



Farmers El Houssain El Kerdaoui (centre) and El Mahfoud Ihrche (right) volunteer with the UNV-supported Community-Based Adaption Project, contributing towards water-sharing systems and tree-planting initiatives, and sharing their knowledge with local youth.

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2014 - 2017

UNV STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme has articulated the scope and dimensions of its strategic direction and results for four decisive years in its Strategic Framework 2014-2017.

This Strategic Framework focuses UNV programmatic efforts in five key areas:

- securing access to basic social services,
- community resilience for environment and disaster risk reduction,
- peace building,
- youth, and
- national capacity development through volunteer schemes.

UNV will also focus on building a credible body of knowledge informed by research, innovation and evidence in order to advocate and enhance the integration of volunteerism into peace and development programming.

WHY PARTNER WITH UNV?

In 2015, UNV began supporting the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience throughout Asia and the Pacific. UN Volunteers, familiar with and often originating from local communities, have been vital to promoting sustainable development. As locals themselves, they are familiar with using locally-appropriate and environmentally-sound practices, including indigenous knowledge in environmental management and capacity development to respond to natural disasters.





UNV's experience in these areas shows that community resilience, which can be enhanced through volunteerism, is the basis for successful and sustainable programmes.

Social, economic and environmental sustainability are building blocks of sustainable development. And they are inextricably interlinked.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has repeatedly underscored that climate change and global warming pose the biggest threats to sustainable development. Climate change and other environmental challenges of the 21st century are enormous, and volunteers can play a major role in helping to tackle them.

Disaster risk reduction and the environment are closely related. Sustainable development requires that disaster risks are reduced and communities are better prepared for response and recovery.

The role of volunteerism in mobilizing and managing volunteers is an important component of any disaster risk management strategy that aims at fostering community recovery, strength and resilience in vulnerable areas.

Governments around the world realize this and UN Volunteers actively support governments and local communities with disaster risk reduction and prevention efforts.

UNV supports countries that have an identified risk and high vulnerability to disaster to mitigate the effects of crisis and address its root causes.

The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 explicitly recognizes the contribution of volunteerism to disaster risk management, particularly in strengthening the capacity of communities to respond to and prevent disasters.



UNV PROJECTS RELATED TO COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Small communities are likely to be hit hardest by climate change. At the same time, they are often least able to cope with its impact. In addition to attempts to mitigate global warming, adaptation measures need to be adopted to manage and cope with its effects.

Volunteerism is an important component of the programme on Community-Based Adaptation (CBA), jointly implemented by participating governments, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and UNV.

From 2008 to 2013, the CBA programme implemented projects across 10 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific. UN Volunteers focused on highly vulnerable communities in the countries concerned and assisted them in increasing their capacity to adapt to climate variability and long-term climate change. In the course of the programme, 49 NGOs and community-based organizations developed and implemented sustainable community-driven adaptation projects.

One international and six national UN Volunteers supported the mobilization of over 5,800 community volunteers, and the project reached 64 communities and an estimated 240,000 people, and worked with 100 community groups (Final Evaluation Report for the Community-Based Adaptation Programme, 2013).



“Climate change is both the result of and a threat to current development patterns. To tackle climate change, the whole world must develop differently. That requires engaged citizens and bold leadership, willing and able to take on entrenched interests and leave behind failed models... Engaged citizens, armed with an understanding of the costs of climate change, can press leaders to act.”

Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator, “Why Tackling Climate Change Matters for Development”, Stanford University



▶ UN Volunteer Assistant Project Manager for Natural Sciences, Kim Eunah (right) works with the Research Institute of Forest Ecology, Environment and Protection in the Chinese Academy of Forestry, to promote the development of integrated management of forests and water.

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DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

In the last five years, UNV has been involved in disaster response and risk reduction activities in a number of countries including Ecuador, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

In 2008, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and UNV set up a fund to strengthen the role of volunteerism in disaster risk reduction. The funds aimed to reduce community vulnerability to natural disasters, support local volunteering and facilitate early recovery.

The Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Peru were the first three countries where the fund was applied. Through the financing of 25 national UN Volunteers, cooperation projects were carried out that contributed, for instance, to training more than 500 volunteers from Civil Defence and Universidad Nordestana in Dominican Republic, 1770 individuals from civil society in Ecuador, and 351 leaders in Peru, who supported the recovery process after the earthquake that affected the ICA region in 2007.

Escuelas Vivas (Living Schools) was a triangular South-South initiative between UNV and the governments of

Brazil and El Salvador, in which skills, knowledge and best practices were transferred between the two nations to deepen the knowledge of hundreds of students, their families and local communities concerning disaster risk reduction and food security. Around 40 activities focused on risk prevention, including workshops and evacuation simulations to train students and their families, and also to develop a disaster preparedness plan for the schools, with the support of more than 500 volunteers.

THE WAY FORWARD

In the Strategic Framework period, UNV will continue to contribute to developing community resilience for local climate change mitigation efforts.

Countries or regions severely lacking in peace and inclusive social and economic development are especially impacted by natural disasters, and the poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups are disproportionately affected.

Volunteerism plays a key role in fostering social cohesion and development and it facilitates a strong transition between emergency relief and the rebuilding of productive lives.



© UNV, 2010

Participants and beneficiaries of the Community-based Adaptation to Climate Change Programme have a traditional lunch (called Aptapi) in Bolivia.



This endows UNV with a unique potential to address these issues, which it will leverage in particular by focusing on:

- 1) climate change adaptation through people-centred approaches; and
- 2) development of innovative approaches to disaster risk reduction by harnessing the power of volunteerism to build community resilience for inclusive and coherent national disaster prevention, preparedness and risk reduction strategies.

In this way, UNV will contribute to the increased effectiveness of UN agencies in promoting resilience to climate change and disaster risks, and to the establishment of enhanced global, regional and national capacity for environmental management and disaster risk reduction.

“Volunteers have a critical role to play in creating awareness about the sustainable management of natural resources that can prevent and mitigate the impact of disasters. Likewise, communities with more trust, civic engagement and stronger networks have a better chance of recovering after a disaster.”

State of the World's Volunteerism Report 2011

UNV (October 2016)

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. We work with partners to integrate qualified, highly motivated and well supported UN Volunteers into development programming and promote the value and global recognition of volunteerism.

UNV is active in around 130 countries every year. With field presences in over 80 countries, UNV is represented worldwide. UNV is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.