

# 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.

**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

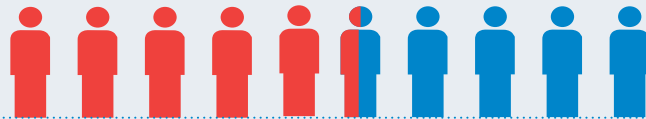


In 2020, over

**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. ”







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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inspiration  
in action

