



**UN
VOLUNTEERS**

Policy Note



UN Community Volunteers

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1. Guiding Principles

The main thrust of the UN Community Volunteer category is to present one of UNV's multifaceted answers to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review *A/Res/67/226*, through which the General Assembly established key systemwide policy orientations for the development cooperation and country-level modalities of the United Nations system with a view to enhancing its coherence and efficiency, as well as the United Nations' capacity to address effectively, and in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the full range of development challenges of our time.

As per the UNV Guidance Note on the use of national UN Volunteers (paragraphs 2.1.2), UN Community Volunteers are those with strong community presence, local knowledge and networks who often live and work in their own communities and tend to have some basic education. Community UN Volunteers are not supposed to be recruited for assignment suitable for national UN Volunteer specialist posts or with educational requirements beyond secondary education.

Robust health and safety standards and compliance with the spirit of volunteerism that ensures "safe, adequate, and modest" living provisions to UN Volunteers are the main guiding principles that are enshrined in UNV's obligation for the well-being of UN Volunteers. Line responsibility for good health and safety practice begins with the supervisor, UN Host Agency, and proceeds upward through the levels of UNV volunteer management.

While contributing to improving the lives of others in the communities which they serve, UN Community Volunteers receive a volunteer living allowance, health, life, and emergency insurances and a training disbursement to facilitate their service in line with these principles. Furthermore, UN Community Volunteers can expect to gain invaluable experience and technical skills which can serve them well when re-entering workforce after volunteering.

2. Purpose

The UN Community Volunteer Policy Note provides guidance as part of an initiative to animate a redesigned UN Community Volunteer scheme that will ultimately become fully incorporated into revised Conditions of Service. The aim of the UN Community Volunteer scheme is to mobilize nationals and resident people of concern with a strong community presence, local knowledge and networks who often live and work in their own communities and tend to have attained some basic education. It would also strive to provide economic inclusion and empowerment of community members in engaging meaningfully in their local development.

This Policy Note provides basic information on the administration of UN Community Volunteers, though more detailed workflow on the management of UN Community Volunteers are located in the applicable Standard Operating Procedures documents. The purpose of this document is to establish the basic terms, conditions, methodologies and administrative arrangements for UN Community Volunteers.

3. UN Community Volunteer Category

It is proposed to establish two types of on-site UN Community Volunteers¹ :

a) UN Community Volunteers: full time

b) UN Community Volunteers (part-time)

- Part-time UN Community Volunteer service period is to be decided by the UN Host Agency though cannot be no more than 130 hours per month.
- Any changes in service period have to be communicated to UN Community Volunteers at least three days before they are implemented.
- Gender dynamics must be strictly scrutinized for part-time UN Community Volunteers as part-time arrangements may be especially attractive to young mothers, while also noting the need for gender balance.
- Flexible approach towards Code of Conduct of part-time UN Community Volunteers prohibition engaging in any outside occupation or employment, whether remunerated or not, without the approval of the UNV programme. In this connection, UN Community Volunteers shall disclose to supervisor any association with a profit-making or business activity, or outside occupation. In particular, UN Community Volunteers shall avoid any conflict of interest between private activities and their functions for the United Nations. A conflict of interest arises from the occurrence of any factor that may affect or reasonably appear to affect the ability of a UN Community Volunteer to independently and impartially discharge any official function assigned to him or her.

All UN Community Volunteers will be selected from within their communities of current residence and will not be moving from one duty station to another.

4. UN Community Volunteer Coordinator

Funds should be allocated for UN Host Agencies mobilizing large numbers of UN Community Volunteers to establish a reserve to mobilize UN Community Volunteer Coordinators at the country level who would be tasked with coordinating the recruitment, onboarding, contract management, and well-being of UN Community Volunteers as well as facilitating the UN Community Volunteer Advisory Committee, when appropriate.

Institutional Arrangements UN Community Volunteer Coordinators²

UN Community Volunteers	Community Coordinators	Specialist Coordinators
0-24	None	None
25-50	1	None
51-100	1	1
101+	Additional for every 25	1

5. Host Agency Accountability

The UN Host Agency will be accountable and responsible for the following:

- Operational issues relating to mobilization of UN Community Volunteers;
- Planned activities to be implemented by UN Community Volunteers;
- Selection criteria, establishing local recruitment methods, and recruitment; safeguards of UN Community UN Volunteers (see criteria for recruitment of UN Community Volunteers);
- Formulate an action plan or framework for the use of UN Community Volunteers in the country within the parameters of this policy;
- Facilitating mandatory learning and Code of Conduct training. When necessary formulate language appropriate learning supplements.
- Assist with onboarding and induction coordination of newly recruited UN Community Volunteers.
- Leave management of UN Community Volunteers.
- Full inclusion of UN Community Volunteers by the United Nations Security Management System (herein after the “UNSMS”) under the same terms and conditions applicable to locally recruited UN staff members⁵.

6. Universal Eligibility Criteria

Basic Eligibility Criteria for all UN Community Volunteers:

- Located in the community in which they will serve;
- Basic education: primary school through secondary, or equivalent preferred;
- Voluntary service, community engagement or work experience can be considered in lieu of any formal education;
- Technical skills: professional/trade experience desirable;
- Skills in community development preferred;
- Minimum 18 years old;
- Good communication skills; and
- Good written and spoken command of the working language required.

Additional eligibility criteria may be defined by the hosting institution and approved by UNV, ensuring they match the expectations and opportunities available at the community level. Nonetheless, the UN Community Volunteer policy seeks to identify candidates without distinction as to race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or disability. To avoid real or perceived family influence or conflict of interest, UNDP’s policy on Family Relationships applies to UN Community Volunteers to the same degree as all other UN Volunteer modalities.

7. Methodology for Establishing UN Community Volunteer VLA

VLA rates for UN Community Volunteers

The level of VLA for UN Community Volunteers will be established globally at the default rate of 40% of the applicable VLA for national UN Volunteers⁴ in the same duty station.

Part-time UN Community Volunteer will receive 50% VLA regardless of the number of hours established by the UN Host Agency within the limits established by Section 4(b).

Ad hoc rates will follow the methodology for national UN Volunteer VLA adjustments, though should not fall below 33% of the locally applicable minimum wage.

8. Recruitment

Inclusive Recruitment:

The vision of the UN Community Volunteers is in part to increase the quantity and diversity of opportunities for interested parties at the local level to volunteer as peace and development actors in furtherance of the mandates of UN entity partners.

Preference in recruitment will affirmatively promote youth, gender balance and marginalized groups in order to promote the full realization of equal volunteer opportunity through a positive recruitment effort that includes:

- Outreach of UN Volunteer opportunities are widely disseminated in order to attract as many qualified candidates as possible, with a particular focus on marginalized people, including but not limited to minority populations, socially vulnerable groups and individuals with disabilities;
- Preferences for recruitment would achieve gender parity at all levels in the recruitment process, including longlisting, shortlisting, and interviewing. In instances when assignment opportunities are externally managed by the Host Agency then deference is given to the Host Agency policy on gender parity.

While preference would be to use the same recruitment standards in selecting UN Community Volunteer candidates as other UN Volunteers are recruited in the country of assignment, due to the language and technical barriers in some duty stations Regional Offices may propose ad hoc simplified recruitment procedures to facilitate a rapid recruitment process or permit conversion of already engaged persons of concern serving under a non-UN Volunteer contractual modality to a UN Community Volunteer.

Desk reviews of UN Community Volunteers candidates are possible in lieu of interviews providing all stated criteria (qualifications, languages and years of experience) and other relevant information (nationality, family relations, past work experience and performance) have been verified and documented⁵.

9. Assignments

This policy note also will provide clarity as to the proper placement of the UN Community Volunteers. UN Community Volunteers should be under the auspices of UN projects directly or indirectly with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or community-based organisations (CBOs) and assigned to “hands-on” implementation tasks at district, village or community levels, where they are expected to live and work closely with peers and counterparts.

They are recruited from their own communities, working in their own communities and are focused on community based projects.

Fit for Purpose - The following assignments are not suitable for UN Community Volunteers:

- Assignments that do not contribute to peace and sustainable human development;
- Assignments less than one months;
- Assignments with an expectation of being longer than four years maximum;
- Assignments that are not affiliated with community focused UN project, NGO, or CBO;
- Assignments in which a UN Community Volunteer has fiduciary responsibility for the commitment of funds, approving budgets or for recruitment and procurement actions of the Host Entity;
- Assignments that duplicate the terms of reference or job description of a regular UN staff member and/or youth or regular UN Volunteer specialists;
- Assignments with educational requirements beyond secondary level education, or equivalent;
- Assignments that fall outside of the United Nations Security Management System;
- Assignments that provide no opportunity for personal development.

The selection, recruitment and administration of UN Community Volunteers is decentralized to the UNV Field Unit, and respective Regional Offices.

The receiving UN host entity, NGO or CBO shall create a working environment conducive to UN Community Volunteers’ substantive learning and professional development, and shall:

- Ensure that a UN Community Volunteer’s assignment is sufficiently community oriented and compliant with the values of volunteerism, sustainable peace and development, and the principles of the United Nations;
- Prepare DOAs describing the tasks of the UN Community Volunteer; and provide guidance and constructive feedback to the UN Community Volunteer regarding his/her performance.

10. UN Community Volunteer Conditions of Service⁶

The current Conditions of Service for national UN Volunteers⁷ will apply to UN Community Volunteers as an interim measure until a full review of the national Conditions of Service is undertaken, with the following few modifications.

Age Limits

UN Community Volunteers have to be at least 18 years of age.

Community Member Eligibility

The UN Community Volunteers scheme seeks to empower individuals and groups of people by providing them with the tools and skills they need to effect change in their own communities. These skills often assist in building capacity through the formation of large social groups working for a common agenda. To ensure the broadest level of participation from all aspects of the community of concern the eligibility criteria for UN Community Volunteers is not determinative based on the nationality, status, or official domicile of the individual but instead their membership⁸ within the community of the duty station.

Practitioners recruiting UN Community Volunteers must therefore be cognisant of the varying administrative statuses of the individuals and work within the context of larger social institutions in coordination with the UNCVAC and UNV HQ.

Travel

UN Community Volunteers are expected to be locally-recruited and work within their community, they are therefore not expected to travel to the duty station.

Settling-In-Grant

As UN Community Volunteers will be locally recruited and not relocated they are not eligible for a Settling-In-Grant.

Medical Clearance

An entry medical examination is generally required for all UN Volunteer assignments. However, considering the bureaucratic impediments this can sometimes cause in expediting recruitment, the requirement of a full medical examination may be waived in favour of a satisfactory medical certificate from a qualified member of the medical profession or through completion of a self-certification form that will be kept on file in case issues of medical liability arise.

Learning & Training

The Host Agency should provide all UN Community Volunteers with pre-deployment induction modules as well as included in any Host Agency trainings. Learning & Training Leave may be taken for such purposes.

Due to poor internet connectivity issues and exigencies of service some UN Community Volunteers may not be able to access or complete some or all of the UNV mandatory online trainings. In those circumstances, the reasons should be documented and, when requested, waived at the behest of the UN Host Agency in consultation with UNV Regional Offices. Nonetheless, UN Host Agencies should make all reasonable effort to ensure that UN Community Volunteers are provided access to those trainings, when possible, and in cases when that is not possible that the similar information, especially those concerning ethics and code of conduct issues, is provided in a format that is clearly understood by all serving UN Community Volunteers.

Depending on the learning opportunities arranged with the Host Agency, UN Community Volunteers should receive a group learning that incorporates either UNV provided content or Host Agency organized substantive topics. In addition, any group learning opportunities organized by the Field Unit should strive to include UN Community Volunteers.

In cases where a group learning is not foreseen then a one-time, unconditional payment for learning, will be paid at the beginning of their assignment.

Resettlement Allowance

UN Community Volunteers are locally recruited and thus should not require reintegration back into their locales upon completion of their service. Therefore, there is no entitlement to a Resettlement Allowance.

Duration Period

UN Community Volunteers assignments can be from a minimum of one-month duration but in no case can exceed four years. Service periods as a UN Community Volunteer do not count towards maximum duration periods for other UN Volunteer modalities.

Termination & Resignation

The UN Community Volunteer contract can be terminated by either the Host Entity or the UN Community Volunteer for any legitimate reason upon giving two weeks' notice in writing. The notice period is a minimum. Resignation effective on a specific date can be declared at any time prior to the start of the notice period. This would apply equally to part-time UN Community Volunteers.

In cases where no or insufficient notice of resignation is provided by the UN Community Volunteer the number of deficient days is considered as unauthorized absence from service and may be noted in the personnel file for future reference.

UNV reserves the right to waive all or part of the notice period in consultation with the UN Community Volunteer based on justifiable and mutually agreeable grounds.

Family Status

UN Community Volunteers will be designated as single status, regardless of the actual civil status of the person, and therefore does not carry any family-related benefits unless otherwise agreed upon between UNV and the Host Entity. Neither the Host Entity nor UNV assume any responsibility for any dependents, regardless of whether the UN Community Volunteer is married or accompanied by his/her dependents.

1 UN Community Volunteers qualifying under the eligibility criteria set forth in the Refugee UN Volunteer Conditions of Service may have a specific designation under the applicable policy guidelines. UN Community Volunteers assigned to H-Duty Stations would fall under the scope of this Policy Note as differentiated from international UN Volunteers. Online UN Community Volunteers could be an established sub-category that would have differing eligibility criteria and policy arrangements.

2 UN Community Volunteer Coordinator role is a binding requirement imposed on the UN Host Entity. The UN Community Volunteer Coordinator could be recruited as a UN Community Volunteer or a national UN Volunteer Specialist based on the above recommended formula of the number of UN Community Volunteers in a particular country while factoring into consideration the capacity of the UNV field presence, complexity of the operations involved, length of contracts, and availability of funds.

3 UN Community Volunteers should be fully incorporated into the security planning, management, and implementation arrangements for the area of the country operation/field presence under the responsibility of the UN Host Agency and under the overall authority of the Designated Official (DO). Any deviations from UNSMS guidelines must be approved by the DO.

4 UN Community Volunteers assigned to H-Duty Stations would reference the VLA rate for international UN Volunteers in calculating the 40% base differential. UN Community Volunteer assigned to H-Duty Stations may have differing rates established by UNV Headquarters that takes into account comparable national service scheme(s) as well as minimum wages.

5 Simple desk review and interview forms will be provided for hiring managers to confirm that they have met minimum standards of recruitment that include objectivity in process, compliance with the DOA qualification requirements, conformity with non-discrimination policies, and an affirmative outreach for achieving gender parity and inclusion of marginalised community populations.

6 UN Community Volunteers serving within specific UNV Service Lines may be guided by separate rules established under the particularities of those initiatives.

7 When applicable due to eligibility criteria the Refugee UN Volunteer Conditions of Service will be the controlling document.

8 Physical presence test in determining community eligibility within the jurisdiction of the duty station.



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