

## Special Voluntary Fund of UNV

### Reporting for 2021

We are  
inspiration  
in action



*Dr. Fanja Razafindrandretsa (far right), UNV Epidemiologist with WHO in Madagascar, coordinating a COVID-19 contact tracing exercise in Tamave. She is one of several UN Volunteers sponsored through UNV's Special Voluntary Fund to help coordinate COVID-19 response efforts across the world. (UNV, 2021)*

**The Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) allows the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme to flexibly and strategically allocate resources in support of its mandate. Since 1970, this open trust fund, comprised of financial contributions from partners, has been an essential resource for UNV to promote volunteerism and to deploy volunteers in the United Nations system. During crises and emergencies, the SVF enables UNV to provide immediate assistance to the response efforts of the United Nations around the globe.**

During the last year of the UNV Strategic Framework 2018–2021, UNV continued to use the SVF to achieve results to support its mandate: the promotion of volunteerism for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the deployment of volunteers to support the United Nations. In 2021, this included the production of the triennial *State of the World's Volunteerism Report* and UNV's support to the United Nations system-wide emergency and crisis response efforts.

### Responding to emergencies and crises

As a system-wide service for the United Nations, UNV is always ready to quickly deploy UN Volunteers to wherever additional capacities are urgently needed. The SVF allows UNV to take targeted and immediate action by funding UN Volunteers to support Member States and United Nations partners in responding to emergencies and crises.

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, UNV committed \$2 million from the SVF to mobilize national UN Volunteers in response to health emergencies in 79 countries. In 2020 and 2021, this funding enabled a total of 140 UN Volunteers to support 18 United Nations partners in assignments related to inter-agency coordination, information management, joint United Nations programmes and public health efforts.

In response to the devastating earthquake that affected southwestern Haiti in 2021, UNV allocated the SVF to fund five UN Volunteers for the United Nations Country Team's humanitarian response, supporting field coordination, information management and communications. In the context of the crisis in Afghanistan, SVF funding enabled UNV to support the redeployment of 11 Afghan national UN Volunteers to international UN Volunteer positions; they were deployed in UNV regional offices as well as with UN Women.

*Luis Alvarado (second from right), UN Community Volunteer of the Kichwa community, serves with UNFPA Ecuador to promote teen pregnancy prevention and sexual and reproductive rights. (UNFPA/SantiagoArcos, 2021)*



## SVF Funding 2021

In 2021, nine Member States contributed to the SVF: Bangladesh, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Switzerland and Thailand. The total amount of contributions to the SVF in 2021 was \$4.8 million, with over 97 per cent coming from three Member States – Germany, Switzerland and France. To diversify the SVF donor base and open pathways for individuals to contribute financially to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, UNV launched a Digital Giving platform.

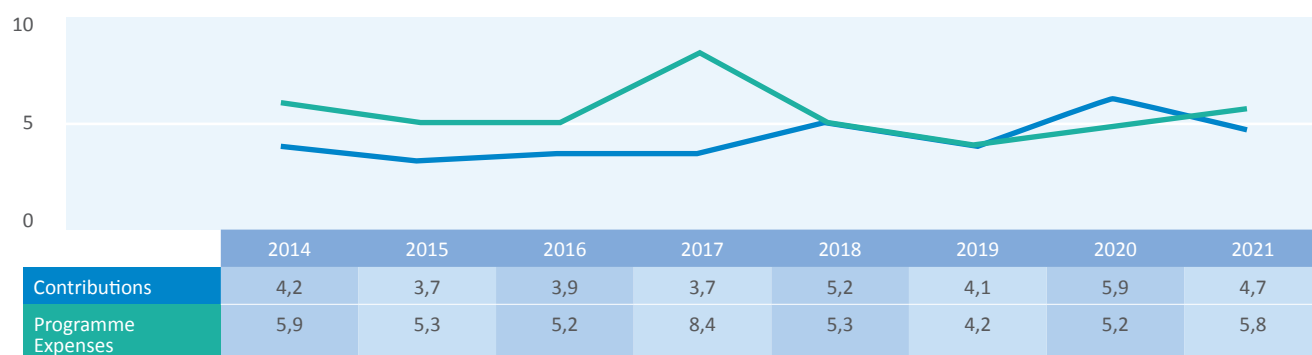
## SVF contributions, 2021

#	Contributors*	Programme resources received (US \$)**
1.	Germany	3,445,609
2.	Switzerland	864,865
3.	France	225,940
4.	Ireland	59,666
5.	Kazakhstan	50,000
6.	China	27,000
7.	Czech Republic	13,709
8.	Individual donations through UNV's Digital Giving Platform	10,445
9.	Bangladesh	2,000
10.	Thailand	1,443
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,700,676</b>

\* Note: Funding partners are listed by magnitude of contributions received in 2021. Sweden's 2021 contribution of \$1,681,521 was accounted for in 2020.

\*\* Note: The reported contributions are rounded up or down to the nearest whole dollar.

## SVF contributions and programme expenses, 2014–2021 (millions of US \$)



Note: the introduction of the Global Programmes in the UNV Strategic Framework 2014-17 allowed UNV to increase delivery of the SVF.





## Enabling an environment where volunteerism can flourish

A big part of UNV's mandate is to support the efforts of Member States, United Nations partners and others to deliver on the 2030 Agenda through volunteerism as an effective means of implementation and people engagement. In responding to this important task, UNV relies on SVF funding.

In 2021, UNV provided technical assistance for data collection and analysis to 22 Member States. This assistance helped to ensure that the contributions of volunteers to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were reflected in the Member States' Voluntary National Reviews. Forty-two reviews were presented at the 2021 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Of these, 61 per cent recognized the positive contributions of volunteering to the SDGs, compared to 58 per cent in 2020.

One important way in which UNV showcases and multiplies the power of volunteerism is by collaborating with local volunteers. In 2021, UNV and its United Nations partners mobilized almost 420,000 local volunteers — people who were not formally affiliated with UNV — in Argentina, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, India, Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka and Venezuela. This effort brought the cumulative number of local non-United Nations volunteers mobilized between 2018 and 2021 to 1,663,729.

With funding support from the SVF, 371,025 volunteers were mobilized in 58 districts in India under the project to strengthen Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) and the National Service Scheme (NSS). UNV implemented this work in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). These volunteers organized on-site and online events to raise awareness around COVID-19, the needs of youth and women, the environment and other themes, engaging over one million young people.

In 2021, the SVF enabled UNV to extend technical and knowledge support to develop policies and legislation on volunteerism and its integration into the 2030 Agenda in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Congo, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Nepal, Nigeria, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

## About the Special Voluntary Fund

In December 1970, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution creating UNV and the SVF, which became operational early the next year. The mandate of the SVF has been modified and expanded over time. Today, the SVF is an instrument that allows UNV to flexibly and strategically allocate resources in support of its mandate and to bolster the response by the United Nations to crises and emergencies. Externally, UNV reports on the use of the SVF to the UNDP Executive Board on an annual basis. Internally, UNV's SVF Steering Committee is responsible for the oversight and strategic direction of SVF-funded activities. This committee ensures full integration and alignment of individual initiatives with UNV's Strategic Framework.

State of the World's  
Volunteerism Report

## Building Equal and Inclusive Societies



*Volunteerism . . . can play a fundamental role in building and strengthening people-state partnerships, thereby enabling collaborative decision-making and helping to rebalance unequal power relations.*

## Filling knowledge gaps on volunteering for the 2030 Agenda

UNV continued to use SVF funding to strengthen the evidence base on volunteering for the SDGs and engage with Member States, civil society and academia.

In 2021, UNV focused on engaging partners in technical consultations around the preparation of the fourth edition of the *State of the World's Volunteerism Report: Building Equal and Inclusive Societies*. Launched in December 2021, the report examines how volunteering can advance inclusion by reducing barriers encountered by marginalized groups seeking volunteering opportunities. Those barriers can take many forms and require myriad solutions, including the adoption of gender-sensitive measures to overcome barriers specifically faced by women. The report also advocates for continued investment in quantitative and qualitative data on volunteering. Volunteerism, the report finds, can play a fundamental role in building and strengthening people-state partnerships, thereby enabling collaborative decision-making and helping to rebalance unequal power relations.

UNV also sustained efforts to equip Member States with the tools and the means to measure and better assess the scale, scope and the social and economic contribution of volunteering to development. To this end, UNV and the International Labour Organization (ILO) published a new volunteer work measurement guide and developed a course on measuring volunteer work for national statistical offices. The first cohort of 30 statisticians, largely from the Global South, were trained in 2021.

During 2021, UNV used its Knowledge Portal on Volunteerism to host 16 webinars and online discussions regarding various topics related to Voluntary National Reviews. The volunteering database — in particular the section on measurement — is the most-viewed section of the portal, followed by the evidence library.



*UN Volunteer Pamela Bahdjé (left), serving with UNDP in Chad, provides young girls at a school in Habena with advice on good use of the internet. (UNV, 2021)*





## Leveraging digital tools to better serve our partners

In 2021, UNV's digital transformation project, supported in part by the SVF, culminated in the launch of the Unified Volunteering Platform (UVP). UVP is a single-entry point for candidates, serving UN Volunteers, United Nations and funding partners. It allows UNV to improve business continuity, facilitate greater transparency and strengthen internal accountabilities.

Robotic process automation continued to reduce the transactional workload in UNV, eliminating over 30,000 manual runs in 2021 and enabling staff to concentrate on tasks of higher value. UNV's digital transformation also introduced a chatbot called Voli, along with other case resolution tools and self-service knowledge items. In 2021, Voli handled over 250,000 enquiries around the clock — an average of 680 per day and 60 per cent more than in 2020 — most of them from potential or current UN Volunteers. In implementing the new digital solutions, UNV focused on ensuring a higher level of accessibility for people with disabilities, with further improvements planned for the future.



*UNV celebrated volunteers during country award ceremonies in Bangladesh, Egypt, Fiji, Guatemala, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Peru, the Republic of Congo, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste and Tunisia.*

## Celebrating volunteerism and 50 years of UNV

International Volunteer Day (IVD), held annually on 5 December, provides an opportunity to thank the many individuals who volunteer and to encourage others to follow their example. In 2021, UNV, Member States, United Nations partners, civil society organizations and academia organized over 235 IVD events and activities at the global, regional and country levels. For its fiftieth anniversary, UNV drew on SVF funding to celebrate volunteers across the world through national volunteer awards as part of the IVD campaign. In 14 countries, UNV organized the award ceremonies together with governments, United Nations Resident Coordinator offices, other United Nations partners, and volunteer-involving organizations. The volunteer awards recognized and supported the spirit of volunteerism and showed appreciation to volunteers, volunteer teams and the organizations working for and through volunteers.



## What's next?

In 2021, UNV prepared its Strategic Framework 2022–2025 in consultation with partners. The members of the Executive Board<sup>1</sup> took note of the document at the first regular session in February 2022. UNV strives to further contribute to the implementation of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of the UN system operational activities. To achieve this, UNV will translate into action the request of Member States to facilitate and promote volunteerism as a powerful and cross-cutting means of implementing the 2030 Agenda.

The Strategic Framework 2022–2025 stresses UNV's role as a system-wide service. In addition to the deployment of UN Volunteers at scale, it focuses on strengthening partnerships to create a more diverse and inclusive United Nations system. It prioritizes achieving efficiency gains and focuses on a global UNV advocacy role. The SVF remains a crucial instrument to achieve this. The new Strategic Framework, therefore, takes a closer look at the SVF as a means of enhancing the organization's institutional effectiveness. Within the Strategic Framework 2022–2025, UNV has developed a clear goal of increasing the revenue and the number of donors to the SVF over the next four years.

The SVF will continue to support UNV in remaining a fit-for-purpose organization, ready to fulfill its role as a UN system-wide service for the engagement of UN Volunteers and a global advocate for unleashing the power of volunteerism for the achievement of sustainable results.

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<sup>1</sup> As a programme administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNV reports to the joint Executive Board of UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).



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