



Farmers and volunteers El Houssain El Kerdaoui (centre) and El Mahfoud Ihrche (right) discuss climate change and its effects on their oasis at Igulwaz, Morocco, with Ali Ait Baha (left), a respected elder. (Baptiste de Ville d'Avray, 2009)

ENGLISH

Overview

➤ Our Programme Strategy: Volunteerism for Peace and Development

“As we celebrate the impact of volunteers on our world, let us remember the many places they are needed: in war zones and classrooms, in hospitals and homes – wherever struggling people seek a helping hand.”

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on International Volunteer Day 2012

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that supports sustainable human development globally through the promotion of volunteerism, including the mobilization of volunteers. It serves the causes of peace and development by enhancing opportunities for participation by all peoples. It is universal, inclusive and embraces volunteer action in all its diversity. It values free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity, which are the foundations of volunteerism.

UNV delivers peace and development results through volunteerism. To this end, UNV partners with civil society, UN entities, governments and the private sector to advocate for volunteerism, integrate volunteerism into development planning and mobilize volunteers. The enormous potential of volunteerism is an inspiration to UNV and to volunteers around the world.

In its programme strategy (2011-2013), UNV focuses on harnessing volunteerism as a strategic asset and a powerful contributor to peace and development. The comparative advantage of UNV is its ability to inspire people to bring about change through volunteerism, community voluntary action and civic engagement.

UNV is inspired by the conviction that everyone can contribute their time, energy and skills to transform their world. According to the Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies, the voluntary sector contributes US \$400 billion to the global economy every year. Volunteerism is both a manifestation and driver of social capital and civic participation, involving people in the decisions that affect their lives.



“Volunteering allows the United Nations system’s cooperation to be brought to the community level; it gives our cooperation a human face.”

*Yoriko Yasukawa,
United Nations Resident Coordinator in Bolivia*

This overview summarizes the programme approach of UNV, outlining the focus of our work and defining realistic and practical ways to embed volunteerism into peace and development activities. We hope you find it useful in highlighting potential areas of synergy and collaboration.

➤ Delivery of basic services

Strengthening the delivery of basic services advances progress towards the achievement of the MDGs, and volunteer efforts increase the efficiency and outreach, as well as ownership and sustainability, of government and civil society programmes. The emphasis UNV places on primary health care and HIV/AIDS is critical, as four of the eight MDGs focus on health. Non-formal education, such as literacy and vocational training, has been identified as one of the best tools for poverty alleviation. UNV will also enhance local governance to promote inclusive participation and engagement of communities in planning, implementing and monitoring local development initiatives.

➤ Sustainable environment and climate change

Historically, the environment movement has been driven and motivated by individual volunteers and volunteer-involving organizations, and this continues to this day, with the added urgency to address climate change. UNV will continue to contribute to local climate change mitigation efforts. We believe a focus on climate change adaptation through people-centred approaches are critical to improve food security.

➤ Crisis prevention and recovery

Conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery activities aim to build trust, social cohesion, social co-existence and mutual support. This social capital is essential for reconciliation and consolidating peace, and embodies the ideals at the core of volunteerism. UNV will continue to focus its efforts on community-based, conflict-sensitive development initiatives and local capacity development for peace building and conflict management. The Hyogo Framework for Action explicitly recognized the added value and contribution of volunteerism to disaster risk management, particularly by bolstering the capacity of communities to respond to and prevent disasters.

A young person is an individual worthy of respect. Despite the challenges she or he may face, that person is a human being, who wants to enjoy life, to take part in society and to make a contribution. During my two years as a volunteer, I wanted to show society that every young person has dreams, and is launching into the future with a goal to accomplish. Do not look at us youth with pity, but with pride. Make space for us to take on responsibility. Support us, guide us and respect us, for we are change.

Sandra Fayad, (24 years old), Lebanon

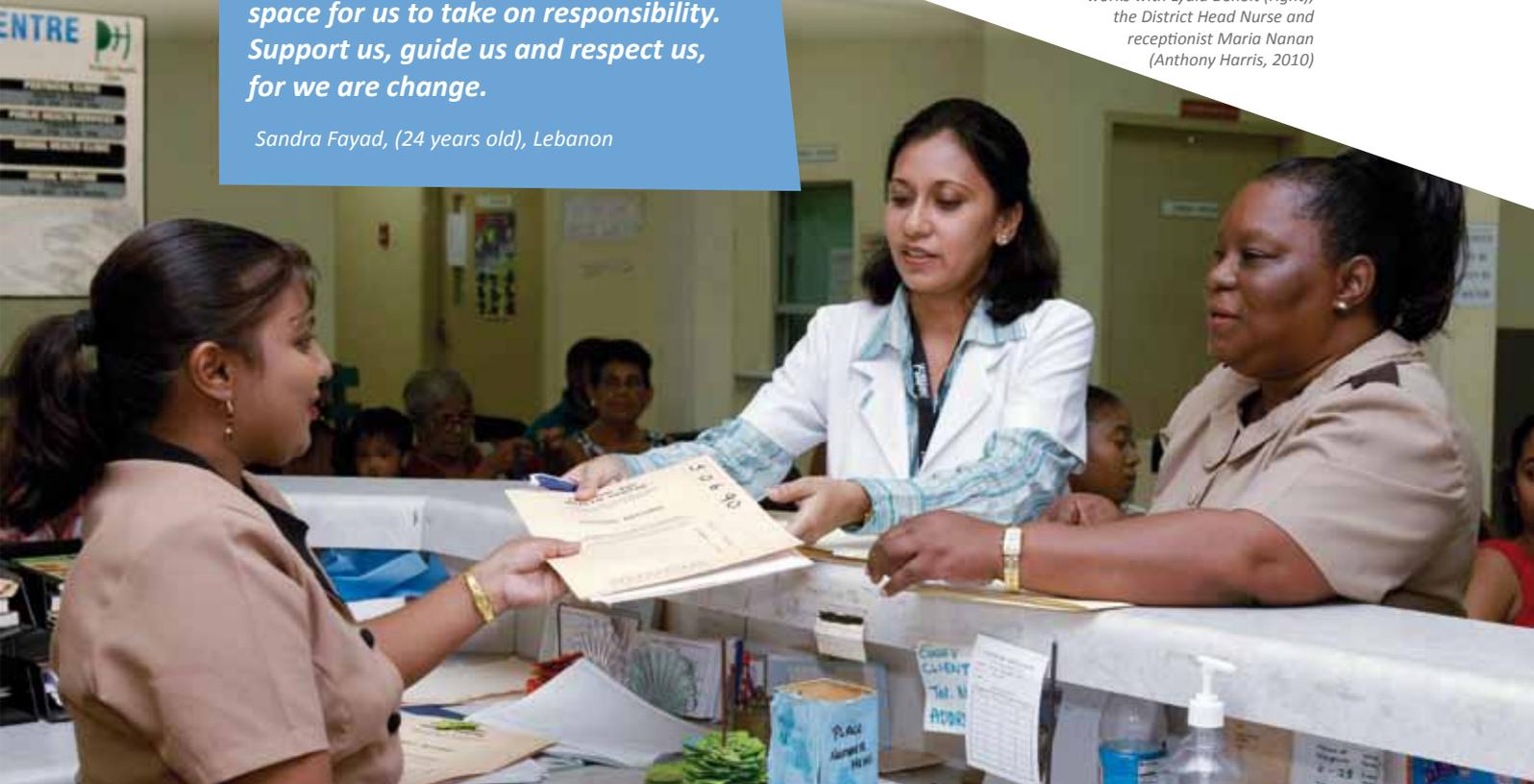
➤ Humanitarian assistance

In recent years, nearly 20 per cent of UN Volunteer assignments, or well over 1500 assignments per annum, have supported the programmes of UN partners in the emergency and humanitarian assistance spectrum. UN Volunteers will continue to support emergency relief efforts, such as information gathering, coordination, protection, shelter, food, health, water, sanitation and logistics. In protracted situations, they will offer ongoing support for camp management, reintegration, human rights monitoring and livelihoods.

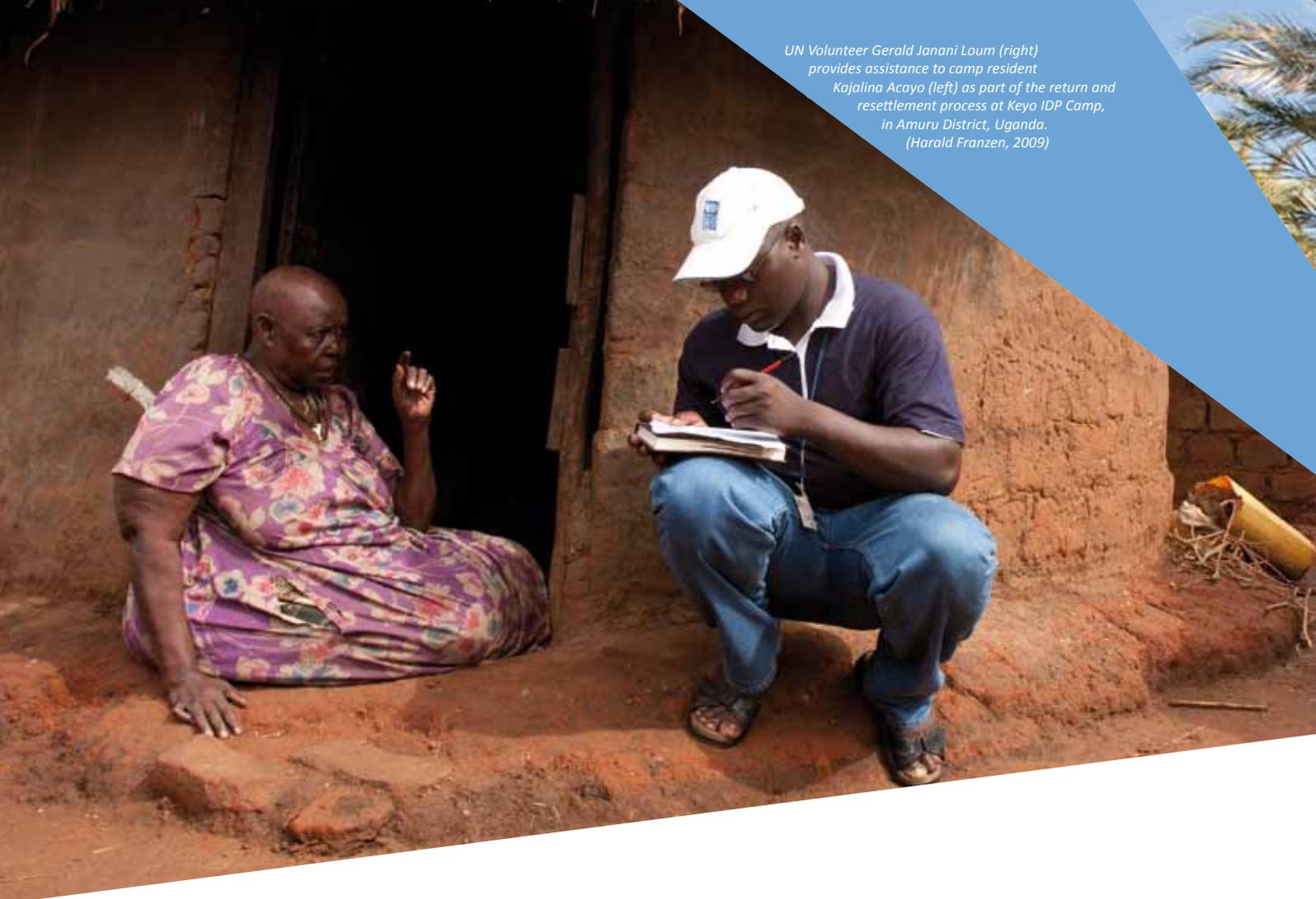
➤ Support to UN missions

UNV collaborates with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UN Department of Political Affairs, and UN Volunteers provide both substantive and technical support to UN peace keeping and peace building missions. UN Volunteers are key to social cohesion, community confidence, local capacity-building and a “light footprint” approach to peace building. They contribute their expertise in civil affairs, human rights, gender and child protection, for example. UNV will continue to play a key role in post-conflict electoral exercises through the mobilization of substantive and technical UN Volunteer expertise.

At Claxton Bay Health Centre in Trinidad and Tobago, UN Volunteer Medical Doctor Shahana Sharmin (centre) from Bangladesh works with Lydia Benoit (right), the District Head Nurse and receptionist Maria Nanan (Anthony Harris, 2010)



UN Volunteer Gerald Janani Loum (right) provides assistance to camp resident Kajalina Acayo (left) as part of the return and resettlement process at Keyo IDP Camp, in Amuru District, Uganda. (Harald Franzen, 2009)



➤ Youth, gender and marginalized groups

The UNV programmatic and operational efforts outlined above are underpinned by the three cross-cutting themes: **youth, gender and marginalized groups**, also defined as the ‘social inclusion pillars’ that sustain our programme approach.

Recognizing the enormous potential of young people to contribute positively to their societies, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, in his Five-Year Action Agenda, announced a specific measure to “create a UN youth volunteers programme under the umbrella of UN Volunteers.” In response, UNV will establish a new UN youth volunteer modality, further engage in global advocacy and partnerships for youth volunteerism, and strengthen the capacity of nationally and regionally owned youth volunteer schemes.

Often among those most affected by poverty, conflict or disaster, women are the driving force behind peace and development efforts in many communities, particularly those engulfed in or emerging from conflict. UNV recognizes that women’s rights are human rights, and a major aspect of the broader gender equity agenda. Therefore, UNV will engage in further research

on gender and volunteerism, and gender mainstreaming will remain a priority for all aspects of UNV programming.

In collaboration with global partners, UNV will continue to advocate for volunteerism and document the contribution of volunteers to peace and development. Specifically, UNV will build on the momentum created during the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers in 2011, as well as the first-ever State of the World’s Volunteerism Report, to advocate that volunteerism, and the values that sustain it, are at the core of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that promotes volunteerism to support peace and development worldwide. Volunteerism can transform the pace and nature of development and it benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer. UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for volunteerism globally, encouraging partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing volunteers.

UNV is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

For more information about UNV, please visit www.unv.org



UN
Volunteers

inspiration in action