

SUMMER 2015

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR GLOBAL
RESEARCH ON VOLUNTEERING FOR
PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Workshop Report



BONN, GERMANY
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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The publication of the 2015 *State of the World's Volunteerism Report* by the United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV) and its demonstration of the potential impact of volunteerism on governance, peace, and development has fuelled discussions of volunteerism's role in development processes. With the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) reaching their end in 2015 and the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) coming into effect, stakeholders have recognized the need to reassess and realign research and practice with the sustainable implementation of volunteerism for peace and development.

On July 6–7, 2015, UNV, the International Forum for Volunteering in Development (Forum), and the Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis jointly held a workshop to develop a Global Research Agenda on volunteerism and its impact on peace and sustainable development for the next decade. The workshop was held at the UNV headquarters in Bonn, Germany, and was attended by 34 researchers and practitioners from various universities and social organizations. In total, representatives from 16 universities and 18 civil society or governmental organizations participated in the workshop (the complete participant list can be found in Appendix 2).



The key objective of the workshop was to develop a strategic framework to better position volunteerism as a modality for peace and development that can benefit both volunteers and the communities in which they are serve. As a result of the collaboration, the researchers and practitioners formulated a Global Research Agenda that identifies research priorities and opportunities for the next decade and the resources needed to achieve it. This will help to appeal to governments

to support enabling environments for volunteering and volunteer-related research and create a comparative knowledge base to inform future research proposals.

The two-day workshop included a combination of individual work, small group discussion, and large group discussions. In most sessions, groups were formed to facilitate conversation among the participants. The groups were mixed between sessions to ensure ongoing exchange of ideas and knowledge. At the end of each session, groups presented their findings with the help of flipcharts. A digitized version of the flipcharts can be obtained from the workshop organizers.

At the beginning of each day, UNV section Chief Amanda Mukwashi greeted participants with an introductory discussion that oriented participants to the day's activities. The workshop was facilitated by Cliff Allum from Skillshare International and Benjamin J. Lough from the School of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Director of International Service at the Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis.

This conference report aims to give a compact overview of the stages and progress made during the workshop. It reflects the ideas and thoughts participants expressed during the workshop. The draft Global Research Agenda will be published separately.

SETTING THE STAGE

The first session focused on establishing a collective idea about the current state of research on volunteering for development. Each participant was asked to share what he or she had been working on at the time and their interests related to research on volunteerism. The second part of the exercise asked participants to name challenges and issues they believe the international research community needs to address. For this exercise, participants formed five groups according to their area of expertise in three thematic areas: (1) research on individuals/volunteers, (2) research on the social impact of volunteerism, and (3) research on the organizational level of volunteerism and the effect on significant others.



Key Research Activities

The group that focused on the individual for this exercise placed emphasis on building capacity through volunteering. The group stressed that individuals gain unique skills, both professionally and on a social level, that can help the volunteers in their future careers and lives. They determined that the benefits of volunteering are, therefore, mutual: ideally the local communities profit from volunteers and at the same time the volunteer can benefit personally and professionally.

The two groups that focused on “social impact” discussed the measurement and tracking of the social power of volunteering. They considered the definition of volunteerism and the distinction of the word in comparison to reciprocal activities—social activism and unpaid labour. Both groups stressed the need for innovative research methodologies that take into account the local context, especially in the Global South. They discussed how more forms of volunteering should be taken into account when doing research. For instance, “negative volunteering,” in which the personal contact of volunteers may be prone to misuse for religious or political fundamentalism, has received limited research. The groups mentioned the positive impact of volunteering as a known key research activity. An example from Kenya was provided wherein long-term tracking showed that volunteers in education have contributed significantly to financial stability and youth employment in the local communities. Although there is undoubtedly more informal than formal volunteering across the globe, there is little research on informal volunteer practices. Finally, both groups mentioned the use of new technologies—especially mobile platforms—to enhance volunteering and its effects.

The groups that discussed the “organizational level” of research on volunteerism noted that it is important to develop an ecosystem to support volunteering. This would involve convincing researchers to work on the topic of community engagement and volunteerism, and also mobilizing seed funding to incentivize this line of research. The groups also stressed that data collection must occur at the organizational level. The groups called for more research on the motivations behind volunteering, and on new and emerging forms, such as mobile volunteering and corporate volunteering. In this regard, culturally diverse models of volunteering structures also need to be documented, as the the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies does in their Global Review.

The need for more research from the Global South that is sensitive to local contexts and realities was a common theme throughout all groups. Each group also mentioned the need for suitable measurement methodologies, indicators, and frameworks that consider the local perspective and global impact. Finally, members of each group agreed that splitting research on volunteerism into individual, social, and organizational level misses the point, as these levels are each interconnected. Research on only one level would not capture the reality of volunteerism as a whole.



Key issues and challenges

Participants noted difficulties related to language and wording used for volunteerism research. Several expressed their discomfort with the term “informal volunteering,” because its definition can be overly broad and can suggest that community-based volunteering is neither formal nor organized. Others were clear that informal volunteering

is direct volunteering, not linked to formal organizations. Participants noted that Canada has measured informal volunteering to some degree in their national surveys. It was also mentioned that to research volunteerism, especially in the Global South, universal terminology must be found so that it is understood locally. Although the concept of volunteering exists in most settings, it is not always the most commonly used or understood word.

Furthermore, a significant challenges lies in researching and documenting the social impact of volunteering and volunteers. In this regard, there is a lack of long-term research that captures impact over time. This relates to the perceived disregard of qualitative research methods. The participants stated that quantitative data is often valued over qualitative data. Moreover, the existing research is also often top-down and comes from the Global North. Participants asked whose knowledge is really mobilized when the researchers come from the North and use their own expertise and experience, rather than deferring to local models and definitions. The studies nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) complete are often not up to academic standards, and therefore lack credibility. It was also noted that more research is needed on remuneration of volunteers and the wider political economy of volunteering.

There was a general consensus that many decision makers lack awareness of the importance of volunteering for development, which commonly results in a lack of funding for research on the topic. In general, the participants thought there is not enough collaboration between the different stakeholders, including universities, NGOs, United Nations member states, and local communities. These challenges and other related issues also came up during subsequent workshop sessions.

COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

This session aimed to document the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in regard to research on volunteerism. Participants randomly assembled in five groups. Each group was equipped with a flipchart and was asked to complete a grid outlining each of these four areas. The full flipcharts can be obtained from the workshop organizers.

Strengths and weaknesses

First, the groups discussed the strengths of research on volunteering for development. As a general observation, most groups listed few items as strengths compared to the other categories. Most groups agreed that there is a trend of growing awareness of the benefits of volunteering and the discussions about it starting to take place on a higher level. That being said, participants also noted that volunteerism is not viewed as an attractive topic by many decision makers, including management and university administration.

The participants praised the good partnerships that have evolved between practitioners and academics that study volunteering. This could be one reason for the increase in innovative research methods and studies that demonstrate the impact and change that volunteerism can bring about. Participatory research provides a space for a collective voice from the communities, which has the power to bring about changes in practice and policy. Participants noted a high potential for partnerships and innovation. As a last point, participants mentioned the increasing recognition of local contexts and indigenous knowledge and practice as a great strength.



Second, each group discussed perceived weaknesses of volunteerism research. In this category, the groups had surprisingly similar outcomes. All groups agreed that lack of funding is a significant issue. Not only is the majority of resources based in the Global North, but there is also a politicization based on the agenda and biases of funders. Participants noted that government-funded research is often very programmatic and

focused on policy development. Though this can be useful, it does not always serve the research needs of communities and local stakeholders. In general, funding is insufficient. Low funding was partly blamed on volunteerism not being exciting enough to attract donor funding. Related to this issue is the lack of supportive policy that could create an enabling environment for this type of research.

The groups also agreed on the fragmented nature of the research landscape. First, there is not enough data being collected from Global Southern countries. The research that does exist on local volunteering is often old and out of date. Furthermore, there are more data on international volunteers than on national or local volunteering. Groups also mentioned that the research on volunteerism is “siloes” and that there is a separation between practitioners and researchers. This lack of integration leads to inefficiency that could be avoided. Often, volunteers and scholars conduct research from the Global South but their research is not easily accessible to the majority of the research community because of language limitations.

The problem with naming and framing key terminology in the field of volunteerism also reveals the inadequacy of research to articulate the unique value of volunteering for peace and development. One group also noted that the topic seems to have no disciplinary home and is not part of the mainstream development agenda.



Opportunities and threats

After speaking about the weaknesses of research on volunteerism, participants discussed opportunities. Many of the points mentioned as weaknesses were actually referenced again as an opportunity for volunteerism research. This indicates that in spite of the shortcomings, researchers and practitioners feel positive about being able to turn them into opportunities for growth and improvement.

Participants believed that opportunities exist through mixed method research and getting creative with data collection. For instance, using qualitative methods could help to shape quantitative research methods. There is increasingly greater collaboration between the different actors, which could play a positive role in measuring the impact of volunteerism. Additionally, the entire aid and development landscape is changing, which brings about new actors, new interests, and new funding opportunities. Universities, for instance, can function as public knowledge brokers. The private sector has also started to show interest in different forms of corporate volunteering.

Much of the untapped knowledge lies within local communities. Often local actors already have the solutions to problems. Using local volunteers as researchers would be one creative bottom-up method that would likely generate different data compared to an approach using researchers from the Global North. A greater exchange between the different actors could ensure more efficient research with better results. Greater collaboration among the different disciplines would also present an opportunity to create a broader and more inclusive body of research. Mainstreaming these silos can influence policy. Participants also believed that it was time to move beyond stereotypes and to move forward with comparative North–South research.

Another opportunity is the use of mobile technologies. For example, researchers could use smartphones to gather data. Mobile technologies can also bring the research community closer together through collective online spaces (e.g., webinars, online forums).



Timing also presents new opportunities. The forthcoming post-2015 development agenda and SDGs present many new opportunities. The SDGs target more than low-income countries, which opens up new opportunities for volunteers. Furthermore, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has adopted volunteering as a form of work. This implies that volunteering will soon be measured at the same level, and with similar attention, as other forms of work.

As for threats to research on volunteering for development, participants again mentioned funding. Securing funding is a problem and bears the danger of commodifying research and turning it into an industry that “produces” data. Organization-led research often has a bias that sees volunteers as outputs, rather than as a means to increase development. Furthermore, participants agreed that time constraints are a clear threat. Researchers are often under pressure to publish in high-impact journals, which makes it difficult to invest in long-term and quality research and analysis on volunteering. At the same time, groups mentioned the insufficient urgency to get volunteerism on everyone’s agenda.

Another threat groups discussed was that practical recommendations made by academia and institutions are often not followed through by local and national organizations in developing countries. This may be as result of the top-down nature of existing research, which can impede its implementation from the bottom up.

An additional problem arises from the lack of shared understanding of the SDGs and the nature of volunteering for development. There

is also a lack of nuance of the different types and forms of volunteering, which could deliver falsified results. Finally, the participants found the perception of volunteering as “service delivery” to be a problematic concept. They stated that this definition forgets and negates the volunteers’ roles in advocacy and activism. In general, research on volunteerism should move away from a focus on economic value to a more diversified and qualitative approach. This remains a challenge, however, because decision makers are often guided by research that relies on the presentation of quantitative data.

VISION STATEMENT

The final session of the workshop’s first day aimed to develop a vision statement that could guide the global agenda. Participants paired up to discuss the future direction for research on volunteering for development. Each participant had five minutes to report to their partner. Afterwards, each participant had one minute to think about what is most important for themselves in their vision. After that, each pair of participants used four yellow post-it notes to list key words that best describe what they hope the global research agenda can achieve. They then attached the notes to pin boards and grouped them according to meaning. The final outcome of this exercise is the word cloud (Figure 1). It represents which key words were mentioned most and represents what the workshop participants envision for the future.

The working vision statement follows:
The development of a rigorous body of global multidisciplinary knowledge to better understand and inform the practice and contributions of volunteering to sustainable development, based on the values of participation, collaboration, and partnership.



process that is able to respond to these challenges, but in ways that include diverse voices and perspectives. A proposed process for theorists interested in developing this space is to draw upon existing examples, experiences, and institutional perspectives. Drawing upon diverse examples from different actors (e.g., individual scholars, research institutions, subject associations, regional groupings), scholars can engage in multidisciplinary dialogue, critical debate, and dissemination of new knowledge with external parties. In this way, scholars can develop new synergies and co-construct projects that move conceptualization forward and respond to the questions and challenges facing volunteering for development.

Methods and measures

Contributors to the methods and measures task group suggested that genuine collaboration is needed to develop locally informed methods, tools, and processes to understand the scale, scope, and contribution of volunteering to global development goals. As theory is developed to articulate relationships between volunteer constructs, appropriate methods and clear measures are needed to test these relationships and demonstrate the distinctive contribution of volunteering to peace and development. Measuring the contributions of diverse forms of volunteering is needed to guide policies and practices that can enhance the long-term impacts among diverse program options.

Standardized survey indicators are often the most common mechanisms to generate data that appeals to governments and funders. However, because many of the current measures have been developed in Northern countries, a truly global research agenda needs to include new and innovative ways to more effectively measure volunteerism in both Northern and Southern contexts, including community-based, individual, and informal volunteering. Credible and comparable data are needed for effective advocacy and lobbying, but appropriate research methods must include a mix of quantitative and qualitative research that is locally grounded and validated.



To build a comparative knowledge base and move research beyond anecdotal evidence, greater consensus on standardized, valid, and reliable measurement tools across programs is needed. Perhaps the most visible instrument is the ILO's Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work, which was developed to provide an alternative to the standard measurement approach in the Northern context, and to make the measurement of volunteering accessible to every country. Recent experience with the implementation of the ILO Manual has underscored the critical importance of using research methods and measures that are tailored to local conditions through collaboration with community-based researchers and NGOs. Though universities and academics traditionally serve as "public knowledge brokers," developing inclusive measures will require closer collaboration among government, academia, practitioners, and civil society organizations. A combination of locally grounded quantitative and qualitative research will permit the flexible implementation of a genuinely global research agenda that uses data to inform policy and practice across diverse development contexts.

ENABLING CONDITIONS

Across different contexts, participants asserted that research is needed to understand innovative enabling environments under which volunteering for development can thrive. In some countries, practical examples of supportive policies and legislation are clear, but others lack official policies or infrastructure that support volunteering. In many circumstances, research on volunteering is not sufficiently recognized as a legitimate sector of inquiry; therefore, it is significantly underdeveloped. Comparative knowledge on the enabling conditions for community-based volunteering and other forms of volunteering in Global Southern countries is particularly lacking.

As a starting point, basic descriptive information is needed on the numbers and types of volunteers in different settings. It is not yet clear who these volunteers are, where they are located, and what they are doing. Research on volunteer ecosystems is needed across all ecological levels—from individual and organizational dynamics to macro cultural and policy forces. The collective capacity to gather this information includes the two priority areas described above—recognizing commonalities between diverse conceptions and forms of volunteering, and developing appropriate quantitative and qualitative measures and

methods. However, research needs to extend beyond these two areas. Clarity and consensus are needed on the specific elements of enabling environments that allow volunteering to thrive (e.g., political, educational, cultural, social, economic, legal). Research on some of these elements are somewhat developed, while others remain largely overlooked.

Though critical, research cannot stand alone; it is primarily a preparatory method for strengthening enabling environments for volunteering. If research is to make concrete differences, it must be motivated by policy and practice needs and must inform legislation and institutional designs. In return, governments and other stakeholders need stronger incentives to invest in research on effective ecosystems that enable volunteering.

CENTRAL RESEARCH CONTEXTS

One group focused on important research contexts that are increasingly relevant for volunteering post-2015. They noted volunteering in the Global South, community-based volunteering, new urban realities affecting volunteering, and volunteering in fragile and post-conflict environments as particularly important. In addition, the group identified a variety of themes as important areas for future global research: diversified forms of volunteering (e.g., corporate, online, e-volunteering, mobile-volunteering, faith-based volunteering), women and mainstreaming gender in volunteering research, volunteering and youth (un)employment, the role of volunteering during forced migration, and volunteering to address climate change.

Considering the social and political realities of many of these contexts, a number of challenges also need to be acknowledged. Among these, when researching vulnerable populations, investigators need to be critically aware of potential ethical issues. It can also be difficult to access local partners and engage them in genuinely mutual and reciprocal research—particularly when local research expertise and capacity are low. Finally, government restrictions or lack of alignment with donor interests can prevent researchers from investing the time needed to investigate these research priorities.



PROCESS

A final condition that emerged from the discussions was the need for an inclusive process to implement and evolve the global research agenda on volunteering for development. This conference report is only the beginning of an iterative and collaborative process to define a global research agenda. Participants suggested that an outcome document could help to focus the field's collective thinking around opportunities and next steps.

Consistent with the vision statement, a global research agenda should be inclusive and should value the advantages of participation, collaboration, and partnership. A diverse cross-section of parties needs to be identified and engaged. To ensure input from diverse stakeholders (e.g., research institutions, volunteer networks, governmental agencies, media, funders, local populations), logistical questions need to be resolved such as translation requirements, ensuring adequate time for inputs from diverse stakeholders, and a clear and transparent feedback process.

Leadership is also key to spearhead a global research agenda. Participants raised questions about which organizations are able to take the lead—ensuring that leadership is a globally representative collection of academic institutions, researchers, and practitioners across different regions. One suggestion emphasized that research networks can play a leading intellectual role in the development of a global knowledge architecture. Another suggestion proposed securing funding for a lead coordinator to move this agenda forward. Though resourcing is always an issue when organizing meetings and conferences to coordinate research agendas, participants also stressed the need to ensure Southern perspectives are represented.

MESSAGE FROM THE UNV EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR

At the end of the workshop, UNV Executive Coordinator Richard Dictus addressed the participants about the

importance of sustainable development. Volunteerism and sustainable development can work together in two ways. On one hand, volunteerism is a great way of realizing the sustainable development goals; on the other, sustainable development also presents a lot of opportunities for volunteerism to get involved. The sustainable development goals are global development goals, which means they are not only focused on developing nations. This implies that every citizen, no matter where one comes from, has to change their way of consuming. To reach this goal, people have to become advocates and spread knowledge about sustainable living. Volunteers can play a major role in this. They have the power and ability to provide a space for implementation of sustainable development in the local context. Research is very important in this regard and it is necessary to keep track of how many volunteers are involved and what kind of impact their involvement has to prove that volunteerism can make a difference. Mr. Dictus also stated that the dialogue needs to take place on the regional level and should involve a comparison of data. Sharing lessons learned is also crucial to avoid repeating mistakes. In 2020, there will be a discussion with the General Assembly and 100 countries, which represents a step to move from the regional to the global level of discussion.

Mr. Dictus also mentioned the 2015 State of the World's Volunteerism Report that illustrates the transformative capacity of volunteers. The report plays a big role in demonstrating to member states that volunteerism is effective at accelerating development and improving well-being because a successful case promotes volunteering among other governments.

Within the topic of volunteerism, there are a few things that need attention: the position of women in sustainable development, youth's role in transforming technology and innovation into sustainable progress, and the social and physical protection of volunteers. In the past, volunteers have been specifically targeted; for instance, in Syria or during the Ebola outbreak. Security has to be a primary concern and social perceptions about volunteers need to be modified. The global research agenda plays a major role, because credible evidence is essential to ensure the above.

SUMMARY AND CLOSING REMARKS

To round up the workshop, UNV Section Chief Amanda Mukwashi summarized the two days and gave closing remarks. First, she remarked that there is an iterative process before that will eventually lead to a better research practice. For this to happen, it is necessary to involve more voices from other regions.



There needs to be greater collaboration and communication between the different disciplines and institutions as well. She addressed the participants directly by saying that everyone should think about and internalize how they can contribute together with their institution or organization. The goal should be to extend the network, connect, and learn from each other. Even though funding is a problem, opportunities are there and need to be identified. Ms. Mukwashi concluded by reflecting on the useful ideas the workshop produced that need to be taken forward and implemented.

APPENDIX 1 // WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Day One

<i>Time</i>	<i>Session</i>
8:30-9:00	Registration and Coffee
9:00-9:30	Welcome Remarks and Context: Amanda Mukwashi Aligning research directions with the global development agenda and the SDGs framework. Reporting from the Washington and Nairobi workshops.
9:30-10:45	Introductions
10:45-11:00	Tea/coffee break
11:00-12:00	Setting the Stage: The state of V4D research. Round-robin sharing of participants' research. What is working and what are the challenges?
12:00-13:30	Lunch break
13:30-15:30	Collaborative Strategic Analysis: Across subfields, what are the research gains, gaps, and future opportunities in different sectors of volunteer engagement (formal, informal, national, international, corporate, technical)?
15:30-16:00	Tea/coffee break
16:00-17:00	Visioning: Based on the analysis of gaps and opportunities, where do we want the state of research on volunteering for development to be in five and ten years?

Day Two

<i>Time</i>	<i>Session</i>
8:30-9:00	Coffee
9:00-10:30	Review of Day One: Summary of tasks and visions. Reflection on messages from Day One
10:30-11:00	Tea/coffee break
11:00-12:30	Research Priorities: Participants brainstorm research priorities related to volunteering for development.
12:30-14:00	Lunch break
14:00-15:30	Categorizing and Ranking Research Priorities Among each list of priorities identified, what are the top three to five priorities that we can focus on as a group?
15:30-15:45	Tea/coffee break
15:45-16:30	Practical Application: Based on the lists of identified research priorities, what needs to happen to get there? What resources are needed: financial, human, intellectual, and otherwise? What is the role of the different stakeholders (academics, networks, organizations)?
16:30-17:00	Reflections from UNV Executive Coordinator: Richard Dictus
17:00-17:30	Summary and Closing Remarks: Amanda Mukwashi
18:00-19:00	Closing Reception

APPENDIX 2 // LIST OF PARTICIPANTS A-Z

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Amanda Mukwashi, United Nations Volunteers, Bonn, Germany

Anja Pauls, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Bonn, Germany

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Benjamin J. Lough, School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Center for Social Development, Washington University in St. Louis; Centre for Social Development in Africa Faculty of Humanities, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

Bev Russell, Social Surveys, Johannesburg, South Africa

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Colleen du Toit, Charities Aid Foundation Southern Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa

Daniela Bosioc, United Nations Volunteers, Bonn, Germany

Emmanuel Dennis Ngongo, Evidence Action, Kenya

Grace Aguilin Dalisay, University of the Philippines and Volunteer Organizations Information and Exchange Network, Manila, Philippines

Helene Perold, Director, Helene Perold & Associates, and Senior Research Associate, Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

Jacob Mati, University of the South Pacific, Kenya (currently in Fiji)

Jacqueline Butcher, Director, Centro de Investigación y Estudios sobre Sociedad Civil, CIESC at the Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico City Campus, Mexico

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Ksenija Fonovic, Associazione Promozione e Solidarietà, Rome, Italy

Mae Chao, United Nations Volunteers, Bonn, Germany

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Note takers

Eros Banaj, Intern, United Nations Volunteers, Bonn, Germany

Vera J. Seelig, Intern, United Nations Volunteers, Bonn, Germany



APPENDIX 3 // CONVENING ORGANIZATIONS

United Nations Volunteers (UNV)

The [United Nations Volunteers \(UNV\)](#) programme is the UN organization that contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for recognition of volunteers, working with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing an increasing number and diversity of volunteers, including experienced UN Volunteers, throughout the world. UNV embraces volunteerism as universal and inclusive, and recognizes volunteerism in its diversity as well as the values that sustain it: free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity. Based in Bonn, Germany, UNV is active in around 130 countries every year. UNV, with Field Units in 86 countries, is represented worldwide through the offices of the United Nations Development Programme.

International Forum for Volunteering in Development

The [International Forum for Volunteering in Development](#) (Forum) is a global network of organisations involved in volunteering for global development. Forum promotes the value of volunteering for development through policy engagement, mutual learning and by sharing innovative and good practices. Forum is the most significant global network of International Volunteer Co-operation Organisations (IVCOs). Forum exists to share information, develop good practice and enhance co-operation across the international volunteering and development sectors. It promotes the value of volunteering for development through policy engagement, mutual learning and by sharing innovative and good practices. Forum is a “virtual” network, with a global membership that includes a range of organisations involved in international development, including non-government and state organisations.

The Center for Social Development, Washington University in St. Louis

[The Center for Social Development's \(CSD's\)](#) mission is to create and study innovations in policy and practices that enable individuals and communities to contribute to the economy and society. Through innovation, research and policy development, CSD makes intellectual and applied contributions in social development theory, evidence, community projects and public policy. As one of the international leaders in research on volunteering and service, CSD's initiatives seek to understand, inform, and expand opportunities for civic service worldwide. At CSD, civic service is defined as social action that makes a difference at a local, national, or international level. The Center's research on service across the life course concentrates on community and national service, international service, and productive aging.

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