



**UN  
VOLUNTEERS**

# Volunteering **in Motion**

UNV ANNUAL REPORT 2018



*We are*  
**inspiration  
in action**

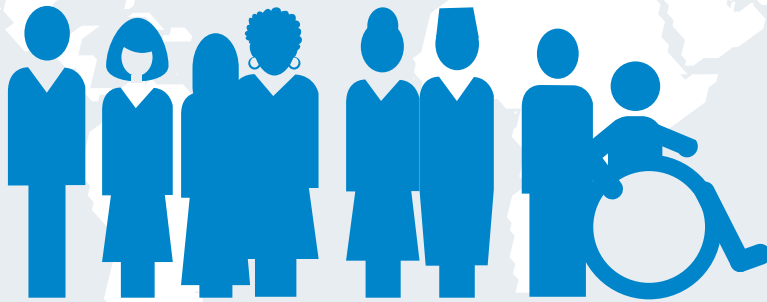


## UNV facts and figures 2018

**7,201**  
**UN Volunteers**

from over **100**  
**different professions**

served with **38**  
**United Nations**  
**partners worldwide**



**16,748**

**Online**  
**Volunteers**

... volunteering remotely with

**47 United Nations partners** and  
**282 civil Society Organizations**  
**working on peace and development**

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 (UN) efforts and promotes the value and global recognition of volunteerism.

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



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.



Cover: UN Youth Volunteers renovating the Al Baqa Prep School for Girls, UNRWA for IVD 2018.  
Jung Hyun Lee (front) UNRWA Youth Volunteer in Private Sector Donor Relations, Hyun Jeong Lim (on ladder) UNDP UN Youth Volunteer in Inclusive Participation and Social Cohesion, Kajza Jansson (left) UNHCR UN Youth Volunteer in Information Management, Joanna Evelina Broumana (left) UNFPA UN Youth Volunteer in Youth, Peace and Security, Katharina Stark (right) UNHCR UN Youth Volunteer in Registration.  
Photo by Mohammad Magayda (UNV, 2018)

Olivier Adam, UNV Executive Coordinator, meets members in one of the 26 Territorial Training and Reincorporation Spaces in Colombia. (Cristina Segarra/ UNV, 2018)



# WELCOME

Dear readers,

Volunteerism is a unique way to bring people together for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Through volunteerism, communities are engaged and build their own sustainable futures. In 2018, as every year since the founding of UNV in 1971, we mobilized volunteers to contribute to the priorities and uphold the values of the United Nations.

The integration of volunteerism into the United Nations system is anchored in the strong relationships between UNV and our United Nations partners. This year, the number of UN Volunteers increased from 6,501 in 2017 to 7,201. The increase was 35 per cent in Asia and the Pacific, 14 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean, 13 per cent in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, 8 per cent in Africa and 2 per cent in the Arab States.

UN Volunteers actively contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Of the 3,665 UN Volunteers who reported on their assignments in 2018, they described working across all 17 goals, especially Goal 5 – Gender Equality, Goal 3 – Health, Goal 16 – Peace, and Goal 17 – Partnerships.

The long-term trend towards increased demand for national UN Volunteers continued in 2018: 45 per cent of all UN Volunteers worldwide compared to 40 per cent the year before. National UN Volunteers enable UNV partners to strengthen national ownership and local capacities, engage local citizens and empower communities.

The ratio of women UN Volunteers remained stable at 47 per cent for the second year running. This year, UNV has explicitly sought out and recommended highly qualified women candidates to its United Nations partners for selection.

In 2018, 81 per cent of UN Volunteers were from the Global South. This number represents a major contribution by UNV to South-South cooperation, bringing people from the South together to find solutions to development challenges through exchanges and transfer of skills, knowledge and best practices between counterparts.

The average age of a UN Volunteer in 2018 was 35, while the number of UN Youth Volunteers, who are between 18 and 29 years of age, increased from 8 per cent in 2017 to 11 per cent in 2018.

UNV continued working with UN Member States and other partners on the recognition of volunteering under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2018 Secretary-General's Report on Volunteering was presented at the 73rd UN General Assembly, followed by the adoption of resolution A/Res/73/140 on the promotion of a conducive environment for volunteerism to enhance the sustainability of development results. UNV also published the triennial flagship State of the World's Volunteerism Report, providing important new analysis on the role of local volunteers in resilience-building.

2018 was also a critical year for the organization in implementing the structural and strategic transformation, in line with the larger United Nations reform. As a more decentralized and streamlined organization, UNV, through the deployment of UN Volunteers to our United Nations partners, made a significant impact in all five Ps of the Sustainable Development Goals: Planet, People, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships.

With our new and more fit-for-purpose organizational structure, along with advances in national volunteering, innovation and strong partnerships, UNV will maintain our drive to leave no one behind and ensure the benefits of volunteerism are recognized throughout the world.

We share our thanks to Members States for their confidence in UNV and their support, to United Nations partners for their close collaboration and to UN Volunteers for their selfless contributions to peace and development around the world.

Olivier Adam, Executive Coordinator



# VOLUNTEERING FOR THE PLANET

Historically, volunteers have driven global climate action for the protection of our planet. UN Volunteers are committed to solving environmental problems that partner agencies are working to address; such as nature conservation, eradicating plastic waste and mitigating the effects of climate change.

## Environmental initiatives

In 2018, national and international UN Volunteers, along with online volunteers, continued to assist the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with environmental projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. UN Volunteers collected and disseminated information on indigenous methodologies, lessons learned and best practices in environmental sustainability in the [Dominican Republic](#), [Ecuador](#), [Honduras](#), [Mexico](#), [Panama](#) and [Uruguay](#).

Bringing many years of professional experience to their assignments, UN Volunteers in the [Central African Republic](#) advocated for improvements in environmental management and encouraged people to protect local ecosystems. On Earth Day 2018, they worked with peacekeepers and the local community to remove plastic waste and plant trees.

UN Volunteers assigned to **UNDP** in [Zimbabwe](#) supported the government to reduce the country's carbon footprint. They provided capacity building and technical assistance on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in vulnerable communities throughout the country.

UN Volunteers fought declining animal populations in Africa, serving with UN Environment (UNEP) in [Kenya](#) and [Tanzania](#). Assigned to the African Elephant Fund established by UNEP, UN Volunteers created more awareness about the importance of elephant conservation and reducing illegal killings and trade.

In [Kenya](#), UN Volunteers worked on programmes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as a result of deforestation and forest degradation, such as **UNEP's** SWITCH Africa Green initiative, which helps the agricultural sector through promoting sustainable agricultural activities. UN Volunteers mobilized communities, students, youth groups and other stakeholders to champion clean and healthy ecosystems.



UN Volunteers Irena Kazenaite and Sahon Flan help clean up on Earth Day in Bangui, Central African Republic. (Hervé Serefia/MINUSCA, 2018)



UN Volunteer Jad El-Baba in Lebanon suggests adjustments in a briquetting plant to achieve maximum efficiency and cost reduction. (UNDP, 2017)

UN Volunteers serving with **UNEP** in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** strove to double the nationally protected conservation areas in the country. They travelled to remote villages and spoke with local people about the importance of protecting the environment.

In **Kosovo**,<sup>1</sup> UN Volunteers were involved in Healthier Kosovo, a joint project of **UNDP**, UNV and the World Health Organization (**WHO**), providing expert advice to national institutions on reducing environment-related health issues. UN Volunteers connected with communities to tackle pollution and other environmental degradation affecting public health.

In **Jordan**, UN Volunteers with specialized experience in energy solutions hit the ground running as part of a new **UNDP** regional project on sustainable energy in the Arab region. They helped develop activities focusing on renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy access for poor and displaced communities.

UN Youth Volunteers working with **UNDP** in **Ukraine** supported a Global Environment Facility project on energy efficiency in public buildings. The goal was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by creating a favourable legal and institutional framework to promote public buildings with higher energy standards.

## How UN Volunteers contributed to the Global Goals for the Planet



Figures are based on UN Volunteers' self-reporting on the contributions their assignments with UN partners make to the SDGs, choosing up to three Goals. (Source: UN Volunteer Report 2018)

## Disaster risk reduction and preparedness

With the support of the Government of **Japan**, UN Volunteers in seven countries (**India**, **Indonesia**, **Malaysia**, **Maldives**, **Myanmar**, **Sri Lanka** and **Thailand**) joined a United Nations disaster risk reduction project undertaken by **UNDP**, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (**UNISDR**) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (**OCHA**). The final evaluation of the project noted that United Nations partners had become more effective in delivering their results by integrating volunteerism into their programming. The reporting on volunteerism from all seven countries also highlighted the increased engagement of women, youth, people with disabilities and marginalized people.

In **Rwanda**, in partnership with the Rwandan government, **UNDP** and other agencies, UN Volunteers trained more than 1,000 women on early warning and disaster risk identification and response techniques and 780 female community volunteers on effective disaster risk reduction, while a further 100 women received advanced training on evacuation techniques.

**UNICEF's** Global Innovation Centre won the UNV Online Volunteering Award, announced in early 2018, for its impactful and innovative involvement of online volunteers around the world. The centre, in partnership with the private sector, assisted children and families accessing aid in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma. Thanks to Online Volunteers, UNICEF launched a bold social media campaign that sensitized people about disaster risk reduction and the available humanitarian assistance.

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

# VOLUNTEERING FOR PROSPERITY

An important part of UNV's mandate is leveraging volunteerism to give marginalized people more opportunities to improve their own futures. In 2018, UNV brokered volunteer assignments with United Nations partners for youth, women, people with disabilities and others. UN Volunteers work with communities to make them more resilient and tackle issues caused by displacement of people from their homes due to economic, social and environmental hardship.

## Youth and employment

In 2018, UNV and **UNDP** partnered with the Government of **Uganda** to implement the Uganda Graduate Volunteer Scheme, providing a bridge for young Ugandan graduates from education to work through volunteering. An online database of over 9,000 graduates allows host organizations to identify, engage and confirm placement opportunities.

In 2018, 86 UN Volunteers were mobilized in **Peru** in support of the Pan American Games. UNV, along with **UNDP** and the United Nations Office for Project Services (**UNOPS**), provided training to 40,000 games volunteers, many of them young people.

Youth unemployment continues to be a challenge in sub-Saharan Africa, with rates as high as 60 per cent in some countries. To tackle these challenges, UNV and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (**COMESA**) jointly developed the regional Youth Internship and Volunteer Programme, which will be piloted for three years in **Comoros**, **Egypt**, **Ethiopia** and **Zambia**.



National UN Volunteers on a field visit for UNHCR in Blelequin, Côte d'Ivoire. (Bertrand Gueu/UNV, 2018)

The Second Annual Forum of National Volunteer Agencies, organized by UNV and the Economic Community of West African States (**ECOWAS**), was held in **Ghana** in 2018. The forum brought together 40 partners from 14 countries as well as 14 regional volunteering bodies to explore the linkages between volunteering and employment.

## Diversity in the United Nations workforce

In 2018, UNV continued to engage persons with disabilities. The joint UNV-**UNDP** talent programme for young professionals with disabilities resulted in the deployment of UN Volunteers in **Sri Lanka** and **Ukraine**, with support from the Government of **Germany**. A guide for working with persons with disabilities was prepared and circulated to all UNDP staff, and a virtual training session supported United Nations offices in preparing for including professionals with disabilities in their teams.

## Volunteers within communities

A new UN Community Volunteer initiative was launched by UNV in 2018, with 116 community volunteers mobilized in their local areas in **Brazil**, **Colombia**, **Guatemala**, **India**, **Nigeria** and **Serbia**. In partnership with **UNDP**, UN Community Volunteers in North-East **Nigeria** contributed to socio-economic recovery by helping members of their communities access financial opportunities through village savings and loan associations. In **Serbia**, with the support of **UNDP** and the UN Refugee Agency (**UNHCR**), 30 young Roma women and men became UN Community Volunteers in government and non-governmental institutions at the local level. These volunteer assignments gave young people a chance to both tackle discrimination and acquire valuable professional experience for future employment opportunities.

## Assistance for refugees, and by refugees

In **Niger**, 10 international UN Volunteers supported **UNHCR**'s Emergency Transit Mechanism, providing much-needed translation and interpretation services to refugees evacuated from **Libya**. With ever-present commitment, UN Volunteers improved the quality of protection and assistance provided to refugees.



**UNHCR** in partnership with the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative awarded scholarships to refugees to continue post-secondary education. In 2018, 14 of these graduates became national UN Volunteers with United Nations agencies in **Ghana** and **Senegal**.

A joint UNV-**UNHCR** project to ensure the security and protection of both refugees and host communities engaged refugees trained in public health, security, education and sexual and gender-based violence as national UN Volunteers. The project mobilized 61 volunteers in **Colombia, Ghana, Kenya** and **Senegal**.

Another joint UNV-**UNHCR** initiative harnessing volunteerism in response to the refugee and migrant crisis in Europe was established in 2018. With UN Volunteers serving in **France, Hungary, Spain** and **Sweden**, the initiative leverages existing volunteer networks to assist refugee and migrant communities in a coordinated manner.

In **Bangladesh**, 19 UN Volunteers with the United Nations Population Fund (**UNFPA**), the International Organization for Migration (**IOM**) and other agencies, help to respond to the influx of Rohingya refugees. Both national and international UN Volunteers represented critical people power particularly for medical expertise as midwives, doctors and pharmacists.

## How UN Volunteers contributed to the Global Goals for Prosperity



*Figures are based on UN Volunteers' self-reporting on the contributions their assignments with UN partners make to the SDGs, choosing up to three Goals. (Source: UN Volunteer Report 2018)*



A young woman is trained to work as a UN Community Volunteer in Serbia. (UNV, 2018)

# VOLUNTEERING FOR PEOPLE

UN Volunteers provide health care and other social services to hundreds of communities worldwide. UNV is also committed – through volunteer assignments and as part of the United Nations system – to addressing all aspects of gender equality.

## Gender and development

Many UN Volunteer assignments focus on women's economic and political empowerment, the role of women in communities and the importance of involving people in their own decision-making through volunteerism. The 230 UN Volunteers who served with **UN Women** in 2018 provided support to projects centred around: women's access to economic opportunities; ending violence against women and girls and expanding their access to services; increasing women's leadership and participation in decision-making at all levels; and peace, security and humanitarian responses.

A partnership between UNV and the Kingdom of **Cambodia**, funded by the **India, Brazil and South Africa** Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (**IBSA Fund**), promotes economic opportunities for young people and women. Over 3,800 young Cambodians, half of whom are women, have been trained and are now confident players in economic fields. The project is supported by UN Volunteers from **China, India and South Korea**.

UNV has partnered with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (**UNAIDS**) in **Nepal** to prevent new HIV infections. UN Volunteers have supported Nepali youth as they take sexual and reproductive health and rights into their own hands. The youth-led social media initiative Live2LUV gives young people a platform to voice their concerns, experiences and opinions, ask questions and challenge taboos about sexual and reproductive health.

Gender Promotion Initiative (GPI) - a joint initiative between the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), **UN Women** and UNV has helped strengthen the capacity of the UN system to engage local communities in gender-responsive peacebuilding in **Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka**. UN Volunteers supported the engagement of women in national and local dialogues within existing peacebuilding initiatives and also launched a community of practice for knowledge sharing in gender-responsive peacebuilding.



*Ismael Abdou Mahamadou is a UN Volunteer supporting the World Food Programme in Maradi, Niger as Field Monitor Assistant. (Erwan Rogard/UNV, 2018)*





A UN Volunteer supports a joint UNV/IBSA Fund project on pregnancy and infant nutrition in Kampong Chhnang, Cambodia. (UNV, 2018)

## How UN Volunteers contributed to the Global Goals for People



Figures are based on UN Volunteers' self-reporting on the contributions their assignments with UN partners make to the SDGs, choosing up to three Goals. (Source: UN Volunteer Report 2018)

Partners for Prevention – a **UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women** and UNV regional joint programme for the prevention of violence against women and girls in Asia and the Pacific – helped train communities in how to prevent violence against women and girls in **Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea** and **Viet Nam**. The project highlighted the importance of volunteering, particularly the role of men in taking a zero tolerance approach to violence.

## Volunteers in support of health

In **Pakistan**, **WHO** mobilized 157 national UN Volunteers as district monitors to support measles readiness assessment campaigns, targeting 32 million children – one of the all-time largest UNV deployments with WHO.

In **Uzbekistan**, UN Volunteers assigned to a joint **UNDP, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** and **UNFPA** project trained 2,000 rural community health volunteers to enhance capacity and raise awareness about preventive health measures.

In response to the World Food Programme (**WFP**) internal emergency declaration for the Sahel in **Niger**, UNV fast-tracked the deployment of 15 national UN Volunteers, one third of them women, in July 2018.

In **India**, under the government's Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan programme, UNV supports district administrations in nurturing community volunteer infrastructure. In 2018, UN Volunteer district youth coordinators mobilized 254,128 local volunteers to support the central and state government in the areas of health, sanitation, education, nutrition, women's empowerment, child protection and digital and financial literacy.

# VOLUNTEERING FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

The 2,136 UN Volunteers who served with United Nations peacekeeping and political missions during 2018 – including 732 women – provided much-needed direct assistance to countries torn by conflict. UN Volunteers work with people to create the best possible conditions for lasting and sustainable peace – through one of the unique strengths of volunteerism – being close to communities.

## Simplifying and streamlining

UNV and the United Nations Secretariat signed a new memorandum of understanding during 2018 to standardize and simplify the deployment of UN Volunteers. This new framework governs the long-standing partnership between the United Nations Secretariat and UNV, and it helps to streamline the deployment of UN Volunteers to United Nations operations that fall under the auspices of the Secretariat.

## Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

UN Volunteers with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in **Mali (MINUSMA)** supported the first phase of the accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, integrating more than 1,400 combatants into the Malian armed forces. UNV also directly supported Mali's national volunteer scheme through a project that mobilized 171 volunteers to conduct awareness-raising activities around the role of youth in peacebuilding.



UN Volunteer Gladys Gbenedji, a civil engineer, visits an electrical station in Hamdaniya, Iraq. (Claire Thomas/UNDP Iraq)

## Electoral assistance

In 2018, **UNDP** mobilized 38 UN Volunteers in **Afghanistan** under the United Nations Electoral Support Programme. Likewise, **UNDP** in **Pakistan** mobilized 32 national UN Youth Volunteers to boost efforts around voter and civic education and youth empowerment. Meanwhile, UN Volunteers in **Papua New Guinea** began preparations to support the Bougainville independence referendum, scheduled for October 2019.

UNV and **UNDP** supported local elections in **Guinea** through the deployment of 38 national UN Volunteers, who provided technical assistance to the Independent National Electoral Commissions; assisting in the preparation of administrative and technical documents, supporting the elaboration of plans for securing the electoral process and drafting reports on local election outcomes.

## How UN Volunteers contributed to the Global Goal for Peace



Figures are based on UN Volunteers' self-reporting on the contributions their assignments with UN partners make to the SDGs, choosing up to three Goals. (Source: UN Volunteer Report 2018)

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, 76 UN Volunteers with the United Nations mission (**MONUSCO**) and **UNDP** supported elections held across 19 remote and volatile areas. UN Volunteers facilitated logistics, electoral liaison, civic education, electoral reporting and electoral operations.

## Justice and peacebuilding

In 2018, UN Volunteers with the United Nations Mission in **South Sudan** (**UNMISS**) created neutral forums to bring together conflicted parties to help build peace in Juba, Rumbek and Yambio and supported workshops empowering women and youth.

In **Guatemala**, 50 UN Volunteers were placed with **UNDP** on a unique project designed to safeguard the historic archives of the national police, in particular criminal records of violence during the military dictatorship. Appropriate archiving practices ensured that victims will have the necessary documentation to claim restoration compensation.

In **Turkey**, international UN Volunteers served with the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism (**UNMM**) to assist in cross-border operations to conduct inspections of United Nations relief consignments and monitor their crossing of the Syrian border in accordance with standard operating procedures.

In **Sri Lanka**, **UNFPA**, **UN Women** and UNV developed a joint project to empower women and young people through a greater understanding of peacebuilding issues and encouraging

participation in peacebuilding processes. The youth component of the project is directly aligned with the 2015 United Nations Security Council resolution on youth, peace and security that recognizes the positive role young people play in promoting peace and preventing violence.

### The legacy of volunteerism in Liberia

UNV became operational in the United Nations Mission in **Liberia** with its first tranche of UN Volunteer deployments back in 2003. From then until the end of the mission's mandate in March 2018, more than 1,200 UN Volunteers from more than 80 countries supported the mission in substantive, administrative and technical areas.

*Throughout the mission years, UN Volunteers have contributed to national capacity development by facilitating the transfer of skills to national staff; supporting institutional strengthening to enhance good governance; increasing civic participation; and assisting with analyses of the political environment.*

Mar Brusolla Valls,  
former UNV Programme Manager in Liberia



UN Volunteer Thakur Chapagain, from Nepal, works with local communities in Torit County, South Sudan, to promote human rights. (UNMISS)



# PARTNERSHIPS

As part of its ongoing drive to improve volunteer mobilization within the United Nations system and increase delivery towards the 2030 Agenda, UNV continued to deepen its collaboration with United Nations entities in 2018. UN Volunteers were deployed to 38 United Nations partner entities in 2018, including six new or returning partners: the **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the United Nations University**. Just as important were UNV's growing partnerships with Member States, civil society, and private sector, which shone light on the relevance of volunteerism at the local, national and global levels.

UNV and the China Young Volunteers Association signed a memorandum of understanding in October 2018 to provide opportunities for Chinese youth to serve as UN University Volunteers and to strengthen capacities in sustainable development in **China** and across Asia. Under the three-year agreement, UNV and the China Young Volunteers Association will develop a UN Youth Volunteer programme that focuses on achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNV also strengthened its long-standing partnership with Economic Community of West African States (**ECOWAS**). Through the ECOWAS Volunteers Programme, 63 Volunteers from 11 ECOWAS countries were deployed to support initiatives in the areas of education, health, project management, communication, and monitoring and evaluation.

UNV and King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (**KMUTT**) in **Thailand** signed an agreement in December 2017 to provide UN University Volunteer opportunities for KMUTT graduate students. The first three students from KMUTT joined with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (**UNIDO**) in **Cambodia**, Pulse Lab Jakarta in **Indonesia** and **UNESCO** in Thailand in 2018.

UNV and the **Russian Federation** signed a memorandum of understanding in July 2018 to bolster the participation of Russian nationals in United Nations activities as fully funded international UN Volunteers. For the first time, 18 fully funded Russian UN Volunteers were deployed to 15 countries.



Local Azerbaijani volunteers and UN Volunteers come together to support International Volunteer Day in Baku. (IVD, 2018)

## International Volunteer Day goes live on social media

During the lead-up to International Volunteer Day on 5 December, 31 United Nations agencies at the global, regional and national levels promoted the campaign on social media. The Secretary-General and the General Assembly President, and many other high-level UN officials supported the campaign through the hashtags #IVD2018 and #ResilientCommunities.



UN Volunteers at an inauguration of a centre for youth in Mali. (UNDP/2017)

UNV partnered with the Google Policy Fellowship programme and **UNDP** to support the prevention of violent extremism through policy and technology. Under this partnership, one international UN University Volunteer was recruited and deployed to UNDP in **Indonesia** for six months in early 2019.

In 2018, there was a 49 per cent increase in UN Volunteers with **UNFPA**. They have worked on: increased availability of comprehensive sexuality education; youth leadership and participation; increased availability and use of gender-responsive sexual and reproductive health services that meet human rights standards for quality of care and equity of access; advanced gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment and reproductive rights, including for the most vulnerable and marginalized women, adolescents and youth; and strengthened national policies and international development agendas.

Through the **UNICEF** Youth Advocates programme, 33 national and seven international UN Youth Volunteers aged 18 to 24 joined 27 country offices to become agents of change in UNICEF. The Youth Advocates represented a diverse group, including 29 women – one of them an 18-year-old refugee – and representatives of other marginalized groups.

## How UN Volunteers contributed to the Global Goal for Partnerships



Figures are based on UN Volunteers' self-reporting on the contributions their assignments with UN partners make to the SDGs, choosing up to three Goals. (Source: UN Volunteer Report 2018)



# STATE OF THE WORLD'S VOLUNTEERISM REPORT 2018

One of UNV's major contributions to global policy and research on volunteerism is the State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR), a triennial flagship United Nations publication since 2011. The third publication, *The Thread that Binds: Volunteerism and Community Resilience*, was launched at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2018, presenting new evidence on the role of volunteers in strengthening communities in times of crisis and beyond.

**“This work can't be measured by a financial ruler.  
We know what we are doing; we value ourselves.”**

SWVR 2018 field research participant, Myanmar

The State of the World's Volunteerism Report reflects on the role of volunteerism worldwide. For the 2018 report, UNV worked with international experts from academia, the United Nations and civil society, implementing a volunteer-led methodology to conduct research among 1,200 participants in 15 countries. Perspectives from the Bolivian Amazon to urban Athens highlighted the efforts of some of the least visible peace and development actors – local volunteers – and provided important evidence on the benefits of inclusive and citizen-led approaches to resilience building.

The SWVR 2018 provides the most comprehensive estimates to date on the scale and scope of volunteering worldwide, sourced from national statistical agencies' own data. It reveals that the efforts of volunteers globally are equivalent to a full-time workforce of 109 million individuals – more than many major global industries. Most volunteering takes place outside the auspices of any organization or association, with 70 per cent of all volunteer work being undertaken informally, person to person. Women take on the majority of volunteer work globally (57 per cent), rising to 59 per cent when only informal volunteering is taken into account.

**“People who have money in town may solve problems  
by paying money, but we solve problems by our own  
cooperation because we are not rich.”**

SWVR 2018 field research participant, Sri Lanka



SWVR researchers in Bolivia preparing consultations on volunteerism with the local community. (UNV/2018)





*International Volunteer Day and the launch of the 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report in Viet Nam. (Yoomi Jun/UNV)*

The report finds that communities across diverse contexts value volunteerism because it enables individuals to create collective strategies for dealing with economic, social and environmental risks. At the same time, the reality on the ground shows that, without the right support, formal volunteering can be exclusive and informal volunteering can be burdensome for women and marginalized groups. When local volunteers are engaged by governments and development actors merely as a readily available resource to fill systemic gaps, volunteer initiatives can reinforce inequalities within and across communities. As the range and frequency of crises rise, local volunteers increasingly need partnerships that help them to move from coping to long-term, sustainable development.

The report reveals how governments and their development partners can best nurture the unique and positive aspects of volunteerism while mitigating against its potential harms to the most vulnerable. It suggests that more equal relationships between communities and development actors along with strategic investment in volunteer leadership and the integration of volunteerism into resilience strategies set the stage for empowering those often left behind.

## SWVR 2018 launched worldwide

The global launch of SWVR 2018 took place in New York in July 2018, followed by regional presentations in Cairo, Colombo, Dakar, Harare, Moscow and Quito. Representatives from governments, the United Nations, civil society and of course volunteers themselves attended the launch and presentations. Under the theme of International Volunteer Day 2018, "Volunteers Build Resilient Communities", country-level events showcased the report's findings and kicked off new discussions on policies and practice. Events were held to share findings with United Nations entities and discuss implications for approaches to resilience building. Background papers on measurement, policy and gender analysis have been developed and are, along with the report, available on the UNV website.

## UNV key statistics 2018

During 2018

**7,201**  
**UN Volunteers**

on the ground  
were hosted by  
UN entities



in **146** countries  
of assignment

and, as  
Online  
Volunteers,  
virtually  
worldwide

**16,748**

**Online  
Volunteers**

UN Volunteers  
were from

**161**  
**countries**

**81%**  
from the Global South

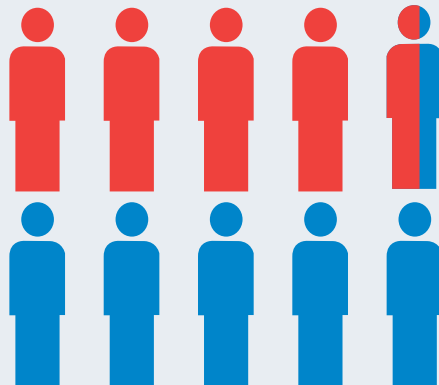


**25% UN Volunteers on-site  
were under the age of 29**

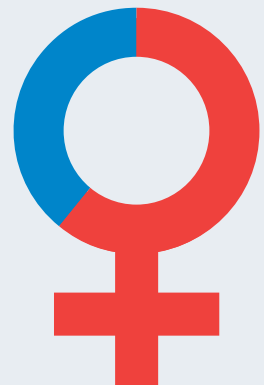
**67%** Online  
Volunteers were  
**29 years old** or under



**47%** of  
**UN Volunteers**  
on-site were  
women



**60%**  
of  
**Online  
Volunteers**  
were  
women







## *We are* inspiration in action

### **United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme**

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Twitter: [www.twitter.com/unvolunteers](https://www.twitter.com/unvolunteers)  
YouTube: [www.youtube.com/unv](https://www.youtube.com/unv)

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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