

Refugee UN Volunteer Special Initiative

Programme Description

Background

When refugees are given the chance, they can support themselves and their families, and make positive contributions to the communities hosting them. Refugees and host communities can mutually empower each other if they are supported, both socially and economically. Following its 2018 adoption by the UN General Assembly, the Global Compact on Refugees has set out to aid those who are forced to flee conflict or persecution through concrete, practical measures that offer opportunities for employment and self-reliance. The **Refugee UN Volunteer programme** is part of this commitment, offering a pathway to employment to high-skilled refugees over the age of 27.

Goal

The special initiative has been established together with UNHCR's long-standing partner, the UN Volunteer Programme (UNV). It facilitates the engagement of refugees with UNHCR through a UNV deployment, for assignments that require specific skills or insights within the local refugee community. The engagement of refugees under this modality is limited to local assignment.

A remunerated local assignment as a RUNV enables refugees to have an opportunity to build on their competencies and skills. It further equips them economically by providing an income-generating opportunity and reduces their dependence on humanitarian assistance. At the same time, the engagement allows UNHCR's operations to benefit from the expertise, skills and unique insights from their RUNV colleagues, and meet their human resources needs locally.

The programme enables refugees to become active agents of change, bringing about a fundamental change in how refugees are generally being perceived in their communities and beyond. Ultimately, the RUNV programme represents a win-win situation for all parties involved: refugees themselves and the communities they serve, as well as UNHCR.

Noting the potential sensitivities linked to the employment of persons of concern by UNHCR in host countries, the RUNV programme limits the engagement of refugees and asylum seekers to tasks that require skills that are not available among the national population of the host country.

Legal framework and Entitlement Package

The legal framework of the special initiative is governed by *UNV's Conditions of Service for Refugee UN Volunteers*, which provides the refugee volunteers with the same entitlement package and Volunteer Living Allowance as that of national UNVs.

In an effort to ensure “equal pay for equal work” and avoid disparities in net compensation between National and Refugee UNVs in the same operation, any cash-based humanitarian assistance already provided to the refugee at the time of the UNV recruitment shall need to be re-assessed. This is the responsibility of the hiring operation. For more details, please refer to the [Q&A](#).

Processflow

The recruitment workflow follows the steps of the national UN Volunteer recruitment; the advertisement, application and selection process take place at the local level, fostering collaboration between UNV Field Units, UNHCR Field Offices and local communities. Both online and offline methods of advertisement and application will be facilitated to ensure that the opportunity reaches the target community and prospective hires have the chance to apply regardless of the technical means of communication available. For more details, please refer to the [Q&A](#).

Minimum requirements for Refugee UN Volunteers

- 1) The candidate is recognized as Refugee by the competent authorities responsible for granting of Refugee status in the Country of residence / refuge, or person has been recognized as a Refugee in accordance with UNHCR mandate and has right to reside legally in the country of refuge.
- 2) The candidate has the right to work in the country of refuge.
- 3) The candidate is at least 27 years of age.
- 4) The candidate has at least 3 years of work experience.
- 5) The candidate possesses skills that are not available among the national population of the host country.
- 6) Educational and language requirements shall be set out in the Description of Assignment (the minimum criteria being a completed secondary education).

Cost of Assignment

The costs of a RUNV recruitment and assignment are equal to the costs of a National UNV recruitment or assignment. For more detailed information, please contact the UNV Field Unit or Regional Office.

Resources

Further information can be found on [UNV website](#), and [UNHCR Intranet page](#).

Contacts

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