the United Nations system's operational activities recognized that a conducive environment for volunteerism can enhance the sustainability of development results.

UNV uses the SVF to invest in volunteerism research, the promotion of volunteerism and the provision of technical support to Member States. UNV works with its partners to advance the understanding of the value of volunteering and to strengthen and diversify the contribution of volunteerism to sustainable development. In 2020, the fund allowed UNV to work with 27 countries on the establishment of volunteer schemes and the integration of volunteering into national policies and legislation.



With resources from the SVF, UNV partnered with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in realizing the Global Technical Meeting on Reimagining Volunteering for the 2030 Agenda during the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2020. The aim of the meeting was to provide a platform to advance discussions on how to jointly shape the future of volunteering to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The virtual meeting, bringing together 4,000 participants and 70 speakers from 60 countries, ended with a call to action encouraging broader and deeper stakeholder engagement with and contributions to the evidence, discussions and debates on integrating volunteerism into the 2030 Agenda.

In 2020, UNV and its United Nations partners mobilized 493,649 local non-UN volunteers in **Cameroon, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, India, Kazakhstan, Kosovo<sup>2</sup>, Peru, Sri Lanka** and **Turkey** through national volunteer schemes. This brings the cumulative number of local non-UN volunteers mobilized during the period of the UNV Strategic Framework 2018–2021 to 1,243,381.

<sup>2</sup> All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).



### UNV achievements in promoting volunteerism, 2020

WHAT?	WHERE?					
	West and Central Africa	East and Southern Africa	Arab States	Asia and the Pacific	Latin America and the Caribbean	Europe and the CIS
UNV provided technical support to develop policies, legislation and strategies on volunteerism	Cameroon ( <i>draft legislation waiting for final approval</i> ), Guinea-Bissau	Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe	League of Arab States	Sri Lanka	Paraguay ( <i>draft legislation waiting for final approval</i> )	
UNV assisted the institutional strengthening of volunteerism at the country level	Benin ( <i>development of a national volunteer programme and establishment of a volunteer coordination platform</i> )		State of Palestine ( <i>establishment of a national volunteer programme</i> )	Sri Lanka ( <i>establishment of the National Volunteering Secretariat and development of an online volunteer management system</i> )		Kazakhstan ( <i>establishment of the Birgemiz Volunteer Office</i> )



*Houda Abdoulbastoi, UN Volunteer Technical Advisor with UNDP in Fombouni, Comoros, helps prepare fruit species for a large-scale reforestation project expected to enhance community incomes and improve environmental conservation in the region. (UNV, 2020)*

## Extending UNV's knowledge and evidence base on volunteerism

As part of its commitment to fill knowledge gaps on volunteering for the 2030 Agenda, UNV used SVF resources to launch an online portal on volunteerism in 2020. The UNV Knowledge Portal on Volunteerism brings together global, regional and national data and evidence on volunteerism. It consolidates and makes accessible volunteering data to inform policy and advocacy, and it links data collectors with policymakers.

In 2020, UNV produced a toolkit on promoting gender equality through volunteering, and this was made available on its Knowledge Portal to assist in growing the evidence base on gender and volunteerism. The toolkit helps policymakers and development practitioners consider how volunteering can support efforts towards gender equality and women's empowerment. It provides step-by-step guidance on how gender concerns can be integrated into national and subnational volunteering frameworks, strategies and plans. Building on scalable and replicable examples from a range of countries, the toolkit also provides inspiration for ways in which policymakers and their partners can promote gender equality through volunteerism.

## Prioritizing agility and efficiency

In addition to enabling UNV to advance its innovation and research on volunteerism, upgrade its services to Member States and United Nations partners, and make investments where timeliness is critical, the SVF also helps UNV strengthen its overall efficiency.

### **Digital transformation**

To better serve United Nations partners and to effectively support the delivery of the 2030 Agenda, SVF funds were invested into UNV's ambitious digital transformation process. In 2020, UNV continued to introduce robotic

*Haya Al-Jamal (standing), national UN Volunteer with UNICEF, participates in an event for World Children's Day in Jordan. Haya supports the UNICEF flagship Makani programme, through site visits and feedback collected from refugee and Jordanian students. (UNICEF, 2019)*



process automation. This resulted in the elimination of over 30,000 manual tasks annually, reducing the transactional workload and enabling staff to concentrate on tasks of higher value. UNV also launched a corporate service desk featuring AI and chatbots. In 2020, AI-powered chatbots on the UNV website and other platforms responded to an average of 400 inquiries a day – most of these from potential or serving UN Volunteers.

To strengthen its organizational readiness, UNV has embarked on a digital learning journey, offering capacity building and training for staff online. In 2021, UNV will accelerate its digital transformation, launching its Unified Volunteer Platform for recruitment and management of UN Volunteers.

### **Moving forward**

Based on the strategic guidance of United Nations Member States through the QCPR, along with lessons learned, UNV will develop a new strategic framework to guide its work in 2022-2025. UNV will continue to promote volunteerism as a transformative accelerator for sustainable development and facilitate the generation of knowledge and evidence through United Nations partnership efforts. It will also publish the new edition of its triennial flagship publication, *State of the World's Volunteerism Report*, in 2021.

The SVF remains a crucial instrument for UNV to reinforce its role as a system-wide United Nations service and a global advocate for volunteerism in the context of achieving the 2030 Agenda.





The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. UNV works with partners to integrate qualified, highly motivated and well-supported UN Volunteers into United Nations efforts and promotes the global recognition of volunteering for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNV is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and reports to the UNDP Executive Board.



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*Photo: UN Volunteer Luc Joseph Baradandikanya (right), gynaecologist, visits patients with the midwifery team at the Mao district hospital in the Kanem region, Chad. He was the first gynaecologist to work at the hospital. (UNICEF Chad, 2019)*



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The print run for this annual report has been limited as part of UNV's effort to reduce its environmental footprint. The report is available online at [www.unv.org](http://www.unv.org).

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