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United Nations Volunteers

United Nations Volunteers

Annual Report of the Administrator

Summary

In 2025, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) delivered powerful results in a year marked by global uncertainty. A record 17,169 United Nations Volunteers stepped up across 172 countries and territories. Their contributions strengthened the work of 59 United Nations entities, from emergency response to peace, development and human rights worldwide. This report spotlights UNV’s achievements throughout the year, aligned with the 2022–2025 Strategic Framework. It offers insights into where and how United Nations Volunteers served across the United Nations system, key performance highlights of UNV, and comprehensive statistical and financial data—available in Annexes I–V on the Executive Board website.

Elements of a decision

The Executive Board may wish to recognize UNV’s achievements in 2025 and commend all United Nations Volunteers for their dedicated service to peace, development, and human rights worldwide. The Board may also note UNV’s progress in further evolving volunteer modalities and streamlining deployment processes to enable more effective volunteer assignments, in collaboration with United Nations entities hosting United Nations Volunteers. The Executive Board may encourage Member States to support UNV’s Special Voluntary Fund and request UNDP and UNV to continue advancing system-wide efficiency gains in the deployment and management of United Nations Volunteers.

Contents

	Page
I. Highlights of results achieved in 2025	2
II. UNV’s redesigned volunteer solutions	10
III. UNV in 2026	10

Annexes (available on the Executive Board website)

- I. Performance indicators, 2025
- II. List of United Nations entities hosting United Nations Volunteers in 2025
- III. Statistical overview, 2025
- IV. Financial overview, 2025
- V. Results Matrix for the UNV Strategic Framework, 2026–2029



I. Highlights of results achieved in 2025

1. UNV closed the final year of its 2022–2025 Strategic Framework with strong momentum. Amidst rising emergency needs and a shifting development landscape, UNV remained agile and delivered for partners on the ground. The organization strengthened its duty of care, ensuring volunteers were supported in increasingly complex contexts, while continuing to adapt and innovate. Throughout the year, UNV advanced volunteerism through a system-wide offer of solutions and bold initiatives—driving community-level action for sustainable development and emergency response. This chapter highlights key achievements aligned with the Strategic Framework. A full performance breakdown—by outcome, output and indicator—is available in Annex I.

Contributing to a people-centred United Nations: The functioning of the United Nations system is supported through the engagement of empowered United Nations Volunteers.

2. In 2025, UNV delivered results at unprecedented scale, with 17,169 United Nations Volunteers from 182 nationalities. This historic surge—17 per cent higher than 2024 and more than double 2019 levels—signals not just growth, but a people-centred shift in how the United Nations system delivers impact on the ground. It also reflects the increased breadth of UNV’s partnerships and the indispensable role volunteers play across the United Nations system. Throughout the year, United Nations Volunteers supported 59 United Nations entities in 172 countries and territories.

3. In 2025, United Nations Volunteers contributed to all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Twenty-five per cent contributed to Sustainable Development Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), reflecting a high number of United Nations Volunteers in fragile development contexts. This was followed by Goal 5, gender equality (25 per cent); Goal 3, good health and well-being (20 per cent); Goal 17, partnerships for the goals (17 per cent) and Goal 10, reduced inequalities (15 per cent).

4. Implementing the strategic guidance of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for the United Nations system,¹ adopted by the United Nations General Assembly UNV contributed to strengthening collaborative actions of the United Nations development system, such as:

- (a) *Joint programmes and inter-agency initiatives.* In Tunisia, United Nations Volunteers worked with 14 United Nations entities to expand opportunities for young people in sustainable development. These youth volunteers were from over half of Tunisia’s governorates, many from disadvantaged backgrounds, including seven youth with disabilities.
- (b) Under the *Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)*, United Nations Volunteers were deployed in 16 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to help deliver joint United Nations system results in community development, emergency response, elections and governance.
- (c) Support to *United Nations conferences.* In Qatar, 82 United Nations Volunteers facilitated the Second World Summit for Social Development in collaboration with the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and national counterparts. In Viet Nam, 96 United Nations Volunteers collaborated with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and national partners for the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime.
- (d) *Joint United Nations advocacy.* United Nations Volunteers contributed to the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence, collaborating across the United Nations system to advance safer and more inclusive environments for women and girls.
 - i. Across Europe and Central Asia, over 360 United Nations Volunteers, among them persons with disabilities, organized webinars with community leaders and social media campaigns, to promote awareness of safe digital spaces.
 - ii. In Sub-Saharan Africa, over 350 United Nations Volunteers worked alongside national institutions and civil society organizations with particular attention to the urgent issue of

¹ A/RES/75/233 (2020)

digital violence against women and girls and the clear message that there can be no excuse for abuse.

5. Among bilateral partnerships with entities in the United Nations system, UNDP saw the highest number of United Nations Volunteers (6,894) deployed in 137 countries.
 - (a) In the *State of Palestine*, United Nations Volunteers assisted debris removal in the Gaza Strip, documenting rubble volumes and monitoring debris-removal mechanisms.
 - (b) In *Ukraine*, they contributed to renewable energy, environmental protection, and reconstruction.
 - (c) In *Bolivia*, they supported programmes addressing Chagas disease, malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV.
 - (d) In *Zambia*, United Nations Volunteer engineers and coordinators enabled infrastructure development by overseeing road and bridge construction and managing the Meheba and Mayukwayukwa resettlement schemes.
 - (e) In *China*, they promoted climate action and green initiatives in rural areas.
6. The second largest host entity in 2025 was the United Nations Secretariat, including peacekeeping operations and special political missions, where United Nations Volunteers were integrated as civilian personnel, providing mission support, upholding human rights, promoting access and integrating ex-combatants into society.
 - (a) The peacekeeping missions hosting 1,046 United Nations Volunteers were the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).
 - (b) In addition, 327 United Nations Volunteers served in United Nations special political missions, mainly the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVMC) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).
7. UNV support to various entities under the Secretariat was not limited to United Nations missions. Valuable contributions were made worldwide by 467 United Nations Volunteers serving with UNODC, 309 United Nations Volunteers with the United Nations Resident Coordinator Offices (UNRCOs), 273 with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 241 with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), 237 with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and 133 with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), among others:
 - (a) United Nations Volunteers in *Bosnia and Herzegovina* partnered with UNODC to design a digital property catalogue boosting transparency, accountability, and disaster-management readiness.
 - (b) In *Myanmar*, they assisted OCHA in assessing the damage caused by the 7.7 magnitude earthquake; and the post-recovery reconstruction efforts.
 - (c) In *Panama*, United Nations Volunteers with OHCHR empowered youth networks to promote human rights across Central America and the *Dominican Republic*.
8. With 2,181 United Nations Volunteers, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was the second largest host entity among agencies, funds and programmes, and third largest in the United Nations system overall. These volunteers served in 130 countries.
 - (a) In *Sudan*, the Learning for Life project in East and North Darfur expanded displaced children's access to quality early childhood education, with United Nations Volunteers contributing to UNICEF through planning, coordination, advocacy, and monitoring.
 - (b) In *Nepal*, they promoted children's rights through disability inclusion and advocacy programmes.
 - (c) In *Romania*, United Nations Volunteers helped children to get protection, schooling, and essential services, including for those arriving from Ukraine.

- (d) In *Madagascar*, they advocated for social and behaviour change in communities by designing street awareness campaigns to counter racial tensions and promote peace.
 - (e) In *Colombia*, United Nations Volunteers ran a national adolescent network and strengthened peace-related work by organizing victim data and coordination with government partners.
9. **The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** engaged 1,075 United Nations Volunteers, a 21 per cent increase compared to the previous year. The service of United Nations Volunteers boosted reproductive health programming and monitoring in 97 countries.
- (a) United Nations Volunteers in *Angola* helped disseminate health and protection messages for adolescents and youth on HIV, early pregnancy and gender-based violence, reaching over 66,000 young people aged 10–24.
 - (b) In *Burkina Faso*, United Nations Volunteers served as midwives in five different regions and offered quality maternal health services to women.
 - (c) In *India*, they worked as gender advocates for awareness on sexual reproductive health and girls' empowerment to over 40,000 people, mostly from marginalized tribal groups across more than 1,000 hard-to-reach villages.
 - (d) In *Türkiye*, through the UNFPA women-friendly cities programme, United Nations Volunteers worked in 25 cities to map and monitor gender equality initiatives at the municipal level.
10. **The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** hosted 757 United Nations Volunteers, a 22 per cent decrease from the previous year, as a result of reduced funding of specific refugee operations. These volunteers delivered on refugee protection and humanitarian action in 69 countries, many of which were affected by war and conflict.
- (a) In *Jordan*, 33 refugees served as United Nations Volunteers in Za'atari and Al Azraq camps. Working as electrical and site assistants, photographers, interpreters and playground volunteers, they strengthened camp services and helped thousands of refugees live with greater dignity and resilience.
 - (b) In *Brazil*, United Nations Volunteers supported Venezuelan refugees in Boa Vista and across the Amazon region, while also contributing to the emergency response to the Rio Grande do Sul floods, which affected 2.4 million people, including 43,000 refugees.
 - (c) In eastern *Chad*, they assisted Sudanese refugees with biometric pre-registration, urgent healthcare and relocation to refugee camps at the Tiné border.
 - (d) In *Rwanda*, they served as interpreters in the Kiziba and Mahama camps helping with translations in processes related to refugee protection, registration and resettlement.
11. In 2025, 656 United Nations Volunteers served with the **United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)** in 78 countries, a 27 per cent increase compared to the previous year.
- (a) In *Bangladesh*, United Nations Volunteers provided administrative and programme support to UN-Women to sustain operations at the Rohingya refugee camp at Cox's Bazar.
 - (b) In *Jamaica*, United Nations Volunteers enabled frontline social work assistance to survivors of family violence and strengthened gender equality advocacy.
 - (c) In *Mozambique*, they advanced young women's economic empowerment while supporting field coordination in Nampula and Zambezia, reaching over 2,600 adolescent girls and young women.
 - (d) In *Nigeria*, United Nations Volunteers promoted women's rights, advocating an end to gender-based violence and creating safer digital spaces for women and girls.
12. Advancing the mandate of the **World Health Organization (WHO)** in 73 countries, the number of United Nations Volunteers increased to 519, or by 2 per cent from 2024.

- (a) The flagship Africa Women Health Champions initiative, in partnership with the *WHO Regional Office for Africa*, continued with 46 women United Nations Volunteers promoting essential health services in 19 countries.
 - (b) In *Egypt*, United Nations Volunteers worked on WHO's epidemic intelligence and contributed to early detection, verification, assessment, and communication of health threats.
 - (c) In the *Solomon Islands*, they strengthened community awareness of malaria risks and preventive actions toward malaria elimination in vulnerable areas.
 - (d) In *Tajikistan*, they supported doctors and nurses on the proper use and benefits of assistive devices—wheelchairs, crutches, walking aids, toilet chairs, hearing aids, and reading glasses.
13. Across 59 countries, 518 United Nations Volunteers worked with the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** – a 45 per cent decrease from the previous year, mostly due to the partner agency's funding shortfalls. They formed the backbone of migrant assistance efforts.
- (a) In *Chad*, United Nations Volunteers worked alongside returning migrants providing basic emotional and practical help, including one-to-one support, reconnecting with communities, organizing group activities, and raising awareness on reintegration.
 - (b) In *Ecuador*, United Nations Volunteers monitored the registration of unaccompanied children and adolescents and evaluated recent migration registration and regularization efforts in 18 cities.
 - (c) In *Türkiye*, they conducted local research to map labour market needs, identify skills gaps, and assess spatial economic patterns affecting migrants and host communities in 19 cities.
14. Marking the commitment to food security in 57 countries, the **World Food Programme (WFP)** hosted 266 United Nations Volunteers, a 12 per cent decrease from the previous year, mostly due to a freeze in the recruitment of United Nations Volunteers in the context of the Programme's global restructuring.
- (a) In *Kenya*, they supported communities to sustain food systems through village loan associations in Isiolo and Samburu, impacting more than 10,000 people.
 - (b) In *Niger*, their activities included distributing cash and cereals to managing community gardens, goat-rearing kits, and improved cooking stoves, reaching 23,000 households across nine communes in Tahoua and Agadez.
 - (c) United Nations Volunteers in *Pakistan* monitored food assistance in the 2025 flood-affected areas of Bahawalpur and Muzaffargarh.

Expand opportunities with United Nations entities for more and diverse people to support United Nations development, peace and humanitarian efforts.

15. The number of nationalities represented among United Nations Volunteers increased to 182 from 173 prior to the start of the Strategic Framework, thus bringing UNV a step closer to enabling volunteer talent across the entire United Nations membership and eliminating the notion of “unrepresented nationalities” among United Nations Volunteers.
16. The largest numbers of United Nations Volunteers in 2025 served in sub-Saharan Africa (5,281), Latin America and the Caribbean (4,875), Asia and the Pacific (3,100), the Arab States region (2,102), Europe and Central Asia (1,506), and other countries (328).
17. Of the total number of United Nations Volunteers, 13,394 served in their countries of origin, while 3,804 served as international United Nations Volunteers in other countries. This demonstrated the commitment of United Nations partners and UNV to enhancing the capacity of local volunteer talent in peace and development worldwide, as well as to North-South and South-South cooperation.
18. The average age of United Nations Volunteers was 33, while the overall age range was from 18 to 80 years. Following the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 79/148² (Strengthening

² A/RES/79/148 (2024)

volunteerism for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, leaving no one behind), UNV reinforced its efforts to promote intergenerational and lifelong volunteering, mobilizing volunteers at all life stages.

19. In 2025, older volunteers aged 60 and above numbered 248, underscoring the continued contribution of experienced professionals bringing lifelong knowledge and expertise to United Nations operations. Younger volunteers constituted a larger cohort, with 2,712 volunteers aged 18–24, demonstrating UNV’s sustained commitment to the United Nations Youth 2030 Strategy. Youth volunteers were most active in community-based assignments (78 per cent), concentrated in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Asia and the Pacific, while older volunteers were primarily in specialist and expert roles (72 per cent), notably in sub-Saharan Africa. Older volunteers were also more prominent in UNICEF and peacekeeping missions such as UNMISS and MONUSCO, where their experience complemented youth-led community action.

20. The proportion of women United Nations Volunteers increased to 60 per cent, a one per cent rise from 2024. While the ratio points to significant progress in the representation of women among United Nations Volunteers, UNV is mindful that global averages might conceal disparities across United Nations entities. To this end, UNV continued to prioritize achieving gender parity in United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions. The ratio of women in the five missions with the largest participation of United Nations Volunteers (UNMISS, MINUSCA, MONUSCO, UNVMC and UNAMA) increased from 43 per cent prior to the start of the current Strategic Framework to over 46 per cent in 2025.

21. In 2025, UNV enabled productive assignments for 325 United Nations Volunteers with disabilities across 24 United Nations entities, a 15 per cent increase from 2024. The largest number of United Nations Volunteers with disabilities worked in UNDP, UNICEF, UNRCOs, UNFPA and UN-Women, while at country level the largest number of persons with disabilities served in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali, Peru, Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan.

22. Pursuing continuous innovation, UNV partnered with United Nations entities on the following targeted initiatives:

(a) With UNICEF on the *Youth on the Move* initiative, which enabled United Nations Volunteer opportunities for refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and migrants aged 20–32 years.

(b) Afghan women were deployed across five United Nations entities in Uzbekistan. These university students supported IOM, UN-Women, UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF in education, youth skills, community resilience, prevention of violent extremism, anti-corruption, and emergency and crisis response.

(c) Early career professionals from underrepresented regions joined UNEP as United Nations Volunteers to work on climate change, nature loss, and pollution.

(d) Through UNDP’s Digital Transformation Initiative and the *TIMBUKTOO HealthTech Hub* in Rwanda, United Nations Volunteers contributed to advancing digital transformation and communications.

(e) United Nations Volunteers with UNDP Georgia *Accelerator Lab* created interactive platforms for e-waste management and promoted sustainability.

(f) Across nine countries in Europe and Central Asia, 127 United Nations Volunteers worked with UNDP, UNODC, UNESCO, UN-Habitat, OHCHR, and UN-Women under the *Tech for Resilience* initiative to co-create open-source digital solutions for resilience, recovery, and inclusion. The digital solutions ranged from child-friendly safety applications to digital platforms for disaster preparedness and response.

Motivated, well-equipped volunteers contribute to United Nations efforts.

23. The 2024 Report of the Secretary-General on the Composition of the Secretariat³ acknowledged that United Nations Volunteers enrich the organization's workforce by contributing skills, insights and youthful perspectives, and recognized their potential as a future talent pool.

24. In 2025, 93 per cent of United Nations Volunteers reported that their assignments contributed to their personal and professional development—an increase of one percentage point from the previous year. Volunteer satisfaction also rose by one percentage point, with 90 per cent reporting a positive overall experience.

25. UNV expanded learning and development opportunities for United Nations Volunteers through 167 capacity-building activities, reaching 12,000 volunteers in 148 countries. These initiatives strengthened core competencies—including anti-racism, leadership, conflict resolution, communication, project and career management and prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. UNV also scaled coaching support, with 111 certified coaches delivering 771 one-on-one sessions to volunteers in 76 countries to enhance wellbeing and professional growth.

Online Volunteers

26. United Nations entities, Member States and civil society partners posted requests for 32,541 Online Volunteers, compared to 22,962 in 2024, pointing to the recognized role of UNV as an enabler of online volunteer talent solutions in the era of global digital transformation.

(a) Globally, over 1,000 Online Volunteers assisted a system-wide United Nations campaign marking the Organization's 80th anniversary, through digital media engagement across social media and community platforms reaching over 500,000 people monthly.

(b) Nearly 2,000 Online Volunteers were mobilized by United Nations entities across Asia and the Pacific in multiple dedicated initiatives: from China's *Movers4Climate* and *HerDigitalFuture* campaigns to Bangladesh's *FutureNation* mentoring, Myanmar's post-conflict housing support, and Pakistan's 16 Days against gender-based violence.

(c) Over 1,790 Online Volunteers were mobilized across the Europe and Central Asia region: in Kazakhstan they worked on health-related data and awareness of infectious diseases; in the Republic of Moldova they produced digital art to promote the rights of minorities and gender governance; and in Türkiye, Online Volunteers from among medical and media students supported a survey on preventing suicide and revealing the mental well-being challenges young people face in the cities affected by the 2023 earthquakes.

(d) In the State of Palestine, Online Volunteers supported local engineers by providing satellite monitoring for artificial intelligence-based debris analysis, enabling safer operations and faster clearance of key access routes.

(e) In Guatemala, Online Volunteers mapped 50,000 rural roads across 22 departments using satellite imagery and open-mapping tools.

Serving the United Nations system: UNV is a fit-for-purpose organization contributing to the efficiency gains of the United Nations system.

27. During the 2022–2025 Strategic Framework period, UNV strengthened its agility to deliver faster, efficient and partner-oriented services. The final evaluation of the 2022–2025 framework confirmed that UNV met or exceeded deployment speed targets, particularly for national United Nations Volunteers. A country presence review in 2025—responding to the encouragement of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS for a demand-driven presence⁴ strengthened field capacity and established additional multi-country field units to expand the coverage and bring the solutions closer to the United Nations country teams. These enhancements were reinforced by ongoing improvements to volunteer recruitment, deployment and an updated internal control framework. As

³ A/79/581 (2024)

⁴ DP/2025/19 (2025)

part of its digital transformation, UNV leveraged artificial intelligence and cloud-based technologies to modernize operations, improve data-driven decision-making, and strengthen cost efficiency.

28. Women represented 62 per cent of UNV staff overall, compared with 38 per cent men. Female representation was particularly strong at senior levels, with women holding the positions of the Deputy Executive Coordinator, four out of six regional managers and 64 per cent of country coordinators. Globally, UNV personnel represented 104 nationalities, with 76 per cent coming from the Global South.

United Nations partners are provided with more efficient services.

29. In 2025, the financial value of UNV activities totalled \$321.7 million, an increase of \$4.1 million, or one per cent, from \$317.5 million in 2024, as illustrated in Annex IV. While regular resources for UNV had stabilized between \$8.4 and \$9 million during the last two Strategic Framework cycles, thus forming the organization's operational bedrock, under the 2026–2029 Strategic Framework, regular resources are projected to decline by 15 per cent in line with the reduction in UNDP's core budget. In addition, UNV reviewed its cost-recovery arrangements, upholding transparency and contributing to system efficiency.

30. UNV continued to depend on the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) to unlock additional gains in the implementation of the Strategic Framework. In 2025, the Fund received contributions totalling \$5 million from 13 donors⁵. Strategic uses of the Fund included: (a) deploying United Nations Volunteers for emergency and crisis response; (b) expanding opportunities for persons with disabilities and from indigenous communities, gender advocates and boosting volunteers from unrepresented states; (c) investing in volunteer research; and (d) strengthening advocacy of the role of volunteers including, inter alia, promoting the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development in 2026.

31. In 2025, the UNV full funding programme received \$20.1 million in revenue, supporting targeted deployment of 861 United Nations Volunteers funded by Member States and academic institutions⁶.

The institutional effectiveness of UNV is enhanced.

32. UNV exceeded its deployment speed target for national United Nations Volunteers, achieving a median deployment time of 17 days in 2025, well below the 29-day benchmark in the Strategic Framework. For international United Nations Volunteers, the median deployment speed was 67 days, down from 76 days in 2024. Building on these results, in 2026, UNV will further refine workflow and automation towards achieving further efficiency gains.

Promoting volunteerism: The efforts of Member States to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are supported through volunteerism as an effective means of implementation and engaging people.

33. In its activities to promote volunteerism, UNV focuses on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as additional guidance from the Member States through United Nations General Assembly resolutions, including: on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for the development of the United Nations system,⁷ which recognizes volunteerism as a key tool for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals; and on strengthening volunteerism to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals,⁸ which encourages Member States to integrate volunteerism into national and sectoral strategies, plans and policies.

⁵ Bangladesh, China, Czechia, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Spain, Thailand, Türkiye, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology and Open Society Foundations.

⁶ Governments of China, Czechia, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Norway, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, as well as the Agency for Volunteer Service of Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region of China, the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology in India and King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi in Thailand.

⁷ A/RES/79/226 (2024)

⁸ A/RES/79/148 (2024)

Brokering of data, research, evidence and knowledge on volunteerism for the Sustainable Development Goals is enhanced.

34. UNV continued to position volunteerism as a powerful driver of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, grounded in evidence and strong policy links. Its flagship 2026 State of the World's Volunteerism Report—built through a unique South–North research collaboration with the University of Pretoria (South Africa) and the University of Northumbria (United Kingdom)—offers practical tools and measurement insights into the roles of volunteers in communities worldwide. It calls on Member States, academia, civil society and the private sector to recognize volunteerism as a strategic, measurable resource.

35. Among the studies supported by UNV linking evidence and policymaking, *The Contribution of Volunteering in Human Mobility Contexts* highlights how volunteers fill critical gaps in humanitarian assistance and protection, from gender equality and inclusion to disaster displacement and migrant integration. While *Contributions of Volunteerism in Humanitarian Action* pushes for humanitarian reform by spotlighting the important role of volunteers.

36. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNV hosted regional workshops for national statistical offices from 38 Member States on measuring volunteer work. UNV and ILO also co-published two studies: one on volunteerism among older persons—highlighting trends and policy implications for active ageing—and on informal volunteering, addressing evidence gaps through a literature review and UNV surveys in eight countries.

37. The UNV Knowledge Portal on Volunteerism remained a key repository for volunteering data, laws, policies and knowledge products. Throughout 2025, UNV collaborated with Member States, academia, civil society and volunteer-involving organizations in the preparation of knowledge products, adding 16 new studies to the portal. The portal also featured webinars and virtual discussions, and its accessibility features were enhanced for persons with disabilities.

Integration of data and evidence on volunteerism for the Sustainable Development Goals is strengthened among Member States and United Nations entities.

38. In 2025, UNV supported Member States to increase volunteering into national development plans and Voluntary National Reviews. During the year, 35 Member States presented these reviews, of which 23 acknowledged the positive impact of volunteers on the Sustainable Development Goals, 16 substantially integrated volunteer contributions in national development strategies and 10 linked volunteering to gender equality or women's empowerment.

39. UNV provided technical support to 18 United Nations country teams⁹ for the integration of volunteerism in common country assessments and sustainable development cooperation frameworks. In addition:

- (a) Twenty-one UNDP country programme document¹⁰ integrated volunteerism for the empowerment of women and inclusion of persons with disabilities; developing skills of youth; and strengthening the participation of people in public spheres.
- (b) Seven UNFPA country programme documents¹¹ integrated the contribution of midwives addressing maternal mortality and community volunteers in strengthening the sexual reproductive health of adolescents,
- (c) Five UNICEF country programme documents¹² integrated the contribution of community volunteers to promote health and develop the skills of adolescents and youth.

⁹ Armenia, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Kosovo UNSCR1244, Liberia, Mexico, North Macedonia, Panama, Somalia, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Türkiye, Uganda, Uzbekistan.

¹⁰ Armenia, Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Liberia, North Macedonia, Paraguay, Rwanda, Serbia, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Uganda, and Uzbekistan.

¹¹ Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Liberia, Paraguay, Timor-Leste, Türkiye.

¹² Belarus, Côte d'Ivoire, Indonesia, Serbia, Türkiye.

II. UNV's redesigned volunteer solutions

40. In 2024, an external evaluation of the United Nations Volunteer categories—grounded in extensive consultations with United Nations partners—identified two pivotal opportunities to enhance flexibility for United Nations entities. First, a removal of age restrictions was found to better align with the global shift toward intergenerational approaches to work. Second, the introduction of flexible work arrangements would reflect evolving workforce practices, following the enduring impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on professional engagement. In response to these recommendations, the Conditions of Service are being updated in 2026 into a modernized suite of 39 volunteer solutions, designed to meet the complexity and urgency of today's global challenges.

41. The conditions of service clarify who can volunteer with the United Nations and how they can serve, with the depth of a candidate's professional background serving as the primary qualification criterion. Volunteers aged 18 to 80 may now undertake assignments ranging from one to 48 months, across a spectrum of roles – from Community Volunteers and Associates to Specialists and Experts. This further expands flexibility through part-time assignments, short-term roles, remote engagement for both national and international volunteers, and continued task-based online volunteering. Together, these changes strengthen volunteer engagement as a more inclusive pathway for volunteers and a more agile and responsive instrument for United Nations host entities.

42. The rollout of this redesigned offer in 2026 will mark a significant shift in how the United Nations mobilizes volunteer talent. As demand has grown for rapid surge capacity, specialized expertise, support beyond the immediate locality, and more flexible forms of engagement, UNV will enable United Nations partners to deploy qualified volunteers in the right place at the right time: more swiftly, flexibly, and ensuring that expertise and availability are matched to evolving needs on the ground, when and where they are most needed to support United Nations mandate delivery.

43. UNV remains committed to systematically gathering feedback and lessons from across the United Nations system, with the intention of regularly updating the conditions of service to maintain relevance for partners and attractiveness for volunteers and prospective candidates. Future amendments will be implemented through incremental and carefully managed enhancements, ensuring rewarding assignments, and effectiveness and efficiency for United Nations partners.

III. UNV in 2026

44. With the new Strategic Framework, 2026–2029 as its compass, UNV will continue focusing on bringing volunteers into peace and development efforts and building on progress. This also includes further expanding partnerships across the United Nations system, more agile ways of working, continuing the pursuit of efficiency gains through digitalization, attention to the quality of assignments and duty of care, and stronger knowledge leadership on volunteerism for the Sustainable Development Goals.

45. UNV will continue to align volunteer roles more closely with needs on the ground, broaden participation from developing countries, engage both young and older volunteers, and support United Nations country teams to embed volunteerism in their work. Despite pressures, 2026 carries strong momentum, driven by the International Volunteer Year and the commitment of UNV staff and volunteers worldwide. The objective is unequivocal: to strengthen the human face of the United Nations by mobilizing volunteers who arrive early, stay engaged, and work closest to communities.