



**VOLONTAIRES  
AU SAHEL**

*Pour un futur inclusif*

# POSITION PAPER

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## The contribution of volunteerism to peace and development in G5 Sahel countries

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# Acknowledgements

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# Preface



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In his speech at the high-level meeting on Mali and the Sahel in September 2019, the United Nations Secretary General, Mr. António Guterres, stressed that the time has come for an urgent mobilization to help the countries and peoples of the Sahel. He said precisely that: "The Sahel needs the unity and commitment of all. Many tools and mechanisms are currently in place. All of them are complementary and deserve to be supported and valued."

This is true for volunteers and this position paper provides visibility and readability of how volunteerism is effectively contributing to peace and development in the Sahel. It presents an overview of volunteerism in the Sahel, analyzes its contribution to peace and development, particularly in relation to the Sahel Development Strategy and Agenda 2030 and 2063. On the basis of the cases presented and the lessons learned, it finally makes recommendations on the levers that could allow the contribution of volunteering to be more important and to bring more impact. We are aware that the Sahel region faces many challenges. From displacement/migration issues to security concerns, from underemployment to climate change, there is much to be done.

We just want to stress that volunteerism is an important part of any strategy that focuses on goals such as poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, education, empowerment of girls and young

people, climate change, disaster risk reduction, social integration, etc. Indeed, we believe that volunteering is an effective way of ensuring that no one is left behind and that it should therefore have a privileged place in the various responses on the Sahel. Finally, volunteering is a privileged tool for strengthening cohesion and social ties between various stakeholders through social dialogue and outreach work. All these aspects are therefore highlighted in the pages you are about to read.

This paper is the culmination of long months of work and reflection that have taken shape around an excellent collaboration between the United Nations Volunteers Programme, the United Nations African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) and l' Organisation Internationale de Francophonie. Other partners have also been on our side. We would like to thank, in particular, the Government of Burkina Faso, which facilitated the organization of the Round Table that finalized these reflections. Finally, our thanks go to each partner, each participant and to the many hands that helped us to achieve this result.

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# Call to action for volunteerism in the Sahel

The proceedings and discussions on volunteering in the Sahel provided the opportunity to some 60 volunteer actors in the region to make concrete proposals which are condensed in this call to action for volunteerism in the Sahel.

## TO SAHEL MEMBER STATES

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- Putting volunteerism at the heart of youth strategies in areas where it is not yet the case, with a view to strengthening civic awareness in favour of peace and living together.
- Include national volunteering in the implementation of projects/programmes supported by technical and financial partners.
- Enhance the value of volunteering in order to make it an asset for post-volunteerism. For example: define terms and conditions for the recognition of voluntary commitment, encourage former volunteers in terms of access to employment or access to tools for young people, enhance the value of the skills acquired through voluntary commitment within the framework of training programmes, etc.
- Increase budgetary resources to better fund volunteering (increase appropriations for volunteering).
- Avoid volunteering becoming a miracle cure for all ills, such as high youth unemployment rates.
- Preventing the State abdicating its role as duty holder vis-à-vis right holders.
- Establish and promote new and existing technical cooperation with countries that already have experiences and political regulations in place.
- Promote volunteering as a cross-cutting issue and link volunteering with other sectors such as national security, infrastructure projects, agriculture, education, the judiciary, etc.
- Promote robust and holistic capacity building activities for all levels of society, engage and support training coordination institutes.

## TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

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- Design coherent and meaningful mission contents that will strengthen the action of volunteers.
- Include a budget line in the local budget for the promotion of volunteerism and mobilization of volunteers.

## TO NATIONAL VOLUNTEERING AGENCIES

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- Build capacity to manage the growing number of volunteers (reorganize, recruit, streamline).
- Improve awareness of volunteering both among the public concerned and among decision-makers in associations and the general public.
- Better support volunteers throughout their mission through a mentoring function.
- Promote the capitalization of skills acquired by volunteers.
- Ensure social protection for volunteers.

## TO CIVIL SOCIETY

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- Promote volunteering in order to create a desire for commitment among young people.
- Design coherent and meaningful contents for volunteer missions

## TO TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES

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- Reviving and encouraging traditional forms of volunteering

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# Introduction

## The Sahel and its major challenges

There are a variety of definitions of the Sahel region none of which is completely consensual. For some geographers and naturalists, for example, the Sahel is defined essentially on the basis of climatic elements and is considered as the space of transition between the Sahara and the Sudan zone. Other specialists define it as "an eco-climatic zone that crosses the whole of Middle Africa, north of the Equator, between the desert proper, i.e. the Sahara, and the Sudan-type savannah".

In this work, we will adopt a definition of the Sahel that is common to most of the technical and financial partners working in the region and that can be found in the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, which defines the Sahel as "a vast semi-arid region of Africa separating the Sahara Desert in the north and the tropical savannahs in the south ». This definition limits the number of countries concerned to 10: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, The Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Chad.

In February 2014, five of these countries undertook to set up an institutional framework for the coordination and monitoring of regional cooperation on development and security policies known as the G5 Sahel: Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad. These 05 countries constitute the framework for our analysis in this document.

In view of the demographic and ecological considerations of these countries, it is clear that the Sahel is, above all, a region of opportunities both in terms of the strength of its people and the richness of its soil and subsoil. It is also a culturally wealthy region with a diversity of peoples, languages and socio-cultural practices. The Sahel is also a region confronted fraught with major difficulties and challenges that can be grouped into three main categories: Climate issues, Demographic and Migration issues and Security issues.

## Climate issues

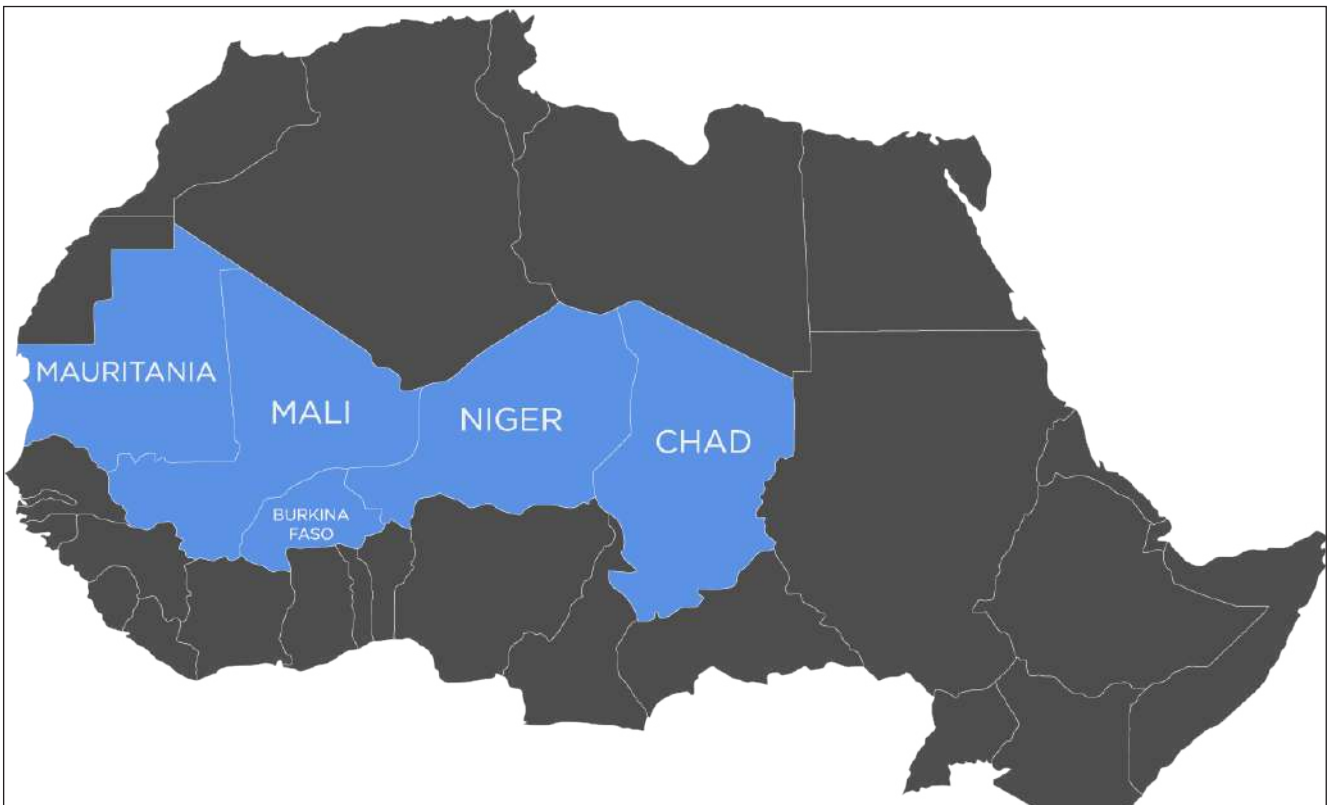
The 2014 UN HABITAT report on the state of Africa's cities clearly shows that in the Sahel, the rapid and large-scale progress of the desert, due to the declining rainfall pattern, threatens the northern fringe of the entire sub-region. Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal are grappling with these environmental and meteorological changes in the Sahel. This southward progression of the Sahelian desert is changing the vegetation over time. Northern Mali is thus faced with an uncertain rainfall pattern and frequent droughts, while the effects of climate change have increased the vulnerability of the Niger River loops (the "Inner Delta" or Macina) in Mali. Ecosystem degradation now threatens traditional livelihoods and their sustainability.

Transhumance, which is more than just an activity, a way of life, is also affected by climate change. The scarcity of resources increases the number of conflicts between transhumant and sedentary people. The consequences in terms of the desert encroachment and the intensification of food-insecure areas are increasingly visible.

Thus, in terms of desert encroachment, West and Central Africa suffers from desertification, which is progressing at a rate of 200 to 250 kilometres per century. This desertification is accompanied by a progressive degradation of the natural environment and is reflected in population movements towards the south and north, particularly towards Europe through Libya.

The recurrence of food crises has become very high in recent years (2005, 2008, 2010 and 2012). The latest food and nutrition crisis (2012) was severe, affecting nearly 18 million people and exposing one million children to high nutritional risks.

In 2016, the number of food-insecure people across the Sahel was estimated at 23.6 million (one in six). Of these, 6 million were in need of emergency food assistance and 5.9 million children under 5 years of age were at risk of severe malnutrition.



Graphique 1 : Carte des pays du G5 Sahel

## Demographic and migration issues

Countries of the Sahel cover just over 7 million square kilometres and are home to nearly 135 million people . Some of the largest countries with a significant proportion of desert (Mali and Niger) have low population densities, with less than 20 people per square kilometre. . In 2013, they ranged from 2.5 or 2.6 per cent (Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Sudan), to more than 3 per cent per year in the other countries and even 3.6 and 3.8 per cent per year in Chad and Niger .

Here again, the consequences are increasingly visible and include: pressure on resources, particularly water; difficulties in terms of food security and more generally on employment and economic security; pressure on services, particularly health services; the growing mismatch between supply and demand; uncontrolled urbanization and environmental impacts. In addition to this demographic issue, the migration issue is also a major concern. Indeed, with the economic crisis and the multiplication of situations of conflict or "conflict/human rights/economy" interaction in Africa, multiple forms of population displacement have increased in recent years at a time when Europe is closing its doors.

In Mali, the return of refugees and IDPs will continue to stagnate as long as the violence in the north of the country continues. More than 150,000 Malian refugees are still in Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso and there are more than 100,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) . Since January 2019, more than 87,000 people have been displaced in central and northern Mali (departure and reception areas), 71,000 more than in the same period in 2018, according to figures recorded by the Rapid Response Mechanisms (RRMs) in Mali.

The Mopti region (departure and reception area) alone has registered more than 15,000 IDPs due to the resurgence of inter-community conflicts since the beginning of the year. Military operations south-west of Ménaka have also partly caused the displacement of more than 10,000 people since January 2009 .

This shows the extent to which political turbulence induces population movement dynamics in a sub-region where mobility has always been one of the key mechanisms for risk management. These movements quickly took the roads to Europe, through areas that had long been poorly protected, such as the coasts of Morocco and the Strait of Gibraltar.

## Security issues

The Sahel has been facing a major security crisis in recent years with armed gang rebellions, jihadist insurgencies, coups d'état, and illicit trafficking in drugs, arms and migrants.

There are many terrorist groups in the region, such as AQIM (Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb), MUJAO (Movement of Unity for Jihad in West Africa), Boko Haram and Ansar Dine. Their influence is significant because of their capacity to be extremely mobile due to the absence of clear borders between States. The activities of these actors can be divided into several groups.

Let's start with the terrorist action. Indeed, numerous actions have been claimed by AQIM or other terrorist groups in recent times, particularly with regard to hostage-taking (e.g. in Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso).

Intrinsic links are forged between terrorist groups and organized crime networks that collaborate to make their business flourish. These networks develop through the complicity or participation of local actors, who profit from these illicit trafficking operations. These drug traffickers also have connections with jihadist groups, which have full or partial control over certain cross-border routes.

Trafficking and terrorism are not the only security concerns in the Sahelian region. The Malian conflict has considerably destabilized the area. Inter-communal conflicts have also intensified under the influence of terrorist movements, giving rise to numerous watch, self-defense and militia groups.

## Volunteerism in the responses to the crises in the Sahel

The various examples presented show that the situation in the Sahelian region is of great concern. Human development in the region is among the lowest in the world.

However, several solutions are already being introduced to address these issues. These include bilateral and multilateral initiatives by international organizations, States and governments, development partners and civil society. One of them is the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (SINUS).

In addition to these efforts, hundreds of volunteer structures are involved, mobilizing the commitment of several social strata in favour of the well-being of the populations of the Sahel.

What specific role does volunteerism play in the region? How does it impact peace and development? How is it structured? How can it be repositioned so that it has greater added value? This paper attempts to answer all these questions. To this end, between September and October 2019, the United Nations Volunteers

(UNV) Programme, in partnership with the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) and the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), conducted a study on volunteerism in the five countries of the G5 Sahel for the period 2014 to 2018. The purpose of the study was to use the results to position volunteerism as an asset and catalyst for achieving the SDGs based on the experiences and achievements of volunteer organizations and volunteers in the sub-region. The study provides information on the types of volunteering in the Sahel, the evolution of political will on volunteering issues, some indicative figures on volunteering and the offers and modalities of volunteering in the Sahel. A Round Table conference on Volunteerism in the Sahel was then organized in November 2019 to review and enrich the results of this study.

This position paper is based on the outcomes of these two major activities and draws on the available literature on volunteering in the Sahel. It provides a clear response to the perception of citizen engagement. A rich potential that can be more fully exploited.



# Volunteerism in the Sahel : Key characteristics

Most countries in the world have their own concept of volunteering, translatly rooted in their history and traditions and largely based on their cultural values. As Margaret Mead points out, "everything that embodies our deepest commitment to the way human life is to be lived and cared for depends on some form of volunteerism". Consequently, the concept of volunteerism varies from country to country. The understanding of volunteerism referred to in this paper is based on resolution

56/38 of 5 December 2001, which states that the terms 'volunteerism' and 'voluntary activity' refer to "a wide range of activities, including traditional forms of mutual assistance and self-help, the provision of services and other forms of civic participation, undertaken freely, for the public good and for which monetary remuneration is not the primary motivation".

## Various forms of commitment

Our work has identified four main forms of volunteering that coexist in the G5 Sahel space.

### Traditional volunteering:

It is a form of volunteering, mostly informal and can be described as positive reciprocity. This type of volunteering is usually expressed within small communities, as immediate solidarity/support to individuals or the community. It goes beyond material benefit to others to ensure the production of social and symbolic values. One of the most recognized values is social cohesion, although this value has been under severe strain in recent times with terrorism and inter/intra-community conflicts in all five countries. Traditional volunteerism can become a means of mobilizing leaders and community members in the design and implementation of development activities.

### National Non-State Volunteerism:

This is formal volunteering, by non-state actors, usually implemented by civil society organizations (CSOs). It revolves around initiatives to engage in volunteer/volunteer assignments. These missions are of varying quality which often depends on the maturity of the organizations and the tools at their disposal.

### National volunteering schemes:

National volunteering schemes managed by the State in the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger). All three countries have laws governing volunteerism. All national volunteer programmes aim to address the challenges of poverty alleviation and youth unemployment. In addition to these formal national schemes, there are also schemes set up by State deconcentrations (ministries, local authorities, etc.).

### International volunteering:

It involves international organizations, on the one hand, within the framework of bilateral or multilateral support. Some national and international organizations outside this support are also involved in this form of volunteering; these include the AIESEC Association which is present in the five countries and mobilizes or deploys international volunteers. There is also another form of international volunteering based on South-South exchanges or reciprocity. For example, the agencies of Burkina Faso and Niger signed an agreement at the end of 2019 to have each country send its volunteers to the other. This is also the case in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, which have signed an agreement with France Volontaires to send and receive volunteers reciprocally.

The State of the World's Volunteerism Report indicates that on the continent only 13.1% of the voluntary engagement concerns structured forms of volunteering against 86.9% for unstructured (rational) forms.



Graphique 2 : Les types de volontariat au G5 Sahel

## A strengthened political and regulatory environment

Until 2001 was proclaimed as the International Year of Volunteering (IYV), volunteering in the five Sahelian countries was limited to traditional volunteer organizations, national and international civil society organizations working in the field of volunteering.

Since then, a remarkable development has been the establishment of national volunteer programmes with technical and financial support from government partners.

### Effective government structures for volunteerism:

In the five G5 Sahel countries national volunteer programmes started with a pilot phase before becoming entities with different legal forms: Agency (Niger), EPA (Mali) and Public Interest Grouping (Burkina Faso). These national volunteer organizations are pioneers in Africa and countries such as Burundi, Cameroon, Madagascar, Senegal have visited one or more of these countries to learn from their experiences.

In 2014, Chad tried an original approach by mandating a national NGO (Comité de Développement du Volontariat au Tchad/CDVT) to implement the pilot phase of its national volunteer programme, called "Programme National de MaVolontariat du Tchad (PNVT)". Unfortunately, this experience was not sufficiently conclusive

and the State now intends to set up a purely State-run structure. The draft law on volunteerism had just been adopted by the Council of Ministers in October 2019. Mauritania's national volunteer programme, approved and launched in 2012/1, has existed for a long period of time with no significant expansion of its activities. Activities resumed in 2016, with UNDP support, and 35 volunteers were deployed. In addition to this programme, the Government of Mauritania, in place since August 2019, took up the issue of volunteerism with the launch of the 'Watanona' programme, which means 'Our Nation', on 25 November 2019.

### Functional regulatory frameworks:

To sum up, we can say that three of the five countries have laws on volunteering. These are Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali. These laws provide a legal framework for the concept of volunteering and clarify duties and obligations for volunteers. They also clearly define what kind of commitment States want to have with volunteers mobilized through government instruments.

In Chad, a draft law has been prepared and is ready for consideration by parliamentary institutions, while in Mauritania, the relaunch of the new programme provides for the establishment of the appropriate legal framework.

## Soaring figures in a growing number of sectors

With a growing number of volunteering organizations, the total number of volunteers mobilized by all volunteer organizations that may have been covered by the study is increasing.

The study and the Round Table discussion have made it possible to record a total of 58,148 volunteers for the period 2012-2019, of which 7,666 were from the four functional national volunteer agencies, namely the national volunteer structures of Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. These figures are largely underestimated since all the organizations were not reached while others like traditional volunteer organizations do not have statistics.

As the availability of statistics is low, it is difficult to precisely define the proportion of youth and

women volunteers in the region. There are, however, some empirical certainties reported by most of the volunteer organizations surveyed. For example, the number of female volunteers is generally lower than the number of male volunteers. Similarly, all government structures prioritize the under-35s as the largest pool of volunteers in the G5 Sahel region.

The State of the World's Volunteerism Report, however, indicates that on the continent 53.7% of voluntary commitment is among women, compared to 46.3% among men.

## The challenges of volunteering in the Sahel

Specific difficulties related to volunteering and common to the five countries of the G5 Sahel were identified. These challenges inhibit the ability of volunteer-involving organizations to offer opportunities, to create value through these opportunities and to provide a clear understanding of the impact of volunteering in the Sahel region.

### Challenges endogenous to volunteer structures

These are the challenges faced by volunteer structures in their functioning or in the management of volunteer assignments. The first challenge identified is the lack of capacity building/training of members of volunteer organizations. Volunteerism as a professional theme is specific and rather recent. Therefore, there are often few tools and knowledge to frame its practice and management. Efforts are increasingly effective through guides on volunteering, exchange and training workshops, national and international meetings. But this remains to be reinforced. Inadequate financial resources are also a regular constraint. Few institutions specifically finance volunteering and state resources for this sector are still low. Finally, there is a weak marketing approach on volunteering linked, on the one hand, to lack of statistical data and, on the other hand, to a non-prioritization of communication activities.

In addition, the weakness, or even archaic nature of volunteer management using tools that are often outdated (Excel sheets) or imprecise (summary job descriptions, etc.) need to be underscored. There is little social protection for the volunteer: Volunteers are not considered as workers in the labour law and some social security structures refuse to provide them with coverage. Among private insurers, the status of volunteers is a novelty that they have not yet included in their offers.

Finally, post-voluntarism management strategies are poor. Even though volunteering is not a profession, the specific situation of the five countries with high unemployment rates, especially among the youth, requires that these young people be accompanied in the post-volunteer phase in order to capitalize on the experiences

they have gained. Many volunteer organizations in the Sahel do not include this point on their agendas.

### Exogenous and environmental challenges

For example, insecurity, which reduces displacement and coverage areas, with terrorism in the five countries, which led to the establishment of the G5 Sahel, weighs like a Damocles sword on the outcomes of development and peace that have been achieved over a number of years. There is also the non-prioritization of volunteerism in development policies and strategies leading to low levels of mobilization of volunteers by existing national structures.

### Poor knowledge of volunteering actors

National volunteering structures are not sufficiently well known and the required profiles exclude some candidates while volunteering is meant to be an inclusive phenomenon. Leadership and policy advocacy in countries: Where leadership is not strong enough, there is weak coordination, lack of synergy and communication around volunteerism sometimes leading to a decline in the resources allocated to volunteerism.

# Volunteerism in the Sahel: how it contributes to peace and development

## Priority areas for the contribution of volunteerism

The quantitative approach to analyzing the contribution of volunteerism to peace and development remains subject to many limitations, the most important of which is the production of reliable quantitative data. However, the analytical evidence available from various volunteer organizations and reflected in our study helps to clarify some elements of effective contribution. For example, we can clearly define the priority areas of action for volunteerism in the G5 Sahel and the development agendas to which volunteerism contributes and the SDGs impacted.

It is worth noting that these areas of intervention are consistent with the intervention strategies in the Sahel, such as the United Nations Sahel Support Plan, which is structured around six axes: cross-border cooperation, prevention and peacekeeping, inclusive growth, climate action, renewable energy and empowerment of women and youth.



## Positioning in the various development agendas

Volunteer activities and initiatives can be linked to at least four types of development agendas: national policies, the ECOWAS Agenda 2020, the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 agenda. National policies, including development and humanitarian policies.

In Burkina Faso, for example, from 2012 to 2019, the government mobilized nearly 6,000 volunteers who were deployed in the education sector within the country. They helped to address the teacher shortage and raise the country's literacy level, thus contributing to the country's effective achievement of MDG 2.

In Mali, the Red Cross has deployed nearly 15,000 volunteers over the past ten years, mainly posted in communities throughout the country, to support the populations' recovery efforts, as a result of the country's security instability. Similarly, some 250 United Nations volunteers work with UNMISMA every year to support the Mission in its peacekeeping efforts. These volunteers not only work on the operational level to help the Mission itself, but some work directly with the communities.

In Niger, the latest National Volunteer Report recounts the active involvement of volunteers in several key projects spearheaded by the government and development partners. It explicitly states that "Nigerian volunteers with the support of UNV and France-Volunteers are committed to the promotion, advocacy and integration of volunteerism for peace and development. Their interventions contribute to the implementation of international commitments to which Niger has subscribed, notably Agenda 2030" (Niger, 2018).

Volunteerism has also been gradually articulated around the ECOWAS 2020 agenda. The main illustration of this is the ECOWAS Volunteer Programme, which has positioned itself as an operational tool to materialize one of the priority objectives of this agenda, namely "an ECOWAS of peoples". This programme focuses on the mobility of ECOWAS youth in order to accompany the

reconstruction efforts of post-crisis countries within the ECOWAS region. It is based in Burkina Faso and deploys volunteers in countries, admittedly outside the G5 Sahel, by mobilizing, among others, young nationals from countries in this region. Thus, through this programme, close to 60 young people from Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali are active.

Volunteering in the Sahel is also in keeping with efforts to support the African Union's Agenda 2063, which is intended to be "a global strategy to optimize the use of Africa's resources for the benefit of all Africans", aiming to encourage discussion among all stakeholders. The volunteers are, for example, materializing two of the major themes on this agenda, namely peace and stability in countries of the region and agricultural processing.

Finally, volunteering in the Sahel is increasingly focused on the Sustainable Development Goals. An analysis of the priority areas where volunteering brings visible added value also helps to identify the priority SDGs where volunteering stands out. These include SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality), SDG 13 (Action to combat climate change) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Effective Institutions).

Volunteers' own perceptions of their own commitment are also close to these trends. In our study, 70% of the volunteers identified in the period 2014 and 2018 indicated that they had contributed to three SDGs: SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being).

# Re-imagining volunteerism in the Sahel for the future

Volunteerism in the Sahel, as we have seen throughout this paper, contributes significantly to peace and development efforts. It has been difficult to quantify all these elements, but trends are emerging. There is therefore a need to work towards enhancing the opportunities offered by volunteering both in terms of ways of doing volunteerism and ways of positioning it.

To re-imagine volunteering, the following positioning axes are identified:

- Focus on reliable data for visible and recognized volunteering
- Moving from coalitions for advocacy to coalitions for impact
- Diversifying volunteer mobilization strategies
- A more strategic approach to measures in support of volunteerism
- Establishing a holistic approach to volunteer capacity building



## Focus on reliable data for visible and recognized volunteerism

Efforts to measure volunteer work have been sporadic and often poorly coordinated, leaving the various actors working in the field of volunteerism and technical and financial partners as well as policymakers with no up-to-date, reliable and comparative data on the extent of this important social and economic phenomenon of volunteerism.

In order to raise the profile of volunteerism for inclusion in development and peace programmes, policies and reports, it needs to be measured to demonstrate its importance. A first approach to this is to engage governments and national statistical offices to make volunteerism part of national statistics.

A second approach is to engage academic and research institutions to work on the subject of volunteerism.

A third approach is to strengthen the capacity of volunteer organizations in the production, management and analysis of data on their work. The establishment of monitoring and evaluation

systems as well as knowledge management systems is a priority here. There is also a need to integrate new tools for mass data management, intelligent data management (artificial intelligence, big data, block chains, cloud systems, application-based management, introduction of ERPs, etc.).

Finally, a fourth approach is to encourage the production of simple consolidated reports on the contribution of volunteering at national and regional levels. This can be done in the form of national annual situations on volunteering or in the form of thematic reports ("volunteering and youth employability", "volunteering and social cohesion", "traditional volunteering and its contribution to peace and development", "economic value of volunteering", "social value of volunteering", "effect of volunteering on SDGs", "motivation of young people in volunteering", etc.).

## Shifting from coalitions for advocacy to coalitions for impact

Volunteer organizations have been more successful in advocacy (nationally and internationally) than in making visible the impact of their activities on development and peace. Positive outcomes such as International Volunteer Day, the inclusion of volunteerism in SDGs, and multiple references to the positive role of volunteers and volunteerism were possible thanks to the combined advocacy efforts of several volunteer organizations. It is now time to move on to coordinated actions to achieve more positive development and peace outcomes and ensure their visibility.

This means engaging in more coalition action on specific areas. For example, one could imagine several organizations coming together around a national priority or SDG and pooling resources and

efforts to ensure that results are achieved. Such coalitions should also help to improve the quality of communication on volunteering through the pooling of resources (photo or video reports reaching several organizations at once, joint production of branding or social marketing materials, etc.).

This does not mean that advocacy activities should cease, but that lessons learned from the success factors of advocacy should be applied to programmatic aspects. Once the coalition for impact is successful, volunteerism can become a visible and valued instrument for achieving the SDGs.

## Diversifying volunteer mobilization strategies

In order to increase opportunities for volunteerism in the Sahel to achieve the SDGs and other development and peace benchmarks, the re-imagined volunteerism will need to use several strategies.

### Reinforce the targeting of young people through more ambitious programmes.

Youth volunteerism has proven to be a useful strategy for mobilizing young men and women in a range of activities that broaden their participation and can harness their energy, vigour and leadership capacities to contribute to the achievement of national and global development goals. At the same time, volunteer experiences encourage young people to strengthen their ownership of development and peace processes and outcomes. As a result, there is greater social cohesion, a greater sense of responsibility and a greater sense of ownership. The result is better social cohesion, greater collaboration between communities and governments, better health and employability. However, demographic change in the Sahel (doubling of the Sahel population by 2050) requires the design of more ambitious engagement arrangements. Currently, national volunteering has a low impact (less than 1000 young people are involved annually in national volunteer

programmes). Interconnected national schemes must also be considered in order to address the young people's strong desire for mobility outside their borders. There are currently few opportunities for young people to volunteer outside their home countries.

### Systematizing the use of new technologies

Among the strategies to increase the number of volunteers mobilized, new information and communication technologies can play an important role, especially among young people. Indeed, a positive aspect of the rapidly growing range of technologies and their increased availability is that more people can participate in solving today's many global challenges. These range from monitoring food insecurity to monitoring violent conflict, early warning of impending disasters and reporting electoral fraud, crop forecasting, education and health, and so on. Many of these activities are carried out by local people using the internet or SMS. Although there are significant disparities between countries, the use of new technologies continues to expand globally. In West Africa, the overall subscriber penetration rate reached 47 per cent in 2017, 28 per cent higher than at the beginning of the decade. Mass mobile commu

nications can contribute to the production and sharing of richer, more complete and more reliable information. It is frequently used by individuals to raise awareness of local issues, to inform people about their choices, and to monitor and improve public services.

### **A better role for women**

The State of the World's Volunteerism Report highlights the key role of women. In this region, statistics are below average (52 per cent of women engaged in volunteerism compared to 59 per cent in the rest of the world). The report also highlights the key role of women as volunteers. Thus, a lot of work needs to be done to ensure that women are taken into account and made visible. They need to take their rightful place more effectively. It's time to overcome fears and pressures, and this must be a major focus of work for both volunteer organizations and governments.

### **Strengthening the diversity of procedures**

Volunteer organizations should also propose several types of assignments: full-time/part-time, online, solidarity leave, and open up volunteering to all age groups: adults, seniors, etc.

### **Strengthening the diversity of procedures Increase opportunities for mixing and exchanging volunteers.**

Another strategy is to conceive of volunteering as a means of cross-fertilization between communities in order to respond to the process of geographical and social fragmentation that marks the Sahel. Community tensions are heightened and undermine national cohesion (being a volunteer outside one's region of origin). For example, volunteer organizations can promote "integration volunteering", which consists of mobilizing residents of other countries as volunteers, and as compensation, these countries also mobilize residents of these countries as volunteers in a spirit of reciprocity.

## **A more strategic approach to volunteering support measures**

The following accompanying measures should facilitate the effective implementation of strategies to increase the number of volunteers mobilized:

### **The creation of a favourable environment for volunteering**

Specifically, the aim is to enhance the value of volunteering, voluntary commitment and the status of volunteers, in general, and of local volunteers, in particular; to provide social protection for volunteers in the discharge of their missions: insurance, security, etc.; to promote the introduction of legislation on volunteering which provides for the recognition and value of volunteering taking into account voluntary experience when recruiting, specific advantages, etc.).

### **The creation of formal frameworks for consultation between volunteer organizations in order to better federate the actions of volunteers.**

In addition to these frameworks for volunteer organizations, the support partners in the Sahel should also create their own framework for exchange and consultation. In each country, these frameworks on volunteering should provide the opportunity to conduct reflection processes in which all the actors concerned (State, local

authorities, civil society) are required to increase the impact of volunteering on peace and development.

### **A synergy between the different forms of volunteerism.**

A mixed team approach (a group of volunteers from national volunteer programmes, international and regional volunteer organizations, national non-state volunteer organizations and traditional volunteerism) to find and implement solutions where volunteerism can make a distinctive contribution while building on and/or complementing the achievements of other actors, but also according to local realities. This will lead to cross-fertilization that is more likely to have a more rapid impact, but also to develop long-term capacity at the national level.

### **Setting up a reliable database of these different structures.**

This database will become the source of information that will help guide volunteer actions within the G5 Sahel. Following the example of the ECOWAS volunteer programme which complements national volunteer programmes, the establishment of a regional volunteer structure



within the G5 Sahel could be envisaged after a feasibility study.

#### **The search for new sources of funding for volunteerism.**

The private sector, technical and financial partners or individuals could contribute to the financing of volunteering through donations/grants that could be used to sponsor volunteers by bearing the cost of their assignment for actions to promote volunteering: feasibility study, research, communication, advocacy, etc.

### **Adopting a holistic approach for capacity building on volunteering**

All the support measures mentioned aimed at increasing volunteer mobilization require a holistic approach to capacity building that covers activities such as identifying targeted training groups, curriculum development, engaging resource persons, delivering conferences, research activities for policy advice, administering knowledge platforms, establishing a certification system and coordinating all these elements.

Volunteer mobilization invites all levels of society - from government to volunteer organizations, civil society and community organizations, the private sector, universities and international organizations mandated to promote volunteerism. It is therefore strongly recommended to promote training institutes that can support capacity building, policy advisory studies and knowledge sharing of people in the field by coordinating strengthening activities.

# NOTES

- 1 (Guterres, 2019).
- 2 (Ba, 2007).
- 3 (Harsch, 2017).
- 4 Le G5 Sahel est mis sur pied grâce a une convention portant sa création et que l'on peut retrouver sur son site internet : <https://www.g5sahel.org/images/convention.pdf>.
- 5 (ONU HABITAT, 2014).
- 6 (Haub & Toshiko, 2015).
- 7 (F. May & Guengant, 2014).
- 8 (UNOCHA, 2014).
- 9 Communiqué de presse du 9 avril 2019. Mécanisme de Réponse Rapide au Mali. Contact Presse Hajer Naili, conseillère régionale en communication à NRC. Naili@nrc.no/info@nrc.no, +47 905 62 329.
- 10 (Gaye, 2017).
- 11 (Nations Unies, 2013).
- 12 (Rifkin, 1997).
- 13 (Nations Unies, 2013).
- 14 L'Association internationale des étudiants en sciences économiques et commerciales (AIESEC) est une organisation internationale, apolitique, indépendante et à but non lucratif, gérée par des étudiants et par des récents diplômés du supérieur : <https://aiesec.org/about-us>.
- 15 (VNU, 2018).
- 16 Créée par loi 2014/10 du 16 avril 2014.
- 17 Etablissement Public à Caractère Administratif, créée par loi 2011/052 du 28 juillet 2011.
- 18 Loi 2014/10 du 16 avril 2014 et loi 2007/003 du 13 juillet 2007.
- 19 Loi 031/2007/AN.
- 20 Loi 051 du 28 juillet 2011.
- 21 (VNU, 2018).
- 22 L'État du Burkina Faso qui est au sein du G5 Sahel celui qui met le plus de ressources sur le volontariat, y consent moins d'un milliard par an.
- 23 Lors de son Conseil des Ministres du 17 décembre 2019, le gouvernement du Burkina Faso a adopté un projet de loi instituant les volontaires pour la défense de la patrie avec pour mission d'aider aux efforts de lutte contre l'insécurité et le terrorisme dans le pays.
- 24 (GSMA, 2018).
- 25 (VNU, 2018).

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*Pour un futur inclusif*