



UNV Youth Volunteering Strategy 2014-2017

Empowering Youth
through Volunteerism



UN
Volunteers

inspiration in action

About Us

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling development challenges, and it can transform the pace and nature of development. Volunteerism benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, and by purposefully creating opportunities for participation.

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UNV is administered by the United Nations
Development Programme (UNDP)



Foreword

In recent years, there has been an increasing focus within the development community on youth issues and a growing emphasis on youth participation in particular. This is in response to demographic shifts (a rapidly growing global youth population) and in recognition of both the potential (enthusiasm, creativity and energy) and the challenges (social exclusion, underemployment, poverty) that this large cohort faces.

Volunteerism has an important role to play in harnessing the potential of young people. It is an important means of supporting young people in their diversity, whilst fostering their inclusion in global peace and sustainable human development processes.

Of course, engaging young people through volunteerism has to be a two-way street: young people should benefit from their volunteering experience as much their host community. That is why, as you will read, this strategy emphasizes skills development, knowledge, and personal growth in our UN Youth Volunteers modality, while also compelling us to not only increase the quantity of volunteering opportunities available to young people globally, but also improve the quality of their volunteer experience.

With this strategy, UNV is setting our course of action with regards to youth volunteerism for the coming years. It represents more than a year's worth of effort by dozens of individuals, who convened workshops and online consultations, chaired focus groups and meetings, held hundreds of phone conversations, and revised numerous drafts to produce this version.

More than fifty organizations and individuals shared their time and expertise with UNV in the course of developing this document, including UN agencies, youth networks, NGOs, volunteer involving organizations, governments, and academic experts. Without a doubt, this document has been much enriched by their contributions and, on behalf of UNV, I would like to thank all of them for their valuable support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Richard Dictus', with a horizontal line underneath.

Richard Dictus
Executive Coordinator, UNV





In Kenya, UNV engaged youth to volunteer in an event to mark International Volunteer Day 2012 (UNV, 2012)

1. Introduction

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme youth volunteering strategy, *Empowering Youth through Volunteerism*, outlines UNV's principles and approaches to strengthening youth volunteerism for global peace and sustainable human development. It proposes specific mechanisms for UNV's engagement with youth in line with its organizational mandate and comparative advantage, and in consideration of the roles of partner organizations.

Although UNV has engaged with youth since its inception, the United Nations General Assembly specifically mandated UNV to promote and advance the role of youth in development through volunteerism (UNGA 31/131). Since then, UNV has worked with stakeholders to engage youth on a wide range of issues. UNV interventions cover: (1) the promotion and recognition of youth volunteerism as a people-centred resource for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), (2) the formation of young leaders through greater citizen participation in the form of volunteerism, and (3) the provision of technical cooperation to governments, regional entities and civil society groups to fully realize the potential of volunteerism for global peace and sustainable human development.

On 25 January 2012, the Secretary-General of the United Nations announced his Five-Year Action Agenda. It identifies youth and volunteering as a theme and priority, and explicitly calls for the "creation of a UN youth volunteers programme under the umbrella of UN Volunteers." This, together with the other youth-related actions outlined in the agenda—the establishment of a System-wide Action Plan on Youth (Youth-SWAP) and the appointment of the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth—reflects a growing effort of the United Nations to engage young people.

In response, UNV took the opportunity to engage with youth, youth-led organizations, volunteer involving organizations, governments and UN entities to analyze advances and best practices in the field of youth volunteering and to identify UNV's key action areas for the coming years. A UNDP/UNV Youth Volunteer Trust Fund was also established.

This strategy builds upon this renewed mandate for youth volunteering. It was developed as a result of research, literature reviews and analyses of youth policies and practices, as well as consultations that included online surveys and in-depth interviews with a wide range of stakeholders. A consultation workshop, held during 11-12 October 2012 in Bonn, Germany, invited representatives of United Nations entities, civil society, youth organizations and governments to share their experiences, recommendations and opinions, and these provided a substantive basis for the development of UNV's youth volunteering strategy. The strategy considers the need to strengthen the capacities of young people, implement better management of youth volunteering programmes, generate and share relevant knowledge, and improve measurement of the contribution of youth volunteerism to global peace and sustainable human development.

Member States further confirmed UNV's mandate to promote volunteerism through UN General Assembly Resolution 67/138 - *Integrating volunteering in the next decade*, adopted on 20 December 2012. In the Resolution, UNV and other relevant United Nations organizations were "...urged to promote the youth volunteer programme called for in the Five-Year Action Agenda of the Secretary-General". The Resolution further "...urged all stakeholders to promote youth volunteering, including through the programme, in cooperation with the United Nations system".

This strategy builds on agreed international strategies such as the UN World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) as well as on UNV's past experience and partnerships in working with youth.

Contents

- Section 1** outlines the introduction and background of the youth volunteering strategy.
- Section 2** provides the situation analysis, including an overview of the context of volunteerism and of youth, and an assessment of opportunities and challenges.
- Section 3** explores UNV's past experience in the area of youth volunteerism.
- Section 4** describes the areas of UNV's intervention including the principles, approaches, rationale, and outcomes which UNV is pursuing to achieve its aims.
- Section 5** highlights the implementation framework for the strategy, including partnerships and monitoring & evaluation.

"Youth are often the first to stand against injustice. Youth is a time of idealism. Young people are a force for transformation."

- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

2. Situation Analysis

A) YOUTH IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

There are more than 1.2 billion youth in the world today, the largest group of young people in history. This large cohort has incredible power and potential, yet at the same time it faces unique vulnerabilities and challenges.

Historically, young people have faced social exclusion, and the recent economic downturn has prompted high unemployment, which particularly affects the younger generation. Youth in general are disproportionately affected by extreme poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, and lack of access to education. In addition, there are limited policy interventions which address youth issues.

The United Nations defines youth as people between the ages of 15 and 24 for statistical purposes. UNV will respect national definitions of youth when partnering with Member States on local and national youth volunteering.

For the UN Youth Volunteers modality, UNV defines youth as between the ages of 18 and 29, as its knowledge, experience, operational tools and Conditions of Service are best suited to working with this age group.

In a survey conducted by the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) during July and August 2012, 13,000 young people from 186 countries identified the following challenges that hinder their participation in development:

- Limited opportunities for effective participation in decision-making processes.
- Lack of participatory structures for young people at the community and national level.
- Lack of trust between youth and government institutions and political parties.
- Lack of capacity development for youth and youth organizations.
- Lack of commitment and support toward young people.

Information and communication technology (ICT) has played a central role in the global rise in prominence of young people. In societies where ICT is used effectively for inclusive social objectives, young people are major contributors to promoting digital literacy. ICT has also empowered young people by bringing them together in response to social concerns and by connecting them across geographical, social, religious, gender, and economic barriers. In other words, youth are well-equipped to harness the power of ICT to address key development issues.

Young people are increasingly acting as the agents of change in society, calling for institutions that are more responsive not only to their needs, but to national or global concerns, and providing the energy, creative ideas and determination to drive reform.

As events like the Arab Spring have shown, young people are able and willing to contribute to societal change. However, when institutions are weak or entry points to participation in society are remote something more is needed to ensure that the contribution of young people is equitable, sustainable and mutually beneficial.

Addressing these issues and building on new opportunities will be critical to ensuring meaningful youth engagement. As WPAY has noted, youth participation is crucial to achieving full employment, social integration and sustainable social and economic development. Furthermore, young people are important actors in conflict prevention, peace-building and post-conflict processes, in the protection, preservation and improvement of the environment and in HIV/AIDS response. Without youth participation, not only are youth voices excluded, but we also risk becoming irrele-

vant ourselves as young people increasingly develop their own solutions to global challenges.

B) YOUTH AND VOLUNTEERISM

The United Nations, in GA resolution 56/38, defines volunteerism as an activity undertaken out of free will, for the general public good, and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor. UNV recognizes the shared values underpinning volunteerism in all its guises, such as solidarity, compassion, empathy and respect for others, and that these values are deeply ingrained in many communities.

Young people's approaches to volunteerism are changing and becoming more diverse. Youth are moving away from structured forms of engagement in favor of increasingly diverse forms on global and national issues through mechanisms such as social media and the Internet, public fora, and participation in local causes and public life. Whatever its specific form, there is growing recognition of the value of youth volunteering for global peace and sustainable human development, and that it represents an important way for young people to meaningfully participate in society. According to the State of the World's Volunteerism Report 2011, "healthy societies need young people who are involved with their communities. Volunteer action can be a highly effective route towards such involvement."

C) CHALLENGES TO YOUTH VOLUNTEERISM

Despite the capacity and willingness of young people to volunteer, many barriers to youth volunteering exist. These include restrictions on freedom of movement and security, economic barriers and challenges related to social exclusion and lack of access to information about volunteering and volunteering opportunities. There is also a lack of easily accessible and comprehensive tools, methodologies and guidelines for the effective and efficient management of volunteers and volunteer opportunities, and opportunities for capacity development through training, coaching and mentoring activities are limited. Finally, access to funding for youth-specific work, including volunteering, is a well-known challenge.

Marginalized youth and young women may find it particularly difficult to access volunteering opportunities due to social and economic exclusion. Few may be able to afford to engage in volunteering instead of taking up paid employment. Furthermore, for volunteers to participate fairly and equally they must be able to fully enjoy their rights and freedoms, and this is not always the case - especially with vulnerable groups and young women. Finally, volunteering opportunities themselves are often not accessible to young people with special needs.

As a result, there is a risk that certain kinds of volunteering (especially international volunteering) remain only within reach of the elite.

As such, special measures must be in place to ensure that volunteering programmes are



Youth volunteers using theatre to teach about the Millennium Development Goals in Palestine. (UNV, 2009)



UN Volunteers engage with young people involved in volunteering for peace at the end of their training on youth volunteering in the slums of Mathare, Kenya. (Tomoya Soejima, 2013)

inclusive, so that all youth, including young people with disabilities, vulnerable youth and young women, can participate in volunteering opportunities.

Other challenges to youth volunteerism that were identified during UNV workshops include:

- The supply of volunteers is not always well linked to the needs of host agencies. This is exacerbated by a lack of information about youth volunteering opportunities and access to the opportunities themselves.
- There is limited involvement of youth in programme design and implementation and this

hampers the meaningful participation of young people in decision-making that affects their engagement in the development agenda.

- Limited evidenced-based research and knowledge exists which examines the impact of youth volunteerism on peace and sustainable human development.

Additionally, advocacy for youth volunteerism should be undertaken so that it is more fully understood that:

- The benefits that youth volunteers bring to host organizations justifies the investment required.
- Youth volunteering refers to a broad range of activities that includes many valuable local community-based opportunities, in addition to those of an international nature.
- Volunteering is an activity that anyone can undertake—regardless of his or her social status, economic background, gender, or location.

D) CHANGES IN GLOBAL REALITIES THAT FOSTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASING YOUTH VOLUNTEERISM

At a global level, and within the United Nations itself, demographic, technological and institutional changes are giving rise to greater opportunities for young people to volunteer. These include:

- The current global 'youth bulge' means that the number of young people available to volunteer is unprecedented.

- Globalisation has made international travel and communications easier.
- Online volunteering is becoming more popular and youth are at the forefront.
- Young people increasingly feel that volunteerism complements formal education in teaching the skills that are required for the job market, such as leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, planning, management, creativity, communication and negotiation.
- As governments, United Nations entities and civil society organizations debate and articulate the post-2015 development agenda, there is a strong call for a bottom-up process in which young people's voices are included and youth are actively engaged in the process, and volunteering is a viable mechanism for this.
- Volunteerism contributes to all five priority areas identified in the Secretary General's Five-Year Action Agenda.

E) BENEFITS OF YOUTH VOLUNTEERISM

While volunteerism is not a panacea for all of the challenges that youth face, it contributes to societal well-being as well as to the development of young volunteers themselves:

- Volunteerism can support young people to become active leaders and citizens and serves as an important tool for engagement in society. Studies in developed and developing regions have found that former volunteers have an increased sense of connection with their communities, and feel more empowered to help and participate in community life beyond the volunteerism experience.
- Youth volunteerism elicits a sense of responsibility toward others, builds inter-generational cooperation and learning and gives young people a feeling of belonging to and respect for their community. In making a positive contribution to society young people develop better sense of self-worth and confidence, reducing negative behaviours. In turn, volunteerism fosters a better understanding of the younger generation as an asset to society.
- As studies in China and Australia have shown, volunteerism can impart hard and soft job skills, thereby increasing the employment prospects of young people. Volunteering can also introduce young people to various fields of work or study, enabling them to explore different types of occupations and helping them make informed decisions about their future.
- By widening participation, volunteerism addresses social exclusion while building a sense of ownership and community. Volunteerism also helps to bring about innovative, cross-generational and demographic solutions, and ones that are locally-appropriate and culturally-sensitive.
- Youth also bring direct benefits to their communities through volunteering. They contribute by identifying problems and finding solutions, bringing valuable insights that come from the youth perspective. In addition they often bring technological skills and innovation and serve as an inspiration and role model to others.

For more information, read:

Fulbrook, Abigail (2007) *Globalising Volunteering: VSO's experience*. Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review, Vol 4, Spring 2007, pp. 21-27.

CNCS - Office of Research and Policy Development (2008) *Still serving: Measuring the eight-year impact of AmeriCorps on Alumni*. Washington D.C.

Brook, Missingham, Hocking and Fifer (2007) *The Right Person for the Job: International Volunteering and the Australian Employment Market*. Monash University and Australian Volunteers International.

Abdallah et al. (2009) *The (un)happy planet index 2.0: Why good lives don't have to cost the earth*. London, UK:nef.



Mariana Vincani (22, left) was able to learn sewing thanks to a national UN Volunteer empowering Roma youth and families in Cërrik, in the Elbasan District, central Albania. (Fabienne Copin/UNV, 2012)

3. UNV & youth volunteerism

Over the last 40 years, UNV has been partnering with other United Nations entities, governments, and civil society partners in programmes throughout the globe (including in post-conflict environments) which engage youth as development actors. Over the last five years UNV and its partners contributed more than US\$20 million to projects and programmes to enhance youth participation in global peace and sustainable human development through volunteerism.

Since 2001, UNV, with the support of a number of partners, has provided recently-graduated students with the opportunity to volunteer with United Nations entities and NGOs in supporting the achievement of the MDGs in areas within their specialized fields of interest and study.

In 2012, nearly a thousand international and national UN Volunteers were under the age of 29. Of these, around sixty percent were female and eighty percent were from developing countries.

In collaboration with national partners, UNV has piloted innovative initiatives aimed at mobilizing large numbers of young national and regional volunteers such as the Youth for Participation programme in Bolivia, the Eco Volunteer programme in Guatemala, the Economic Community of West African States regional volunteer programme, or the National Development Volunteers in Nepal.

UNV has also harnessed ICT to make volunteering opportunities more accessible to young people. The Online Volunteering service enables volunteers to contribute their skills online to organizations working for sustainable human development. Through the service UNV has enabled tens of thousands of young people to participate, regardless of their educational, social or cultural background. In 2012 alone, nearly seven thousand online volunteers were under 29 years of age, representing over sixty percent of online volunteers that year. Of these, nearly two-thirds were from developing countries.

Over the last 10 years UNV has provided technical assistance to governments and civil society partners to help establish national volunteer schemes. In Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, China, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Peru, Senegal, and Togo, UNV supported partners to develop policy frameworks and national volunteer programmes to mobilize youth volunteers to work towards the achievement of the MDGs in the areas of education, health, environment and economic development.

National and regional partners who have benefited from UNV's technical support and capacity building expertise recognize UNV's ability to:

- **LINK VOLUNTEERS WITH DEMAND** by recruiting and matching volunteers to the needs of partners. UNV's Online Volunteering service complements this by enabling volunteers to donate their time and skills over the Internet;
- **CONVENE STAKEHOLDERS**, which allows for collaboration and coordination among different organizations that support, or could support, youth volunteerism; and
- **IMPROVE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES** to develop volunteering schemes and manage youth volunteers based on UNV's technical and methodological knowledge and experience.

This strategy is founded on the above experience and outlines UNV's intention and future direction with regard to youth volunteering.

4. Areas of intervention

The overall aim of this strategy is to facilitate the engagement of youth in global peace and sustainable human development through volunteerism, bringing the voice of youth into the development discourse and helping young people to realize their full social, economic and human potential.

The youth volunteering strategy will be implemented under UNV's Strategic Framework (2014-2017) and its programme priority areas, and the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth.

UNV believes that volunteering will help young people to gain a strong sense of civic engagement to bring about positive transformation in their communities. As such, this strategy supports youth empowerment as a means to address their own needs while contributing to global peace and sustainable human development through volunteering. This strategy is guided by the following principles and approaches:

Principles

BUILD OWNERSHIP: Give young people the space and opportunities to drive, shape and take part in volunteering, including in the design and implementation of this strategy.

FOSTER MUTUAL BENEFITS: Ensure that volunteering opportunities benefit both communities and the volunteers themselves.

ENSURE INCLUSION AND PROMOTE GENDER EQUITY: Promote diversity, strive for gender equity, and make particular effort to include young women and youth from vulnerable and marginalized populations.

WORK IN PARTNERSHIPS: Work in collaborative and innovative partnerships with United Nations entities, public, private and civil society partners.

PROMOTE AND LISTEN TO YOUTH VOICE: Bring the diversity of perspectives and experiences of young people into programme design and implementation, and facilitate the expression of youth voice on volunteerism within the UN system.

Approaches

PARTICIPATION: Establish mechanisms for involving young people in programme design, implementation, and decision-making.

SUPPORT: Respond to the expectations of youth, sustain engagement and ensure that volunteer opportunities are appropriate and responsibly managed.

EVIDENCE: Promote youth volunteering by referring to latest research and analyses of youth volunteering in programme development and design.

SYNERGY: Identify areas of synergy and potential partnerships among stakeholders in the youth and volunteering fields to ensure collaboration, cooperation and the exchange of good practices.

IMPACT: Scale-up and improve the quality of existing youth-related programmes.

With all of the above in mind, this strategy pursues three specific outcomes to achieve its aims:

Outcome 1: Increased recognition of the contribution of youth to global peace and sustainable human development through volunteerism, and inclusion of youth voices in the development discourse.

Outcome 2: Improved capacity of relevant stakeholders to support an enabling environment for regional, national and community youth volunteering for global peace and sustainable human development.

Outcome 3: Increased and diversified opportunities for young people to contribute to global peace and sustainable human development work, especially of the United Nations, through a United Nations Youth Volunteer modality.

Success will be measured by increases in the recognition of the contribution of young people to global peace and sustainable human development, in the number of quality volunteering opportunities available to young people around the world, and in greater numbers of young volunteers mobilized for global peace and sustainable human development.

The outcomes are described in more detail below.

OUTCOME 1: INCREASED RECOGNITION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF YOUTH TO GLOBAL PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM, AND INCLUSION OF YOUTH VOICES IN THE DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE.

UNV will work with partners to achieve better recognition of the value of youth volunteering in global peace and sustainable human development activities and programmes. It will promote the value of youth volunteering in general and of UN Youth Volunteers in particular. UNV will support the inclusion of youth voices in global peace and sustainable human development discourses.

More specifically UNV will:

Advocate for a space for youth voices on volunteerism: In close collaboration with the United Nations Secretary-General Envoy on Youth and other partners, UNV will undertake national, regional and global advocacy through youth networks, UN Volunteers, online volunteers and social network platforms to highlight the positive contributions of youth volunteerism and to recognize the learning and competencies gained through volunteering. In particular, it will support youth voluntary engagement in the development and implementation of the post-2015 framework and other high-level strategic processes.

UNV will advocate for a deeper and better quality of youth participation within United Nations

programmes and projects through its participation in the IANYD and the IANYD Sub-Working Group on Youth Volunteering.

UNV will support meaningful integration of youth volunteerism in the global peace and sustainable human development activities of UN entities. Further, UNV will support the establishment of mechanisms to ensure that such activities are transparent and accountable, and that they consider the best interests of young people wherever appropriate.

Promote youth volunteering: UNV will conduct awareness-raising campaigns about youth and volunteering among policy makers, political and community leaders, and the public at large, using traditional and new media. UNV will work through national committees and coordination structures as platforms to convey information about the impact of youth volunteering at national and local levels.

Build knowledge: In order to ensure that outcomes related to youth volunteering are achievable, measurable, and beneficial, it will be crucial to establish a solid base of evidence. This will expand the body of empirical evidence which currently exists regarding the challenges and benefits of youth volunteerism, and help policymakers and practitioners identify appropriate solutions. UNV will support knowledge building and sharing. This will include the development of appropriate tools and the organization of fora and online platforms. UNV will undertake and support joint research activities that demonstrate the value of youth volunteerism. Research will also generate a body of knowledge to expand the evidence-based data on youth volunteerism.

OUTCOME 2: IMPROVED CAPACITY OF RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS TO SUPPORT AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY YOUTH VOLUNTEERING FOR GLOBAL PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

UNV will support the capacity development of governments, youth-led and volunteering organizations, higher education institutions, civil society, UN agencies, and private sector entities to implement and scale-up formal and non-formal learning opportunities, create spaces and partnerships for youth engagement, establish youth volunteer schemes, formulate appropriate youth volunteering policies and manage youth volunteers in a safe and responsible manner.

UNV will engage partners who have experience in working with youth volunteers to define and promote the development of norms and good practices for the responsible and effective management of youth volunteers. This is important to ensure that volunteering experiences are safe, transparent and accountable, and that they meet standards in volunteer management, programme and activity design, ethical practices, gender equality and respect for minorities.

More specifically, UNV will:

Support the inclusion of youth volunteerism in national and United Nations development frameworks: UNV will provide tools and assistance to national and development partners to include youth engagement and participation in situation analyses and development planning processes. Where required, UNV will conduct assessments of the state of youth volunteerism to inform national assessments and analyses of human development before planning processes are finalized. In addition, UNV proposes to mainstream youth volunteering within Memoranda of Understanding between UNV and partner organizations and will assess the impact of youth volunteering in joint programming initiatives.



A local volunteer, right, speaks with young women of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility in Rangapani Village, Bangladesh. The UNDP-initiated partnership with the government, communities and NGOs empowers women through skills training and development. (Amiya Kanti Chakma, 2011)



Volunteer youth artists in Honduras address the development needs of their communities through music. (Andrew Smith, 2009)

Support the establishment and strengthening of national and regional youth volunteer schemes:

UNV will support enabling environments for youth volunteerism through the development of national and regional youth volunteering policies and structures, including legal frameworks and policies, among other mechanisms. UNV will support the creation and strengthening of youth volunteer platforms and networks, youth volunteer referral centres and youth volunteer corps that commit to promoting safe and responsible youth volunteering programmes.

Facilitate access to capacity development activities for youth-led volunteering organizations and youth volunteers:

UNV will prioritize, in close partnership with the United Nations system, support to initiatives which have youth capacity building components as well as to youth-led knowledge sharing initiatives. UNV will help youth-led volunteering

organizations to strengthen their internal governance, accountability, transparency, and programmatic focus on global issues. UNV will facilitate the inclusion of youth voice within the UN system by representing the voice of youth-led organizations within the IANYD Sub-Working Group on Youth Volunteering.

UNV will support partners' efforts to develop standards, guidelines and curricula for staff to design, manage and evaluate youth volunteering policies and programmes. Guidance materials, such as a guide on how to start youth volunteer initiatives, will be developed.

Young people's skills, especially those which contribute to their meaningful participation in policy dialogues and development programmes, will be strengthened.

OUTCOME 3: INCREASED AND DIVERSIFIED OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO GLOBAL PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT WORK, ESPECIALLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, THROUGH A UNITED NATIONS YOUTH VOLUNTEER MODALITY.

UNV will engage youth between the ages of 18 to 29 as volunteers to enable them to contribute to global peace and sustainable human development, and also enhance their own skills, expertise and civic engagement capacities under a UN Youth Volunteer modality.

More specifically, UNV will:

Establish the UN Youth Volunteer modality: The modality will recognize, address and respond to youth as a distinct and heterogeneous population group, with particular needs and capacities which stem from their formative ages. The modality will include three types of volunteers mobilized by UNV: national UN Youth Volunteers, international UN Youth Volunteers, and online youth volunteers.

These efforts will build on UNV's existing intern and university youth volunteering schemes. Diverse youth volunteering schemes such as young professionals, university-linked programmes, and short-term assignments for youth groups, will be created or enhanced to broaden the range of opportunities for volunteering. Underpinning these efforts will be a focus on gender parity, South-South and national placements, and the inclusion of marginalized youth.

The following are descriptions of possible UN Youth Volunteer assignments, in these cases addressing UNV's thematic priority areas:

- Improve access to and delivery of basic services, especially primary health care, HIV/AIDS and education. This could include operational support to institutions and groups, information and outreach to marginalized groups, and strengthening accountability and local governance by improving community participation.
- Enhance community resilience and capacities for disaster risk reduction and for the environment. This could include supporting community-based adaptation to climate change, developing volunteer-based national disaster prevention and risk reduction strategies, training emergency first responders, and developing knowledge products on sustainable livelihood initiatives.
- Contribute to peace building through enhancing conflict resolution skills among children and youth, promoting community dialogues, supporting community radio programming, and enhancing IT capacities.
- Advance the role of youth engagement in local and national economic, social and environmental progress through activities such as building the capacity of youth-led groups, developing youth and school councils, supporting youth entrepreneur initiatives, and organizing national and local volunteering schemes.

Further details are specified in the UN Youth Volunteer Modality policy note, national and international UN Youth Volunteer conditions of service, individual descriptions of assignments, and on the Online Volunteering Service website (onlinevolunteering.org).

Partner with UN entities to engage UN Youth Volunteers in appropriate assignments: UNV will especially seek strong partnerships with UN entities, sharing common agendas under the Youth-SWAP, to engage UN Youth Volunteers, preferably through group deployments, in their peace and development programming.

Enhance and expand partnerships: In support of the UN Youth Volunteer modality, UNV will enhance its partnerships with UN entities and governments, and expanded relationships with donors, foundations, private sector entities, higher education institutions, civil society organisations, volunteer involving organisations, and youth networks to develop synergies across programmes, mobilize resources, and develop and exchange knowledge.

Ensure high quality UN Youth Volunteer experiences: UNV will closely collaborate with the UN entities hosting youth volunteers to facilitate successful volunteer assignments, including supportive, properly resourced and secure environments. This includes ensuring the appropriate learning, development and well-being of volunteers. In support of this, UNV will organize regular feedback and reporting by the volunteers and host agencies on the volunteer experience and development impact. A key principle in ensuring inclusion and quality volunteer management will be strengthening programming partnerships with other youth volunteer involving organizations.

5. Implementation

This strategy will be implemented through a concrete results framework and a programme document that is linked to UNV's Strategic Framework (2014-2017) and its programme priority areas, and the Youth-SWAP.

To ensure inclusiveness, accountability and transparency, UNV will establish a global youth programme consultative group (YPCG). It will comprise members of the IANYD Sub-Working Group on Youth Volunteering, representatives from global youth organizations and regional youth networks, civil society, volunteer involving organizations, a representative from the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and government representatives. The YPCG, which will be chaired by the Chair of the UNV Youth Programme Board, will meet once a year to review programme implementation and provide strategic advice on the overall direction of the programme, including on resource mobilization and partnership building, coordination with other youth-related programmes and global advocacy.

Geographically, the programme will be implemented in at least 40 countries by 2017. The following criteria may be considered during the selection process:

- UNV has significant programmatic activities and presence in the country.
- Partner UN agencies and the government have had a strong and well-tested youth programme in the country which can be scaled-up and expanded.
- The government and United Nations Country Team have indicated an interest and desire to have a youth volunteer programme in the country.
- There is a strong youth volunteer movement and network in the country which can partner with UNV to implement the programme.

Partnerships

UNV will engage a diverse range of partners that includes: governments, foundations, private sector entities, universities, civil society organisations, volunteer involving organisations, youth networks and UN entities to develop programmatic collaborations, identify and support UN Youth Volunteer assignments, mobilize resources, and support the peace and sustainable human development achievements of UN Youth Volunteers.

UNV will explore global and regional opportunities for partnerships with United Nations entities, programmes and funds through the United Nations IANYD and inter-governmental regional entities, respectively. At the national level, the key implementation platforms for the strategy will remain United Nations common programming and planning frameworks. Here, opportunities for joint programmes will be explored with United Nations entities on the ground, in partnership with national governments and youth-led organizations.

To promote youth volunteering opportunities, UNV will actively pursue partnerships with United Nations entities interested in youth programming in the field. For the programme pilot, targeted partnerships with UNICEF, ILO, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women, and UNEP will be pursued.

Volunteer exchange opportunities will be sought and further strengthened on a South-South and North-South basis, through national projects and international volunteering opportunities, with existing and new partners—in particular from emerging economies.



On International Youth Day, national UN Volunteers and beneficiaries of the UNV supported UNDP Enhanced Public Trust, Security and Inclusion Project joined a parade coordinated by the Ministry of Culture and Sports in Guyana. (Michiru Ito, 2011)

With governments and other partners, UNV will focus on the identification and promotion of effective models for involving large numbers of youth volunteers in service delivery, advocacy for the inclusion of youth in policy formulation, violence prevention and reconciliation in post-conflict or post-crisis countries, among others.

Across all sectors, UNV will act as a convener for youth volunteerism, bringing together partners for knowledge sharing, joint research, conferences, advocacy and capacity strengthening initiatives.

Financing

To the extent possible, all existing funding streams related to youth will be integrated into the UNDP/UNV Youth Volunteer Trust Fund. Volunteers under the UN Youth Volunteer modality will be funded either through the UNDP/UNV Youth Volunteer Trust

Fund or directly through their host agency. To increase funding diversity for the programme, partnership opportunities with the private sector, foundations and emerging donors in the Global South will be pursued in support of volunteer exchange initiatives.

Monitoring and evaluation

Appropriate measurement tools will be developed in collaboration with other volunteer-sending organizations to evaluate the impact of the activities undertaken to achieve the three outcomes of this strategy.

UNV will explore existing methodologies as well as those under development to select the most suitable ones or to adapt existing ones to measure programme results and impact. For example, there are currently organizations developing youth development or participation indices, which can help generate indicators to measure programme impact. UNV will also supplement the monitoring of its activities and outcomes through benchmarking with international, regional and national youth volunteer-involving organizations.

The UNV Youth Volunteers Strategy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis through annual project reviews and reports. Undertaken in consultation with programme partners (including representatives of youth organizations) these assessments will evaluate programme results against the outputs defined in this document. A mid-term and final evaluation will assess the continued relevance of the strategy within an evolving context.



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UN entities:

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Youth networks:

ASTRA youth (Eastern Europe and Central Asia), The South-East European Youth Network (SEEYN), World Assembly of Youth (WAY), African Youth with Disability Network (AYWDN), Pan African Youth Union (PYU), African Youth Initiative on Climate Change (AYICC), African Youth Decade Alliance (AYDA), World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM), World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH / weltwaerts-Secretariat, European Youth Forum (YFJ), Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), International Falcon Movement – Socialist Educational International (IFM-SEI)

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UNV Headquarters and Field Units

Youth volunteers are renovating a school in Omdurman, Sudan as part of activities organised by Youth NGOs and UNV Sudan in anticipation of International Youth Day 2013. (Alexandros Zervos/UNV, 2013)

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