

2022 State of the World's  
Volunteerism Report

# Building Equal and Inclusive Societies

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**2022 State of the World's  
Volunteerism Report:  
Building Equal and  
Inclusive Societies**

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## Foreword

Volunteerism plays a central role in strengthening people–state relationships. It promotes better governance, helps build more equal and inclusive societies, and fosters stability. Increasingly, volunteers across the globe are forging closer partnerships with state authorities to address urgent development challenges, from climate change, to ecosystem and biodiversity loss, to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. As shown by the 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR) entitled *Building Equal and Inclusive Societies*, despite the devastating socio-economic impacts of this pandemic, global interest in volunteering has not waned.

This latest SWVR presents new evidence on volunteer–state partnerships. It demonstrates how cooperation between volunteers and governments is helping build a culture of collaborative decision-making.

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**As the report illustrates,  
volunteerism offers new pathways  
for rights-based participation.**

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New partnerships between governments and volunteers from marginalized groups—women, persons with disabilities, slum-dwellers and the urban poor—are reconfiguring long-standing power relations. While volunteers have more opportunities to engage in activities that are meaningful to them, volunteers from marginalized groups remain disadvantaged. For instance, caregiving and domestic responsibilities limit the ability of women and girls to engage in volunteering in many countries. Addressing such gaps in volunteering practices and aspirations is vital to tackling exclusion and gender inequality.

The report also asks us to rethink how to engage volunteers as partners in development as we work towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As some countries start to build forward better from the pandemic, governments and other stakeholders need to work even more closely with volunteers, engaging with them as key partners and opening up space for them to collaborate on vital development solutions. In doing so, we can help create a 21<sup>st</sup> Century social contract that is more inclusive and responsive to the needs of communities. This much is clear: drawing upon the incredible creativity, energy and expertise of volunteers will be crucial to shaping a greener, more inclusive and more sustainable future.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Volunteerism is a powerful force, and an important part of the fabric of society. Globally, it remains an important vehicle for shaping and advancing development. Its potential to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development that delivers to all is, however, yet to be realized.

As countries and regions grapple with enormous challenges, one thing is clear: no single stakeholder, entity or sector can address these challenges alone. Now more than ever, partnerships are vitally important.

Recognizing this, the 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR) explores the ways in which volunteer–state partnerships can help address our most pressing challenges.

The SWVR investigates how volunteers in the Global South collaborate with state authorities, and finds that volunteers play significant and diverse roles in decision-making, in co-producing services, and in developing innovative solutions. Moreover, by tapping into the experiences, knowledge and aspirations of marginalized groups, volunteer–state partnerships are addressing development concerns and responding to the needs of communities, thus helping build equal and inclusive societies.

In addition, the SWVR explores unequal power relations between people and states, and illustrates how relationships based on equal partnership can create a new social contract and help fundamentally reorient development.

It also breaks new ground on the discourse on volunteerism. While volunteers are often viewed from an instrumental perspective in terms of how they help or support the state and other stakeholders to deliver on development, the SWVR provides

fresh insights on the rights perspective, highlighting that volunteerism is also linked to human rights.

## KEY FINDINGS

### **Volunteerism can promote a culture of collaborative decision-making.**

Volunteers contribute to shaping and prioritizing issues that are important to them and their communities. By aligning their priorities with those of their governments, volunteers contribute to outcomes that are relevant and responsive to the needs of communities. With volunteers' desire for better governance and commitment to inclusion and participation, volunteerism can help build a culture of participatory and collaborative decision-making.

### **Volunteerism can alter unequal power relations.**

Volunteers can alter and transform unequal power relationships between ordinary citizens and state authorities. With appropriate support, volunteers can take up more active roles and claim their rightful place in society. In this way, volunteerism enables people to own and shape the development agenda, with an inclusive governance approach that fosters rights-based participation.

### **Volunteerism offers diverse pathways to civic participation, but remains unequal.**

Faced with complex issues, volunteers find diverse causes to engage in and various channels for volunteering. While the diverse paths to volunteering are laudable, participation remains unequal, with limited volunteering opportunities for some groups. For example, women in the Global South face particular challenges. Besides juggling caregiving and domestic responsibilities



which limit their aspirations and ability to volunteer, many women engage in volunteering as a form of “service” and less in initiatives that involve prioritizing issues, highlighting ongoing gender gaps in volunteering.

### **Volunteers build bridges.**

Volunteers are often in the unique position of brokering relationships between service providers and beneficiaries, a connection that is sometimes weakened by administrative issues and differing priorities. As such, volunteers act as mediators between marginalized groups and state authorities, often helping navigate bureaucratic processes.

The SWVR concludes by providing key recommendations that can guide policymakers in order to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and build societies founded on inclusion and equality. Areas that need careful attention include:

- ongoing barriers faced by marginalized groups in volunteering, including gender-related volunteering inequalities;
- recognition of informal volunteers' work and contributions, as they generally receive less recognition and less practical support;
- how to better leverage volunteers' invaluable expertise, knowledge and experiences for development, and ensure they can contribute to the attainment of the SDGs;
- how to foster social innovation among marginalized groups in order to reap the tremendous benefits that development offers;
- measures to better leverage emerging partnerships through volunteering, a critical element in supporting the achievement of SDGs.

As the adage goes, what is not counted does not count. As data on volunteers are currently scarce and often inadequate, there is a need to invest in measurement and provide support for research on volunteerism in order to close this gap.

With the right policies and support in place, we can unlock the potential of volunteerism to contribute to a common future that is equal and inclusive for all.



## Chapter 1

# Volunteerism: Building equal and inclusive societies

16 PEACE, JUSTICE  
AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS



17 PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



## 1.1. Why this report and why now?

Against the backdrop of 21<sup>st</sup> Century challenges such as increasing inequalities, the climate emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteerism is often presented as a global and local asset which can help localize and achieve development goals through people-centred relationships.<sup>1,2</sup> Volunteerism could play a role in “building forward better” by transforming the underlying economic, political, environmental and social systems, especially as fragilities within existing systems—such as health and well-being, employment, trade and sustainable livelihoods—have become more visible and often, more severe.<sup>3</sup> The UN Secretary-General has called for a “new social contract for a new era”,<sup>4</sup> a dynamic and evolving agreement between people and the state founded on new norms, systems and governance structures that delivers for all. Building more equal and inclusive societies is central to these endeavours.

There is a need to approach development differently, as a process to which volunteers can contribute. But the way forward is not yet clear.

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**The UN Secretary-General has called for a “new social contract for a new era”, a dynamic and evolving agreement between people and the state founded on new norms, systems and governance structures that delivers for all.**

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How can a global reset towards building more inclusive societies be achieved in this context? This will depend on the voices at the table and the interests that are prioritized. There is now a recognized need for “a reconfiguration of a range of relationships

that have become sharply imbalanced—those between state and citizen”.<sup>5</sup> Stakeholders—and the volunteers among them—will need to work in new ways so that the most marginalized and vulnerable groups, namely women, persons with disabilities, slum-dwellers and the urban poor, can participate as equals. This means not only new structures and opportunities that facilitate participation, but also a change in the mindset of all actors.

This chapter introduces the rationale and conceptual starting points that frame the 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR) on the theme of Building Equal and Inclusive Societies. Section 1.1 discusses how volunteering itself is changing and how it could serve as a tool for responding to issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Section 1.2. outlines the scope of the report and defines the key terms used. Section 1.3 explains how the SWVR is structured.

### 1.1.1. The dynamic potential of volunteerism

Since 2011, UNV has published an SWVR every three years to develop a strong knowledge base on the role of volunteerism in peace and sustainable development. The 2011 report, Universal Values for Global Well-being, found that many people around the world view volunteerism as a route to individual and community well-being, social inclusion, sustainable livelihoods, management of disaster risk and prevention, and recovery from violent conflicts.<sup>6</sup> The 2015 report, Transforming Governance, showed that volunteerism could be a pathway to ensuring governance accountability and responsiveness.<sup>7</sup> The third report in the series, published in 2018, focused on Volunteerism and Community Resilience, demonstrating how communities can join together to develop collective resources to cope with shocks and stresses, particularly in marginalized contexts where state provision is limited.<sup>8</sup>



The 2022 report explores the theme of Building Equal and Inclusive Societies, focusing particularly on volunteerism and a new social contract. It builds on insights from previous SWVRs on the role of volunteerism within local governance, and on the importance of partnerships between volunteers, volunteer-involving organizations and the state. In 2011, for instance, SWVR argued that despite volunteers' contribution to development, volunteerism should not take the place of actions that are the responsibility of the state.<sup>9</sup> The 2018 SWVR, meanwhile, highlighted the importance of local government support to enhance community resilience.<sup>10</sup> This SWVR develops this further, asking:

- *What role could volunteerism play in developing people–state relationships?*
- *Given that volunteers do not work alone, does volunteerism's unique contribution to development lie in its capacity to facilitate new forms of collaboration and partnerships,<sup>11</sup> including with various state authorities?*

To understand these new partnerships, this report introduces the idea of a new social contract between volunteers and the state.

For decades, volunteers and volunteer-involving organizations have worked with governments to provide services to the most vulnerable and marginalized.

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**Yet, it has been shown that volunteer participation can go beyond consultation, resulting in much-needed knowledge production and innovative governance practices.<sup>12, 13</sup>**

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Some volunteers have influential leadership roles in their communities. In Kenyan villages, for example, village elders working voluntarily

in public administration not only bring fellow community members' concerns into public policy, but also help facilitate community uptake of government programmes.<sup>14</sup> Research has found that community members often have higher expectations of these village elders than elected officials and paid officers.<sup>15</sup>

During the COVID-19 pandemic, informal, spontaneous, people-to-people volunteering has endured.<sup>16</sup> Communities have continued to respond to the crisis in significant ways, despite limited mobility and resources. From fund-raising and distribution of food packages for daily wage workers in major cities in India,<sup>17</sup> youth-led radio-based COVID-19 awareness programmes in Tanzania<sup>18</sup> and refugee UN Volunteers joining the medical workforce in Jordan,<sup>19</sup> to community pantries in the Philippines,<sup>20</sup> community soup kitchens in Colombia,<sup>21</sup> and driving local doctors to home visits in the Russian Federation,<sup>22</sup> volunteer responses are often local and carried out by people who themselves are facing similar constraints to the people they are "serving".

While the need for volunteers has increased, pandemic-related challenges have reduced volunteer engagement in many countries. For example, in Australia, two in three volunteers stopped volunteering between February and April in 2020.<sup>23</sup> A survey of students in Saudi Arabia<sup>24</sup> reported low volunteer participation during the first two months of the pandemic because of concerns around personal health and safety. In Mongolia, despite continued volunteer commitment, following countrywide lockdowns<sup>25</sup> in 2020, there was a 30 percent decline in volunteer participation in programmes organized by the Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organizations. In terms of international volunteering, in a February survey of 130 volunteer-involving organizations, 47 percent of the international volunteers surveyed reported that they had been repatriated due to COVID-19, with many



being offered a variety of alternative activities such as remote work.<sup>26</sup>

Some volunteer groups have changed their approach as the crisis has evolved.<sup>27</sup> Volunteers who are usually involved in campaigning have reverted to more “traditional” volunteering activities such as providing services to meet the basic needs of their immediate community.<sup>28</sup> It remains to be seen how these shifts might affect the ability of volunteering to contribute to more inclusive state–society relationships.

### 1.1.2. Report objectives

Against the backdrop of these issues, this fourth SWVR explores how volunteering can help to shape people–state relationships and build equal and inclusive societies, through the development of an inclusive 21st Century social contract.

It looks at how volunteers and volunteer-involving organizations and governments are working together to collaborate and co-create more inclusive structures (referred to in this report as “volunteer–state relationships”) and mechanisms that are fit for the challenges of the 21st Century.<sup>29</sup> It also provides much-needed evidence on the processes involved in creating and strengthening people–state relationships through volunteerism. Specifically, this report:

- i) explores emerging models of volunteer–state relationships, their central features and mechanisms, and their strengths and weaknesses; and
- ii) identifies strategies for effective collaboration between volunteers and states to help shape inclusive processes and equitable development outcomes.

The report draws on case study research<sup>30</sup> across five regions: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Arab States, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Based on this evidence, the SWVR proposes strategies on policy measures and partnership mechanisms that support action and collaboration between state actors and volunteers, volunteer-involving organizations, and their wider communities. It is also intended to help policymakers in Member States, governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to identify strengths and areas for improvement when assessing their own work on volunteer action.



Volunteers engage in nature conservation work as part of the Lomas Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) project in Peru. The lomas are local ecosystems that rely on fog for moisture. Source: UNV.

## 1.2. Scope, focus and definitions

### 1.2.1. Volunteering in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The global commitment to recognizing and harnessing the role of volunteerism within government action continues to increase. The 2018 UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution<sup>31</sup> on “Volunteering for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” encouraged governments to galvanize the position of volunteering within national and international frameworks of action for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It recognized the need for greater ownership of the development agenda by all by integrating volunteering into national, sectoral and local plans and processes.

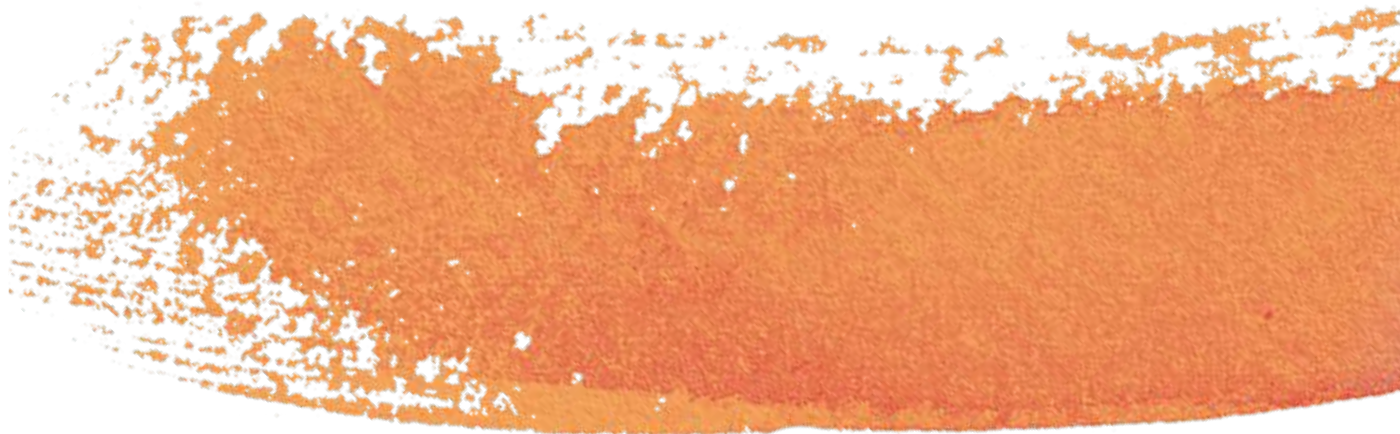
Definitions of volunteering vary. This report uses the definition adopted in the 2002 UN General Assembly resolution, which describes volunteering as “a wide range of activities, including traditional forms of mutual aid and self-help, formal service delivery and other forms of civic participation, undertaken of free will, for the general public good and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor.”<sup>32</sup>

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This definition recognizes that volunteering activities are diverse but have three core characteristics: they are undertaken of free will, for the good of others and are not primarily motivated by monetary benefits.

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However, volunteering is a complex social phenomenon that means different things to different people. Cultural and community-based values influence how volunteering is practised,<sup>33, 34, 35</sup> and the spread of new technology has diversified the ways in which volunteers contribute and gather.<sup>36</sup> Informal, community-based, episodic and spontaneous volunteering are also increasingly recognized.<sup>37, 38</sup> These forms of volunteering challenge the popular view that volunteering only happens within an organization. With volunteering often considered “unpaid”, the blurred boundaries between volunteering, skills development and livelihoods—particularly in resource-poor contexts—also challenge the idea of volunteer remuneration.<sup>39, 40, 41</sup> When discussing volunteering, the focus is most often on the contribution that volunteers make to society. However, the benefits of volunteering for volunteers themselves are also becoming increasingly clear, and it is important to understand how these influence many volunteers’ motivations.<sup>42, 43, 44</sup>





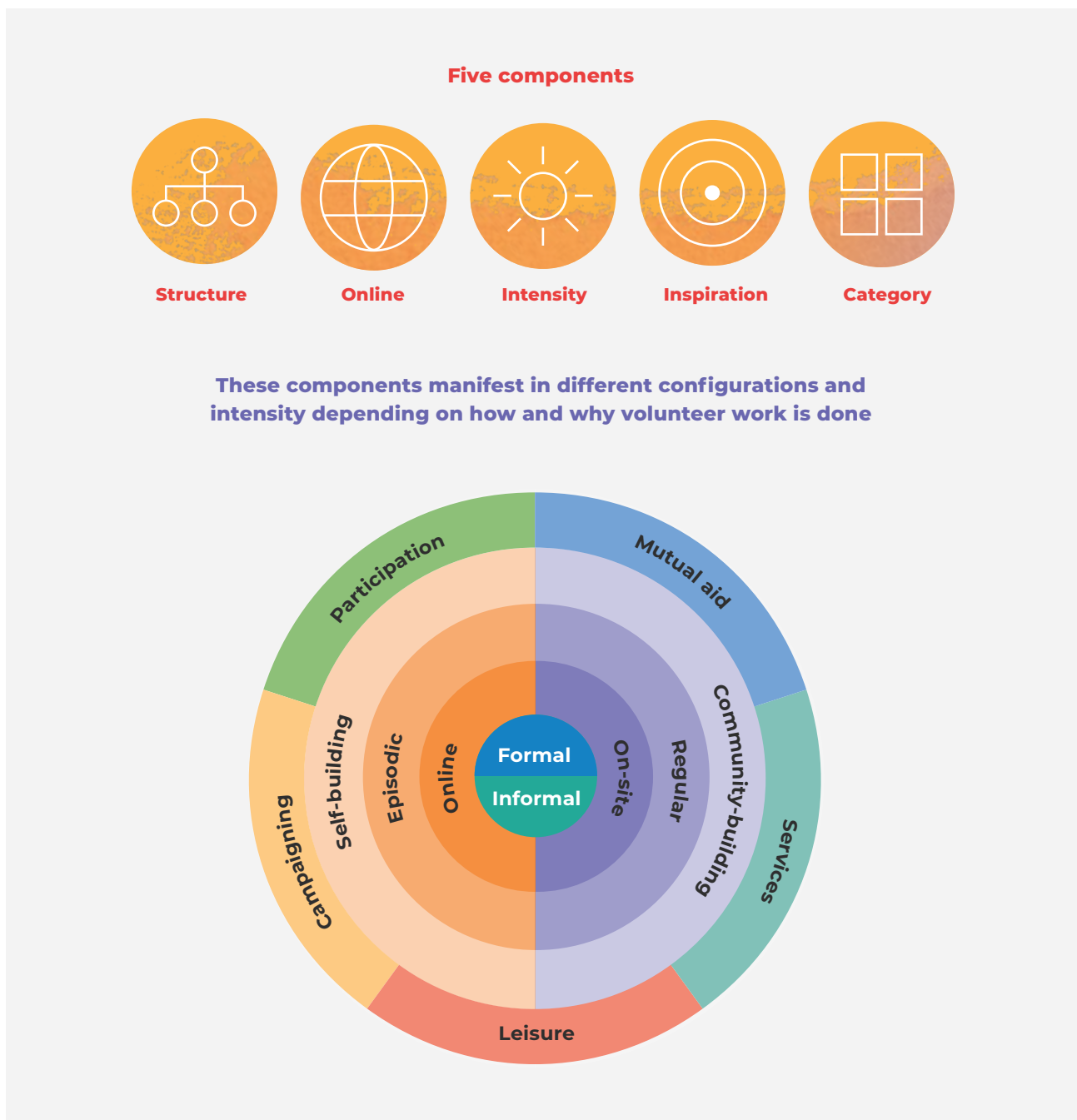
A volunteer restores a temple gate in Nepal.  
Source: UNV.



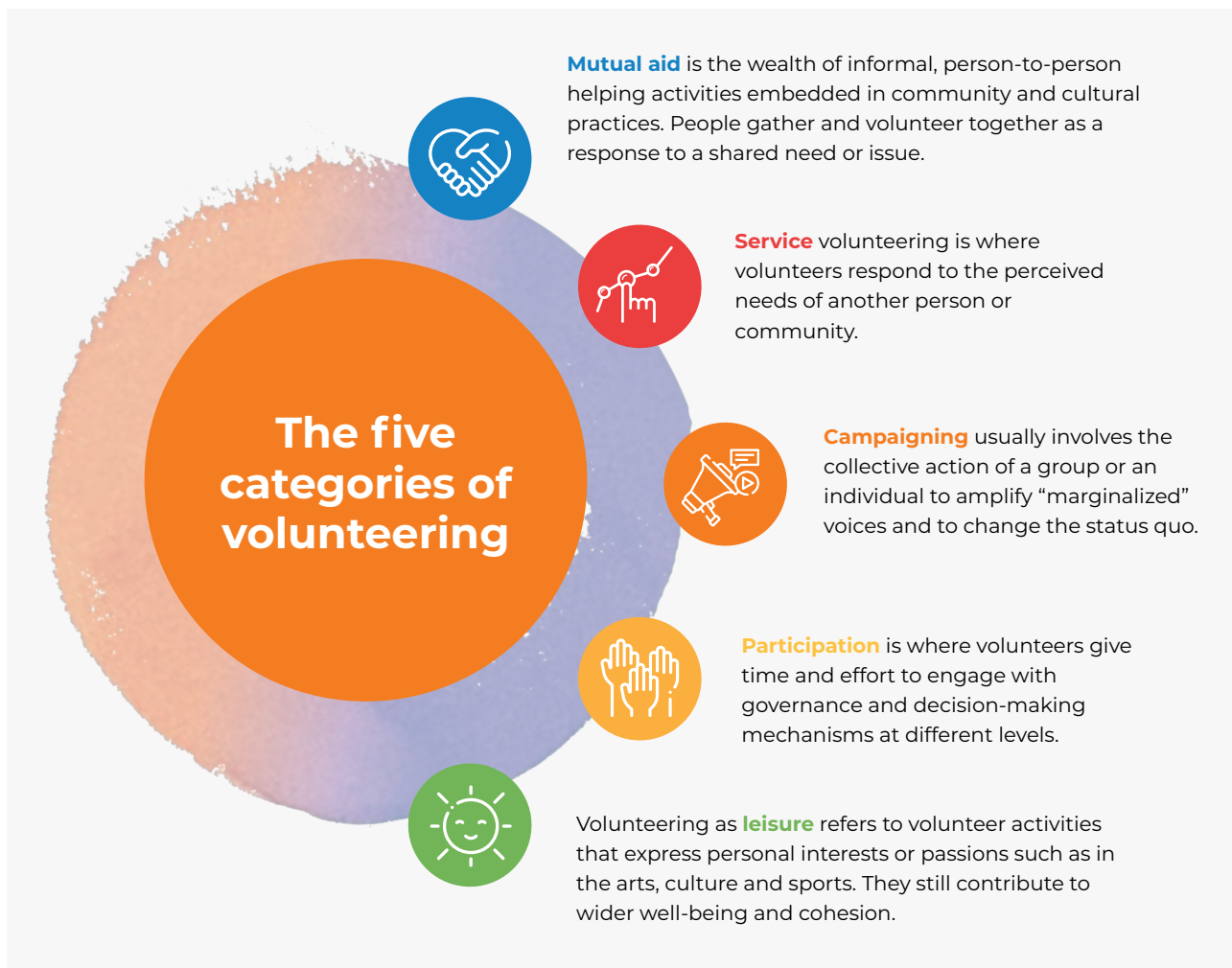
In 2020, a paper published under the Plan of Action to Integrate Volunteering into the 2030 Agenda proposed a new model for understanding volunteering practices in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.<sup>45</sup> This new model takes a broad view of volunteering. Whereas before, the characteristics of volunteering were precisely defined, in the new model, volunteering is

defined according to five components,<sup>46</sup> each representing a dimension of volunteer action: structure (formal and/or informal), site (online and/or offline), intensity (episodic and/or regular), aspiration (self-building and/or community-building) and category (service, mutual aid, participation, campaigning and leisure; these are not mutually exclusive).

**Figure 1.1.** A model for volunteering practices in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century





**Figure 1.2.** Categories of volunteering

The 2022 SWVR uses this broader definition of volunteering rather than strict definitions that do not capture the many and diverse volunteer practices that people engage in. As the models show, volunteering can be described as having certain core characteristics, but looks very different in different contexts.

The report also places emphasis on volunteering as civic participation.

Not all forms of civic participation are volunteering (and vice versa) but there are overlaps between the two.<sup>47</sup>

Civic participation is often defined as collective action undertaken to improve society and civic life.<sup>48, 49</sup> It includes activities such as voluntary service to local communities, but also occasional charitable donations<sup>50</sup> which may not be seen as volunteering. It also includes political participation at the personal (e.g. voting in an election) and collective (e.g. membership of political parties)<sup>51</sup> levels, or people volunteering their time to actively participate in government decision-making or co-implementing state programmes.

When seen in this light, volunteering allows individuals to intervene “in the solution of existing social problems which require a certain interaction between society and the state.”<sup>52</sup> Many of the volunteering practices in this report have to do with volunteering as civic participation, such as individuals contributing new ideas to local authorities to address local problems, and attending neighbourhood and council meetings.

### 1.2.2. Inclusion and social contracts for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

To focus on the potential contribution of volunteering towards building equal and inclusive societies, this report refers to the idea of the social contract, which has been described as “a dynamic and tacit agreement between states, people and communities on their mutual roles and responsibilities, with participation, public goods, public policies and taxation chief among them”.<sup>53</sup> Social contracts are dynamic: the relationships between people and states, and the power dynamics between them, continue to be reshaped, repurposed and reimagined in response to new challenges such as aging, gender inequalities and climate change.<sup>54</sup>

Useful distinctions have been made between “old” and “new” social contracts over the last two centuries.<sup>55</sup> These social contracts, particularly in the early 20th Century, were influenced by shrinking public services, and there was less consideration of the needs of the planet and the environment. Furthermore, the roles and responsibilities of “people” and “state” tended to be seen as separate.

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**In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, there has been a shift to what has been described as a new “eco-social contract”<sup>56</sup> with an overall emphasis on inclusion.**

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This new social contract consists of the following three priorities:

- i) Ensure human rights for all by extending social contracts to marginalized sectors of the society.
- ii) Be inclusive and recognize multiple inequalities that act as barriers to the engagement of certain groups—for instance, women—in relationships with the state.
- iii) Protect the planet, ecological processes and people’s relationship with nature.

With this new focus on inclusion, the idea of social contracts is no longer limited to Western contexts, and relationships are increasingly complex. For example, in parts of Africa, social contracts are believed to be enshrined in ubuntu, a philosophy of community and reciprocity.<sup>57</sup> Social contracts may also look different in fragile states, protracted crises, war or violence. In these contexts, governments might have limited resources and revenues, and a lack of legal and policy capacities to meet its peoples’ needs: “the main challenge is not government’s willingness but its ability to deliver on citizens’ expectations.”<sup>58</sup> It is therefore important to consider how the relationships between people and the state can contribute to building peaceful societies.<sup>59</sup> This report recognizes that no one social contract between people and states will fit every situation. Instead, there will be a variety of social contracts and players, for instance between specific segments of the society and certain government institutions operating at multiple levels. In addition, “people” and the “state” will have different expectations and opportunities depending on the context: the social contract “defines what we can expect from each other in society”<sup>60</sup> and “what a reasonable set of expectations should be.”<sup>61</sup>

Where in the past, many social contracts have explicitly excluded women from participating in and making social decisions,<sup>62</sup> going forward, they will be shaped by factors such as inequalities in power, influence, gender and technology.<sup>63, 64</sup>

In addition, just as individuals have multiple identities, roles, functions and alliances in society, states have a variety of institutional capacities that influence how they respond to communities' expectations. These range from effectiveness of state institutions, quality of leadership, accountability and transparency, to the resources they have available or their capacity to learn, adapt and innovate.

#### Box 1.1.

##### Defining social contracts

**“Social contracts”** are dynamic and evolving agreements between diverse groups of people. This report focuses on volunteers and volunteer-involving organizations on the one hand, and state actors and institutions at various levels on the other. These agreements should outline the mutual responsibilities of volunteers and state actors for joint social action towards building equal and inclusive societies. In other words, social contracts are created, developed and maintained through various forms of people–state relationships.

**“People–state relationships”** is a more general term that refers to how population groups work with the state. “Volunteer–state relationships” refer more specifically to when volunteers, volunteer groups or volunteer-involving organizations work with state institutions and government officials.

Source: UNDP (2016).

To add to this complex network, relationships between people and the state are shaped by various formal and informal structures and technologies.<sup>65, 66</sup> For example, volunteers as individuals will not only engage with the state and other actors through voluntary activities; they will also engage by being citizens, workers and consumers. Volunteers could face unique opportunities and challenges when working with state authorities compared with, for instance, paid staff or service users.

It is clear from a social contract perspective that relationships between volunteers, volunteer-involving organizations and the state can go beyond a partnership in which the role of the volunteers is to ensure that the state is accountable and call them out when they fail to honour their commitments:<sup>67</sup> volunteers and state authorities can also co-own and co-create initiatives at multiple levels.

However, to maximize the potential of this kind of collaboration, these social contracts cannot be assumed to be harmonious, good or necessary. Rather, their weaknesses and limitations and areas of disagreement need to be identified.<sup>68</sup>

#### 1.2.3. A focus on the dynamics of people–state relationships

To understand how social contracts are developed, we need to look at how the dynamics of people–state relationships are created and maintained. When people participate in state actions, the aims of the relationship and the time and resources required from both state institutions and community members need to be clear. Table 1.1<sup>69</sup> presents three types of people–state relationship that can lead to more equitable and inclusive partnerships: deliberation, collaboration and connections. It also outlines the role volunteering can play in each type of relationship.

**Table 1.1.** Types of people–state relationship

Relationship	Description	Examples where volunteering could play a role
<b>Deliberation</b>	People talk and listen to each other to develop plans and mediate various levels of state authority. As well as consensus, conflict may arise and will need to be addressed.	Deliberative governance mechanisms such as town-hall meetings, co-designing local policies; policy forums such as hackathons, and community campaigning.
<b>Collaboration</b>	Collective action is undertaken between people and their local/national government towards solving social issues. These partnerships could be considered as a spectrum between state-led and people-led.	Co-creation and co-implementation of social protection programmes and services through planning and delivery initiatives, community response teams and mutual aid groups.
<b>Connections</b>	Effective and enduring relationships are forged between people and states. These connections and relationships are embedded within existing governance systems and frameworks, and are subject to institutional change and contestations, due to the changing characteristics of the political contexts and the institutions themselves.	Community health volunteers as part of a devolved national health system; national volunteering programmes; neighbourhood governance; local councils; climate boards, and social entrepreneurship.

These types do not exist in isolation; they evolve in response to wider power inequalities, and are not necessarily harmonious. In many people–state relationships, conflicts arise<sup>70</sup> which, at times, reflect wider polarization.<sup>71</sup> At the same time, opening up spaces for various ideas to be deliberated, and even disputed, can be central to achieving inclusive social contracts and public policymaking.<sup>72, 73</sup> In Argentina, contestations between the government and social groups on how best to respond to the spread of COVID-19 led to a post-pandemic reconstruction plan that focused on reviving the economy in the country's poorest cities.<sup>74</sup>

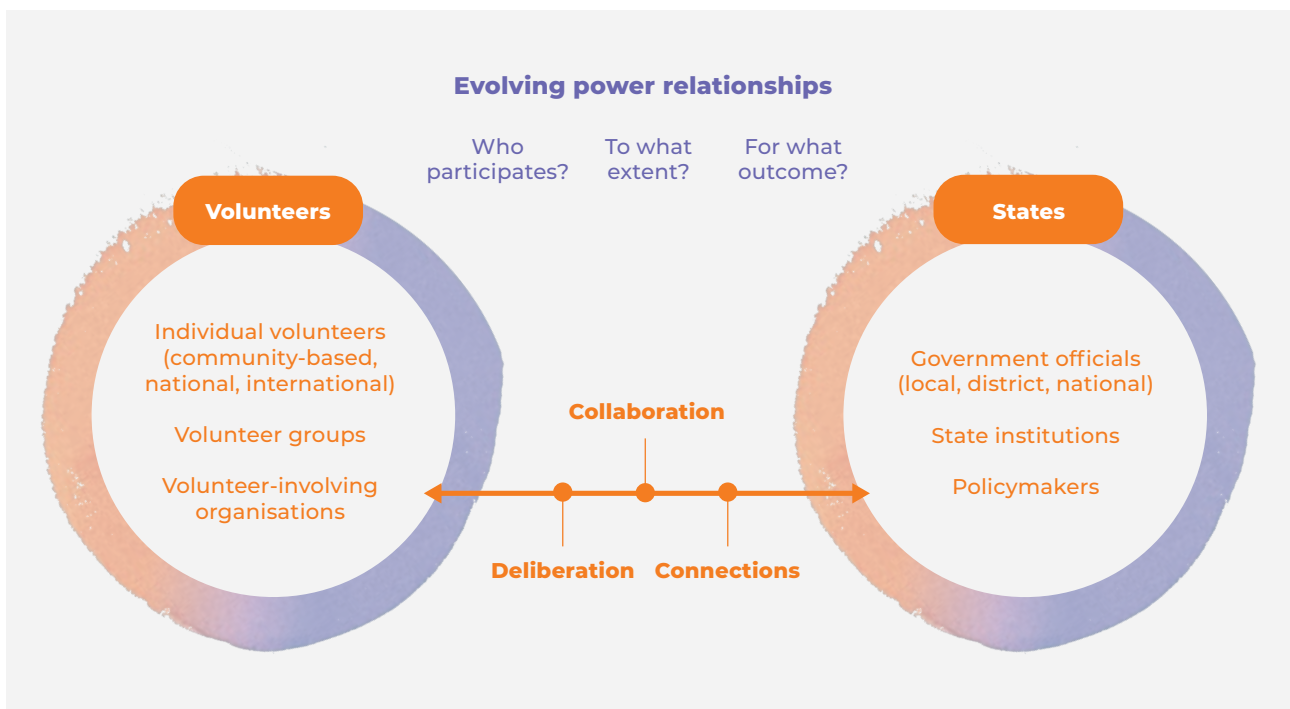
Five years into the implementation of the SDGs, Voluntary National Reviews of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development increasingly recognize the potential of volunteering as a vehicle for participation and consultation.<sup>75</sup> Volunteering enables people's participation through community participation for resilience-building; the use of apps, platforms and social media; and participation in consultations for policies that directly affect volunteers themselves. In the United Arab Emirates, youth councils led by local volunteers ensure that policies empower young people and volunteering organizations. In Paraguay, volunteers and the government engaged in a consultative

process which led to the development of volunteering legislation.

This report describes i) the extent of volunteers' and volunteer groups' involvement in volunteer–state relationships;

and ii) the shifting power relationships and dynamics of control between volunteers and state authorities.<sup>76</sup> As Figure 1.3 shows, volunteer–state relationships evolve through deliberation, collaboration and connections.

**Figure 1.3.** Evolving volunteer–state relationships



The framework recognizes that “volunteers” and “states” are not homogeneous groups and zooms in on the various elements that shape these relationships. The report poses three core questions:

- i) Who volunteers or participates?
  - ii) What is the extent or quality of such participation?
  - iii) What outcomes are facilitated as a result?
- i) This question addresses voice and inclusion in volunteer–state relationships. Certain groups such as women, young people, people with disabilities and indigenous peoples

might face barriers when volunteering in partnership with state authorities in decision-making, co-production and social innovation, and their participation may also be constrained.

- ii) This question asks how participation in people–state relationships fosters ownership. Differences and inequalities in power, gender, socio-economic status and influence affect participation through volunteering.
- iii) This question asks what outcomes are facilitated when volunteers and the state work together rather than separately. In doing so, it identifies the added value of these partnerships in the context of the SDGs.



These questions are used as the starting point for exploring real-world scenarios of volunteer–state relationships, to identify their strengths and potential as well as limitations and conflicts.

#### 1.2.4. Volunteer–state models

To discuss real-world scenarios of volunteer–state relationships, this report categorizes them according to: i) the actors involved; ii) the relationships between them; and iii) the extent to which their activities address voice and inclusion, innovation and ownership. The report identifies three models: the deliberative governance model, the co-production of services model and the social innovation model.

The **deliberative governance model** (chapter 4) demonstrates how diverse voices and aspirations are, and can be, brought into states' decision-making processes. Inclusion of these voices requires careful attention to issues of inequalities such as the gendered dimension of volunteering and volunteer–state relationships.

In the cities of Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte in Brazil, for instance, participatory budgeting became a way to shape financial priority in favour of the poor.<sup>77</sup> During the Tunisian government's transition, civil society organizations (CSOs) played a role in ensuring public dialogue in policymaking processes. This helped reduce public scepticism and increased buy-in on implementation.<sup>78</sup>

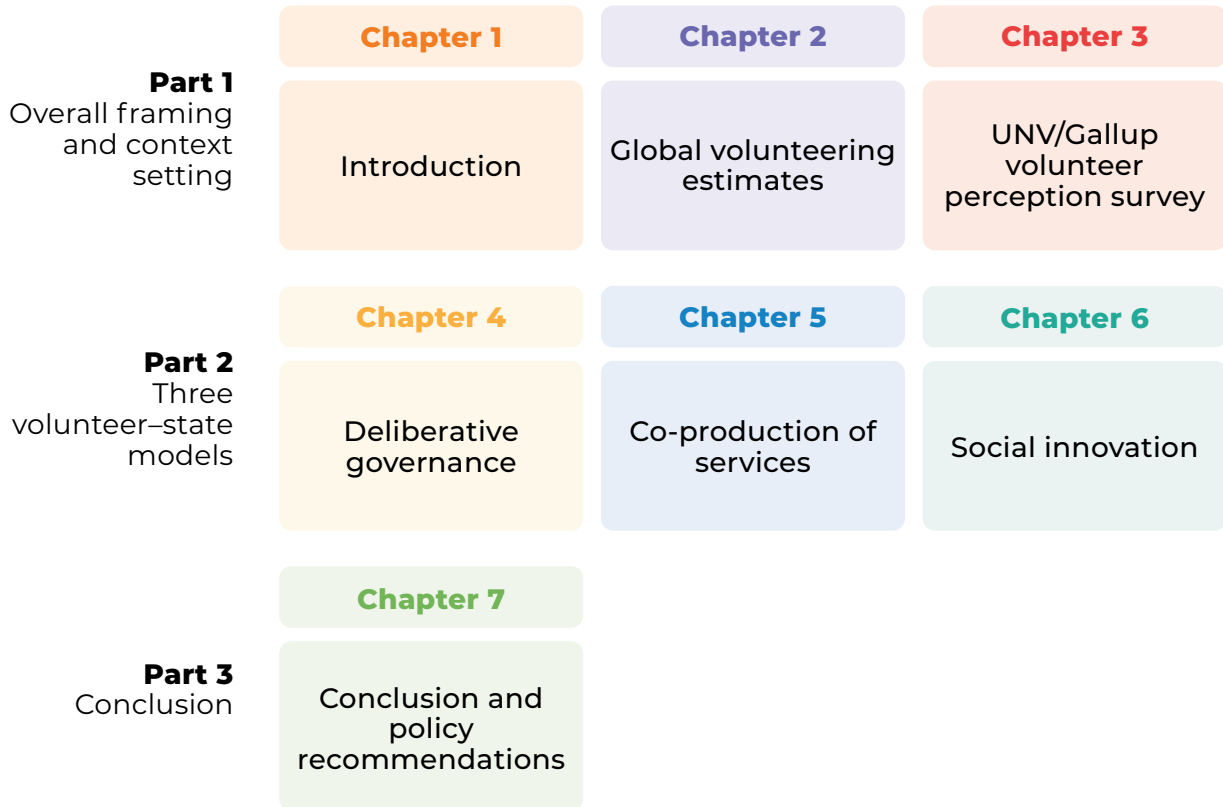
The **co-production of services model** (chapter 5) demonstrates the extent to which volunteers can shape public policies and programmes, from design to implementation to evaluation. Through this process of co-production, volunteers also shape their own work and priorities, exercising agency to ensure that their safety is protected and that their relationship with the state is equitable. In a study of local volunteers in the Korogocho slums in Kenya, for example, the participation of low-income volunteers was

sometimes limited because local institutions already had pre-set programme objectives prior to engaging with the community.<sup>79</sup> The Tuberculosis Task Force in the Philippines has co-designed legislation on TB contact tracing. They are now leading this contact-tracing effort on behalf of the local government.<sup>80</sup>

The **social innovation model** (chapter 6) explores how volunteers may be involved in generating, implementing and disseminating new ideas and practices aimed at addressing ongoing and emerging social challenges. For instance, in Central Asia, several health care volunteer groups have devised new practices in response to the pandemic<sup>81</sup> such as the installation of home oxygen machines for at-risk patients, organized by Egzu Agmal in Uzbekistan. While many examples of contemporary social innovation focus on technological and digital projects, the SWVR reviews community-based social innovations in many contexts where resources are scarce.

### 1.3. How to read this report

The SWVR 2022 follows an anthology format: each chapter is stand-alone so that the report can be read in whatever order is most helpful. Nevertheless, chapters are linked together by the overall theme of Building Equal and Inclusive Societies. The report kicks off a set of four reports that provide both evidence and thought leadership on specific areas of focus under the Call to Action on Volunteering in the Decade of Action. The forthcoming editions of the report will explore how volunteerism can be a transformative force in the Decade of Action and beyond. The SWVR 2024 will examine volunteerism and measurement, building on chapter 2 of this report. The SWVR 2027 will explore volunteerism and inequalities, and the 2030 edition will take stock of volunteers' contribution to the 2030 Agenda and the Decade of Action.

**Figure 1.4.** Structure of the report

The first part of the report consists of three framing chapters. These present the main ideas that underpin the report and introduce concepts for investigating the potential contribution volunteerism can make to building equal and inclusive societies. Following the introduction, the next two chapters survey global and regional patterns of volunteering with a special focus on Global South countries, investigating how COVID-19 has impacted volunteering and its future directions. This part of the report provides a “state of the world’s” view of volunteering, and global and regional trends.

The second part of the report focuses on the three models of volunteer-state relationship: deliberative governance, co-production of social services and social innovation. Each chapter investigates the “process” and “action” components of its respective model and discusses the drivers, challenges and barriers. To do this, the SWVR draws on research case studies from Africa, Asia and

the Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Arab States, and Latin America and the Caribbean (see Table 1.2.; see Appendix A for the full case study methodology).



**Table 1.2.** List of case studies per chapter

Chapters	Theme from the analytical framework	Maxi case studies	Mini case studies
<b>Volunteer–state partnerships and deliberative governance</b>	Voice and Inclusion	Guthi and Barghar (Nepal) and Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano (Ecuador)	Agricultural and Rural Management Council (CARG; Democratic Republic of the Congo – DRC), Nebhana Water Forum (Tunisia), Alga (Kyrgyzstan)
<b>Volunteer–state partnerships and co-production of services</b>	Ownership	Amel Association International (Lebanon)	China Disabled Persons' Federation (China), Center for Vocational Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (Kazakhstan); Bajenu Gox (Senegal), Sairon (Kyrgyzstan)
<b>Volunteer–state partnerships and social innovation</b>	Innovation	Art & Global Health Center (ArtGlo; Malawi)	The Volunteer Center of Trinidad and Tobago (Trinidad and Tobago), Model of Integral Care for Rurality (Colombia), Muungano Alliance (Kenya); Markets for Change (Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands)

The final chapter discusses key policy principles and offers further recommendations for policymakers on building equal and inclusive societies through development of inclusive and sustainable social contracts with volunteers.

Each chapter also features “Volunteer voices” and “Special contributions” sections. Volunteer voices are first-hand accounts from volunteers across the globe reflecting on a particular contemporary volunteering issue such as partnerships, gender and urbanization. Special contributions are think pieces by policymakers, international organizations, governments and volunteers.



## Volunteer voice: Makan Dramé from Mali on the challenges and impacts of volunteering

**Volunteering is a complex social process that means different things to different people. When COVID-19 reached Mali, Makan Dramé immediately volunteered to support his local government officials in their response despite experiencing a number of challenges. Below, Makan reflects on the impact volunteering can have on both communities and volunteers.**

*My passion for volunteering dates back to my childhood. Raised in a family that prioritized solidarity and mutual support, I spent much of my time working as a community volunteer—a deeply enriching experience.*

*Having worked as a national volunteer with the National Centre for the Promotion of Volunteerism (CNPV), I was among 60 volunteers who were selected to participate in the United Nations Community Volunteers for the COVID-19 response. As team leader, I engaged volunteers in raising awareness and informing and mobilizing communities to fight COVID-19 in public spaces by observing preventive measures. For 11 months, the volunteers worked in health centres, families, mosques, markets, community gatherings (grins) and on the streets.*

*In November 2020, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which is responsible for civic education and citizenship-building in Bamako, supported a two-day awareness-raising campaign on the pandemic, launched by UNV Mali in partnership with the CNPV. As part of the campaign, thousands of people including women, young people, vulnerable people and internally displaced persons (IDPs) were reached. During the campaign's launch, which mobilized volunteer-involving organizations and associations to raise awareness on COVID-19 prevention measures, community volunteers were commended for their commitment to COVID-19 control efforts.*

*Most people do not understand the importance of volunteering and the role that volunteers play in building citizenship. It is not easy to be a volunteer. As we are not full-time employees with a permanent contract, we are sometimes not respected in society because of our status. Very often, the negative opinions towards volunteers come from family, friends and acquaintances... And yet every citizen can and must contribute to building their country.*

*What I am most proud of is having contributed to the collective effort to fight COVID-19. We successfully accomplished our mission because our daily activities helped to change attitudes and save lives.*

## **Special contribution: Partnership between volunteers and the state**

### **Reflection by H.E. Dr. Nivine El-Kabbag, Minister of Social Solidarity, Egypt**

Egypt believes in the importance of developing the capacities and potential of young people as future leaders in order to achieve sustainable development and Egypt Vision 2030. Recent history and events have shown that young people are active actors in society and have the awareness, capacity and determination to bring about constructive social change, and positively impact the lives of millions of people in the most vulnerable groups and the victims of disasters or accidents.

For Egypt, youth are valuable resources whom we must support and invest in, and we must embrace their ideas and energies to address the social problems that we are solving. The Ministry of Social Solidarity, in partnership with other sectors of the government and society, is working to ensure that young people from all backgrounds, from rural and urban areas, volunteer in various areas of development, thereby enhancing the opportunities of young people to deal with their personal and community challenges and enjoy team spirit, cooperation and innovation.

The Ministry of Social Solidarity provides capacity-building programmes and communication channels for young people to volunteer to participate and respond creatively to Egypt's development challenges. Youth have participated as volunteers in all the presidential initiatives and major development projects undertaken by the Egyptian state over the past few years, such as the national initiative for the development of Egyptian villages; and Hayah Karima and Waii, the community awareness-raising programmes. Moreover, the Ministry of Social Solidarity has depended on the strong contributions from volunteers in critical moments of disasters and crises through their voluntary work with the Egyptian Red Crescent. Furthermore, youth are playing a major role in shaping a safe future for their peers through their voluntary activities done with the Fund to Combat Addiction and Substance Abuse. These initiatives strengthen the leadership role of young people in the community and humanitarian work, and boost their motivation, resilience and potential for the development of their communities as active citizens, future responsible leaders and role models for younger generations in Egypt.



## Chapter 2

# What is not counted does not count: Global volunteering estimates

16 PEACE, JUSTICE  
AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS



17 PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



## Key highlights

- Measuring volunteering globally continues to be a challenge, but new data shed light on the scale and scope of volunteer engagement around the world.
- Using this new data, the monthly volunteer rate, defined as the share of working-age people 15 years or older who volunteer in a month, amounts to almost 15 percent, or 862 million people.
- Most volunteer work continues to be arranged informally between individuals, with 14.3 percent of the global population participating, while 6.5 percent of working-age people worldwide engage in formal volunteering via an organization or association. A significant percentage of people carry out multiple types of volunteer work.
- While formal volunteers are mostly men, informal volunteers are more likely to be women.
- Member States can use newly developed measurement tools by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNV to better measure volunteer action at the national level.

## 2.1. Introduction

Every day around the globe, millions of people take action on issues that matter to them, volunteering with communities, organizations, companies and alone. In doing so, they bring us closer to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 2020 “Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system” recognizes that “volunteerism can be a powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the important role that volunteers play in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences”.<sup>82</sup>

However, less is known about just how many people volunteer, how they volunteer, and how their contributions can be maximized to achieve the SDGs. Answers to these vital questions require data and evidence. This chapter builds on previous efforts to measure the scale and scope of volunteering at the global and regional level.

## 2.2. Meeting the challenge: producing global and regional volunteer estimates

Estimating the scale and scope of global volunteerism is challenging. Volunteerism comprises a diverse set of actors and activities and has varying impacts on peace and development, depending on the context. As a result, its definition varies from country to country, and even within countries.<sup>83</sup> This report uses the definition that was adopted in the 2002 UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution: “a wide range

of activities, including traditional forms of mutual aid and self-help, formal service delivery and other forms of civic participation, undertaken of free will, for the general public good and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor.”<sup>84</sup> Under this comprehensive definition, volunteerism encompasses both formal activities performed through organizations and informal actions performed by individuals outside formally registered organizations.

To statistically measure volunteering, a detailed definition of volunteers is required to enable comparison across different sources and countries. The International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), the global reference body in this area, has led multiple consultations that feed into the current definition of volunteering as a form of unpaid work. In 2013, this culminated in the adoption of standardized definitions, which are essential for measurement, and official guidance for national statistics systems on how to measure volunteering.



A volunteer visits a roadside market in Malawi to encourage local women to attend a meeting on gender-based violence. *Source:* UNV.

**Under the ICLS definition, people in volunteer work are defined as all people of working age who, during a short reference period, performed any unpaid, non-compulsory activity to produce goods or provide services for others, where:**

- “any activity” means work for at least one hour;
- “unpaid” means the absence of cash or in-kind remuneration for work done or hours worked (although volunteer workers may receive compensation or stipends);
- “non-compulsory” means work performed without a civil, legal or administrative requirement;
- production “for others” means work performed outside of the household or family of the volunteer.

**The definition excludes:**

- community service and work by prisoners ordered by a court or similar authority and compulsory military or alternative civilian service;
- unpaid work required as part of education or training programmes (i.e. unpaid trainees);
- work for others performed during working time associated with employment or during paid time off granted by an employer.

*Source:* ILO (2013).



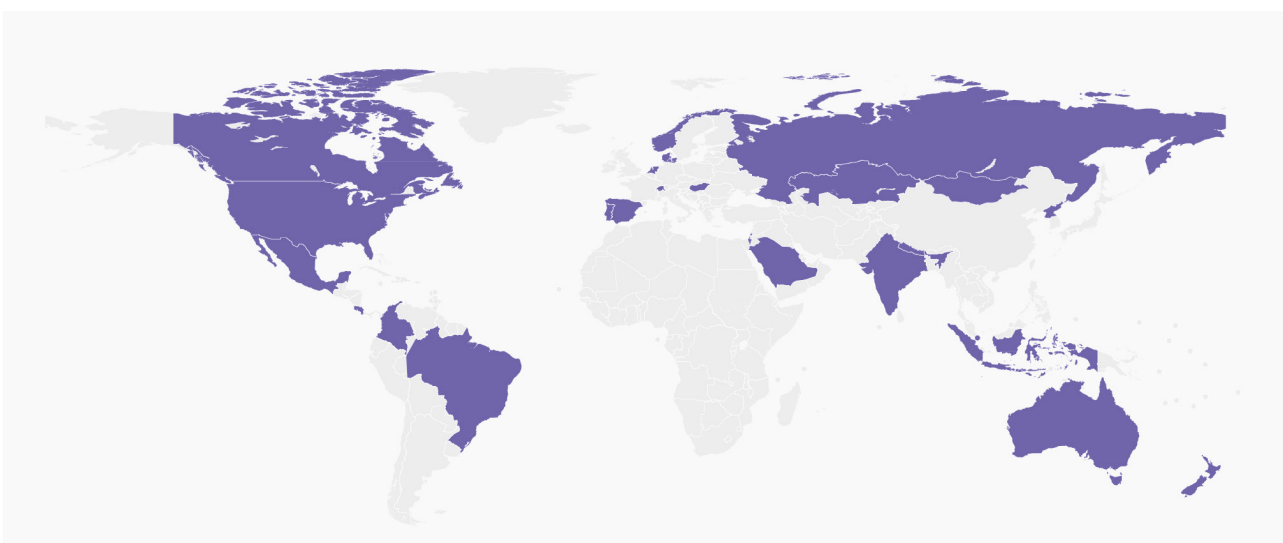
National and cross-national data can be unreliable for a number of reasons. First, the lack of consistency in how volunteering is defined across countries and the lack of regular measurements undermine the quality of statistics. Second, volunteering is typically a sporadic activity. For instance, the 2018 SWVR noted that “although national statistical agencies view volunteering as a form of unpaid work that has social and economic value, only a handful of countries, largely high-income, regularly measure volunteering, and they have done so inconsistently. And when volunteering is measured, the focus has often primarily been on organization-based volunteering, to the neglect of volunteering performed spontaneously by people in their communities”.<sup>85</sup>

Despite these challenges, there has been much progress since the development of UNV-ILO volunteering measurement tools, which can capture the full diversity of volunteering efforts, including modules for labour force surveys,<sup>86</sup> modules for population censuses,<sup>87</sup> and a new indicator on volunteering in the ILOSTAT online database which provides national statistics

on volunteering from UN Member States.<sup>88</sup> Substantive changes include questions to better identify involvement in informal volunteering and in volunteering performed in relation to donations, which seem to be particularly important in the Global South. In general, focus has shifted from just formal or organization-based volunteering towards informal and sporadic forms of volunteering, which may be more relevant in countries with less formal volunteering infrastructure and likely more diverse and non-conventional forms of volunteering.

Since 2018, following the launch of the new UNV-ILO tools and guidance, at least 25 countries<sup>i</sup> have undertaken new national statistical measurements of volunteering (see Figure 2.1). UNV and ILO continue to facilitate international cooperation for national statistical measurement of volunteering. However, the pandemic saw many countries postpone plans to measure volunteering in 2020. Statistical coverage in the Global South remains patchy but efforts are under way, using the UNV/ILO tools, to systematically measure volunteer efforts in the region.

**Figure 2.1.** Map of countries that have undertaken national statistical volunteering measurements



<sup>i</sup> These are Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Israel, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland and the United States of America.

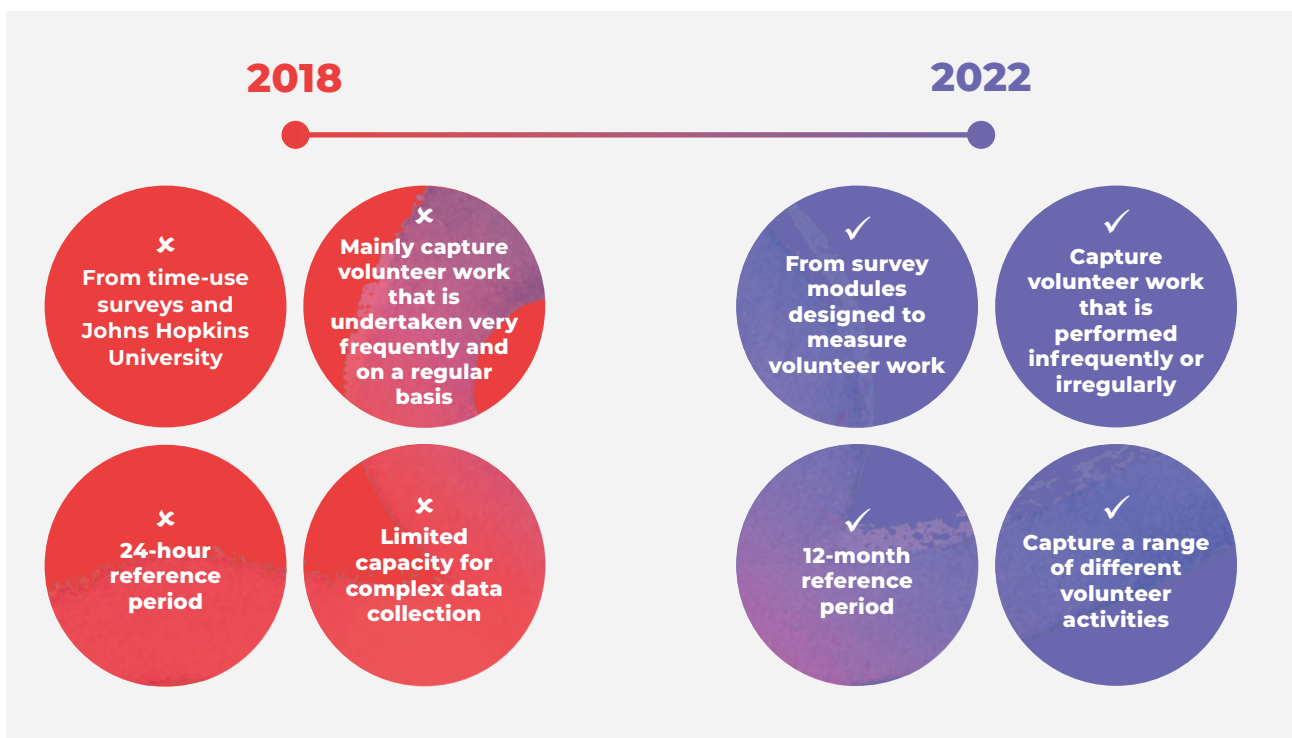
Figures presented later on in the chapter (Figures 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8 and 2.9) provide regional and global estimates of the total number of volunteers and volunteer rates; volunteering by type, formality (see Box 2.1 for definitions) and gender, and an estimate of full-time equivalents (how many full-time workers would be needed to do the work that volunteers do).

Importantly, the survey module data apply a 12-month period, which better captures volunteering that is performed less frequently, even occasionally, and captures a wider range of volunteering activities. This is in contrast with the time-use survey data used in 2018, which applied a reference period of 24 hours. As a result, they mainly only captured volunteering that was performed very frequently. In addition, the usefulness of time-use surveys is limited when it comes to more complex data-collection approaches.

**Box 2.1. Formal and informal volunteering**

*Formal volunteering takes place through organizations, associations or groups, typically by volunteers with an ongoing or sustained commitment to an organization, who contribute their time on a regular basis. Informal volunteering occurs directly between individuals and communities without being mediated by an organization. While the terms of formal and informal volunteering are widely used in the global volunteering community, labour force statisticians often refer to them as organization-based volunteering and direct volunteering.*

**Figure 2.2.** Comparison of 2018 SWVR data with 2022 SWVR data





### 2.2.1. Data sources

The ILOSTAT database<sup>89</sup> contains volunteer rates that are published by national statistical offices, or estimated by the ILO using data collected and published by national statistical offices, in 61 countries. For this estimation, the most recent and complete data sets were selected, especially where countries had collected volunteering data several times.

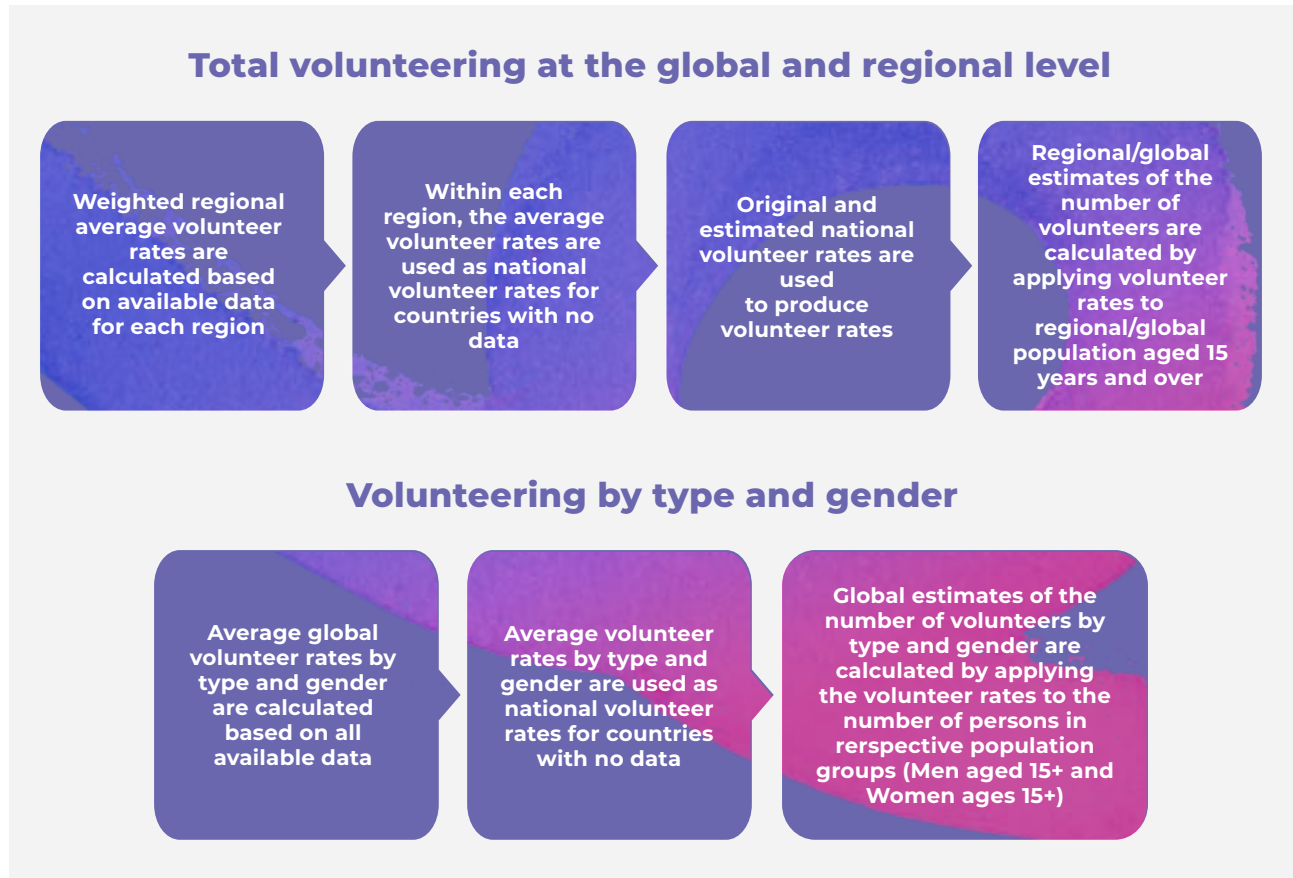
National surveys collecting volunteer work data use a variety of measurement approaches. One variable that has a direct impact on the volunteer rate is the reference period. Three different reference periods were applied to calculate the volunteer rates available in ILOSTAT: one week or seven days, four weeks or 30 days and one year or 12

months. Volunteer rates were estimated by the UNV-Gallup survey. Before proceeding to the calculation of global estimates, all available volunteer rates were made comparable—that is, they were adjusted to reflect the hypothetical situation in which all countries use the same reference period to estimate volunteer rates. This adjustment process is described in the methodological note in Appendix B.

### 2.2.2. Calculation of estimates

Before calculating the global and regional volunteer rate estimates, the rates had to be calculated for countries that did not have statistics available (see Figure 2.3). A more detailed explanation of these calculations can be found in Appendix B.

**Figure 2.3.** Calculation of estimates



Regional volunteer rate estimates were calculated as weighted averages of original and estimated national volunteer rates in each region. Global volunteer rate estimates were calculated as weighted averages of original and estimated national volunteer rates in all countries. Regional and global estimates of the total number of volunteers were then calculated by applying the estimated volunteer rates to the regional and global totals of the population aged 15 years and over. To estimate the number of men and women engaging in formal and informal volunteering, volunteer rates by type and gender were applied to the number of persons in the respective population groups (i.e. men aged 15 years and over and women aged 15 years and over).

Finally, global full-time equivalents were calculated by multiplying the estimated total number of monthly volunteers by the average number of hours volunteered per month, and then dividing this number by 160, based on the assumption that a full-time worker works 40 hours per week times four weeks per month.

### 2.2.3. Limitations

Volunteer rates from ILOSTAT and the UNV-Gallup survey were generated using a wide variety of measurement approaches, from simple to highly complex. The lack of consistency of country-level measurements, coupled with the fact that some countries only measure formal volunteering, make calculating global estimates challenging.

The different data dissemination formats used by countries to publish national volunteer rates also affect the reliability of the estimations. For example, volunteer rates for many European countries come from a survey conducted by Eurostat, which estimates and publishes both formal and informal volunteering rates, but not total volunteer rates. For these countries, the higher of the two rates was used as the total volunteer rate in global estimations. Because

of this, the volunteer rate values for Europe and Central Asia, and therefore, the global rate, underestimate the real incidence of volunteering in the population, if all other factors remain constant.

It is also important to note that volunteer rate estimates by type of volunteering and gender are based mainly on data from the Global North, since only five countries from the Global South had produced statistics. This makes the estimates less representative because they do not reflect regional differences.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted people's participation in volunteering in 2020 and 2021. Most statistics used to calculate these estimates—for 59 out of 69 countries—were produced between 2010 and 2019. The UNV-Gallup survey, conducted in eight countries in the Global South at the beginning of 2021, covered the previous 12 months (i.e. most of 2020).

Volunteering data collected in 2020, when strict lockdowns and other containment measures were implemented across the world, have likely impacted these global estimates.

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**On the one hand, it is reasonable to assume that COVID-19 restrictions stopped many people from volunteering on site, while on the other hand, many people are likely to have switched to volunteering online.**

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Additionally, the sudden increase in the number of people needing assistance because of the pandemic may have opened up more volunteering opportunities. These factors, and the lack of pre-pandemic volunteering statistics for countries in which the UNV-Gallup survey was conducted, make it difficult to evaluate exactly how COVID-19 has affected volunteering.



A volunteer advocates for the protection of the lomas, local ecosystems that rely on fog for moisture, from land traffickers in Peru.  
Source: UNV.



## 2.3. Global estimates

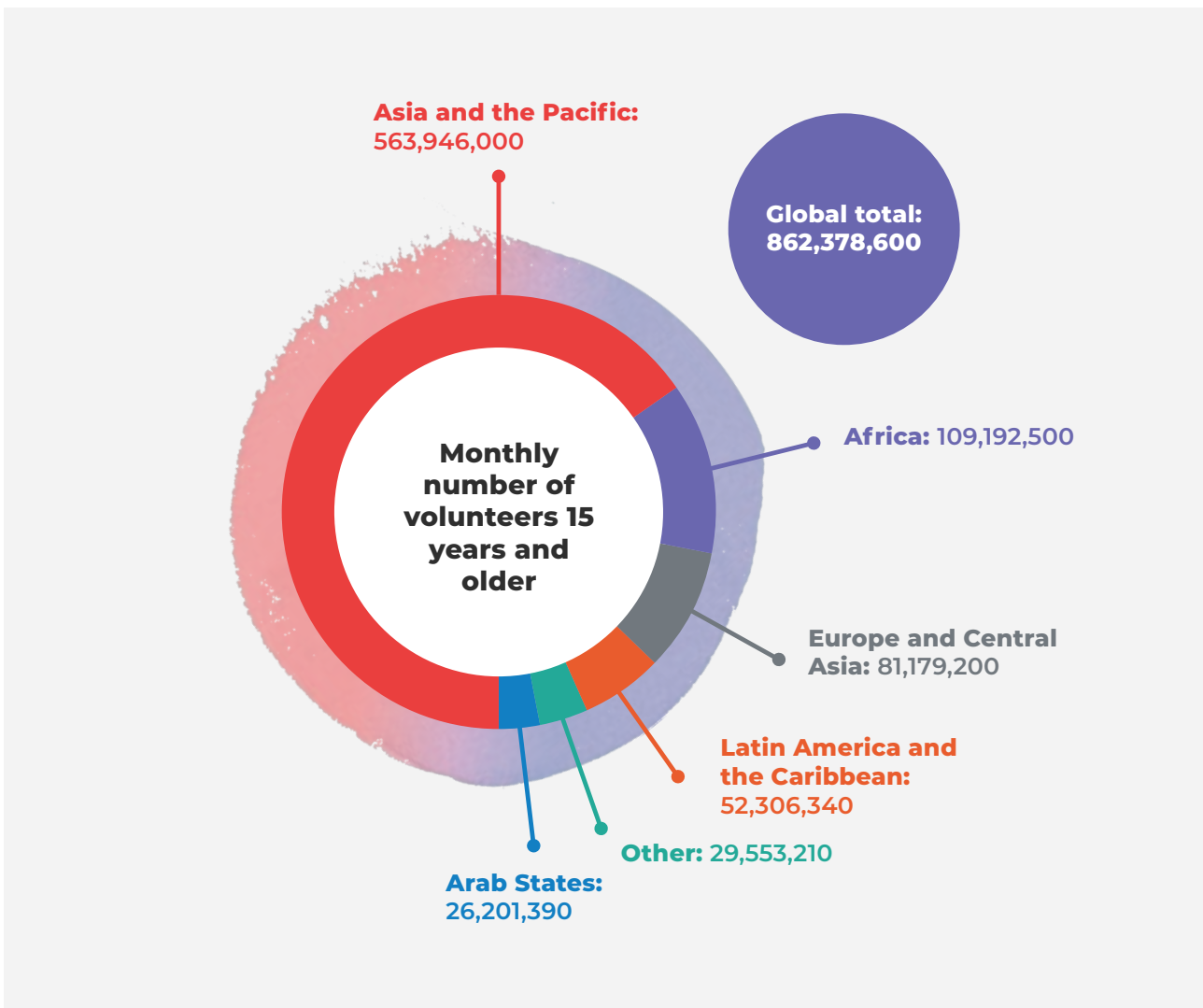
This section looks at annual volunteering estimates but mainly focuses on monthly figures, since the latest international standards on statistics set the reference period to a month.

Looking at total numbers of volunteers, the monthly number of volunteers aged 15 years and over amounts to 862.4 million worldwide. There are significant regional differences, with Asia and the Pacific taking a strong lead (see Figure 2.4).

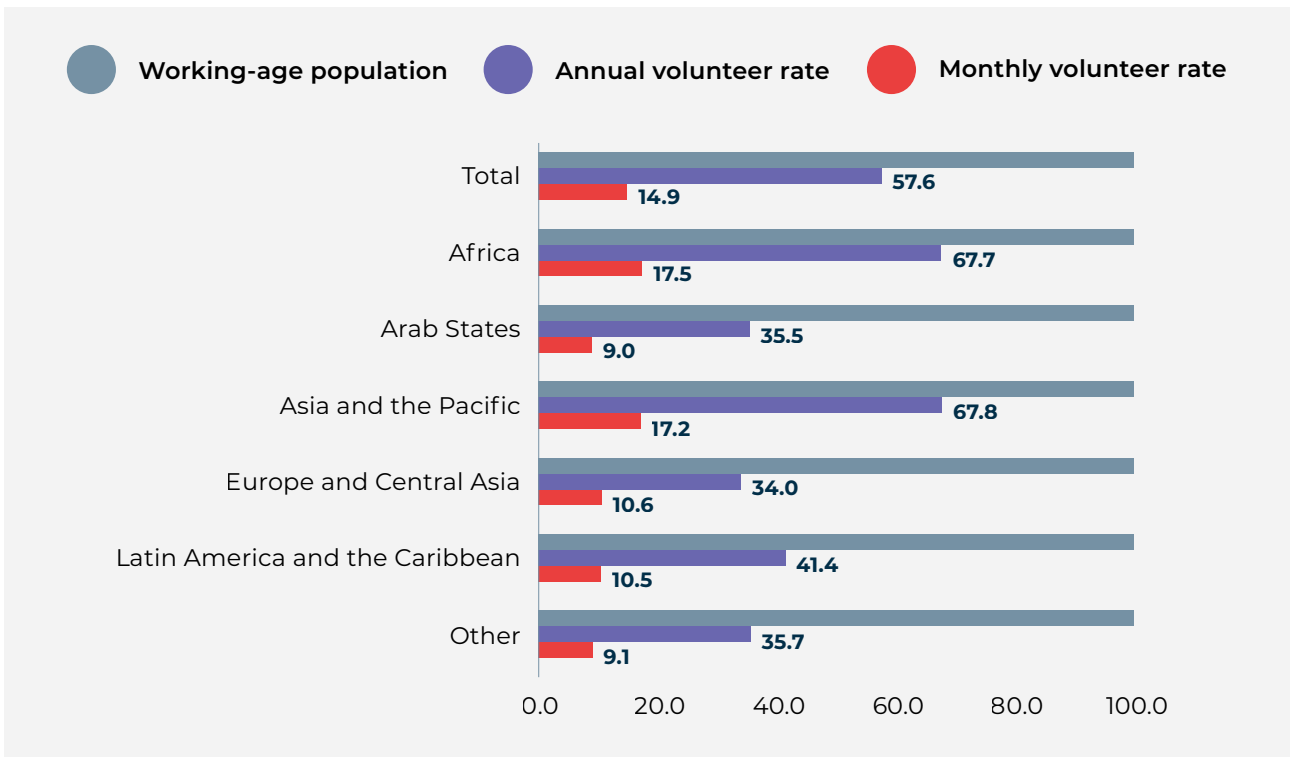
Regional differences can be attributed to different population sizes and varying volunteer rates. The share of the total working-age population (15 years and over) who volunteer amounts to almost 15 percent (see Figure 2.5).

While the Arab States, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean display monthly volunteer rates of 9 to 10.6 percent, Africa and Asia and the Pacific far exceed this with monthly volunteer rates of 17.5 percent and 17.2 percent, respectively.

**Figure 2.4.** Monthly number of volunteers aged 15 years and over, by region



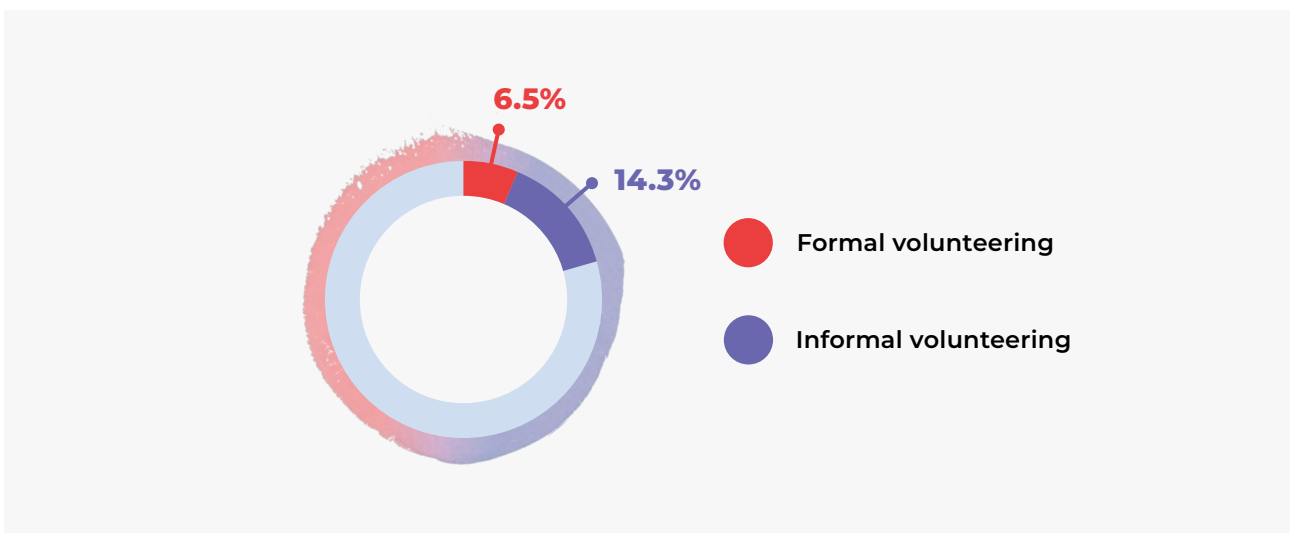
**Figure 2.5.** Volunteer rates (%)



When it comes to formal and informal volunteering, 6.5 percent of working-age people worldwide engage in formal volunteering, while 14.3 percent engage in informal volunteering (see Figure 2.6). This

means that worldwide, more than twice as many people volunteer informally than formally, even with informal volunteering likely still being underestimated due to the difficulties of capturing it.

**Figure 2.6.** Monthly volunteer rates by type (%)

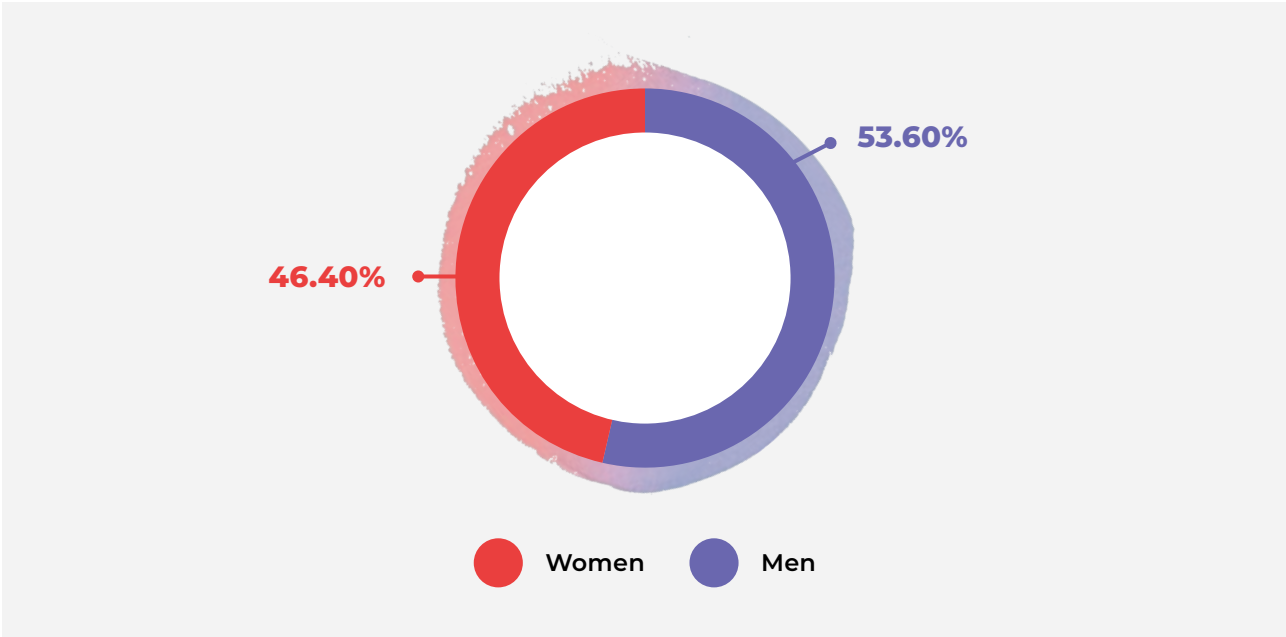




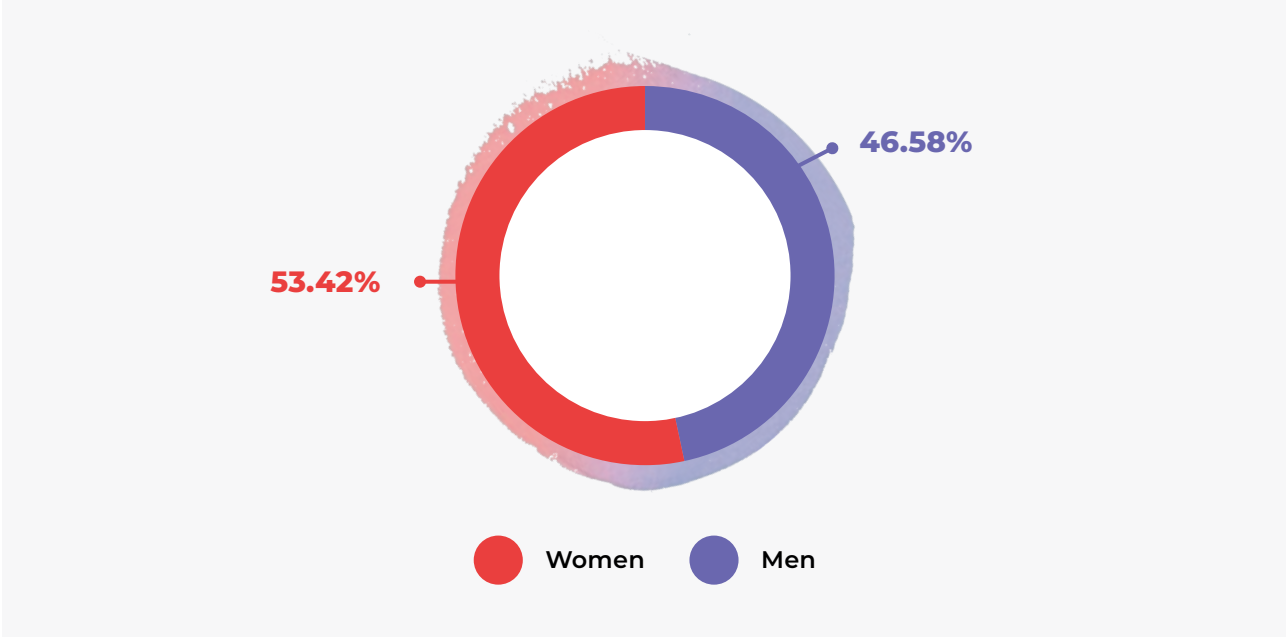
Looking at gender-based differences, formal volunteers are mostly men, whereas informal volunteers are more likely to be women (see Figures 2.7 and 2.8). This has important implications for the ways in which volunteering can reinforce or challenge

gender norms: informal volunteering tends to have lower status, attract less recognition and receive less practical support such as training, insurance or administrative support, than formal volunteering.

**Figure 2.7.** Formal volunteering by gender



**Figure 2.8.** Informal volunteering by gender



To gauge the economic contribution of volunteering globally, the number of full-time equivalent workers was estimated. The result was approximately 61,000,000 full-time workers monthly, assuming a 40-hour week.

As these estimates show, volunteering is a massive resource for the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs, with millions of people contributing across various sectors.

## 2.4. Improving measurement of volunteering at the global and regional level

Global volunteering could still be being underestimated, since many countries only report data on formal volunteering and difficulties in capturing informal volunteering remain. Incoherence in the data and the fact that much of the data is from countries in the Global North are further limitations. Although measuring volunteering remains challenging, progress has been made, potentially enabling better global, regional and national volunteering estimates in the future.

More countries have started to measure the scale and scope of volunteering on a regular basis. Low- and middle-income countries in particular, where data gaps persist, will benefit from investments in measuring volunteering according to the latest international standards on statistics. More high-quality and comparable data will enable the development and use of more elaborate and complex models of volunteerism.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to several countries postponing their plans to measure volunteering. There is a need to regain momentum. The ILO's creation of new data-collection methods could help accelerate the generation of comparable and standardized data across different contexts. As part of their measurement efforts, Member States should

incorporate the new UNV-ILO volunteering measurement tools in their national statistical surveys such as labour force surveys, social surveys and other household surveys.

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**As we seek to build forward better in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, development strategies should incorporate volunteering measurements as part of environmental, social and economic benchmarks for progress.**

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Furthermore, Member States should use volunteering data more widely for national planning, analysis and reporting on the 2030 Agenda, and continue to collaborate on measurement issues.

This chapter has presented statistics on global volunteering estimates: formal, informal, by gender and age, among other variables. Those wishing to incorporate volunteering mechanisms into development need data for informed policy decision-making. Making this information available to policymakers and development practitioners is therefore critical if the world is to benefit from the real value of various volunteering models. The chapter highlights the scarcity of data on volunteering, which has remained circumstantial, especially in the Global South, and thus the efforts to develop a measurement methodology that can be applied to measure volunteer efforts, both formal and informal. On the other hand, many countries in the Global North have already been quantifying the value of volunteering for many years, which has helped to position volunteering within their socio-economic contexts.

The next chapter explores trends of volunteering before, during and beyond the global COVID-19 crisis, looking at how volunteering can help us build forward better and shape the new social contract.

## **Volunteer voice: Gladys Mutukwa from Zambia on the inclusion of women's voices**

**Gender gaps in volunteering exist globally. Gladys Mutukwa, a volunteer in Zambia, shares her insights.**

*My name is Gladys Mutukwa. I'm 73 years old. I'm a lawyer by profession and worked as a State Advocate and a Legal Aid Officer for the Zambian Government, and eventually as a Diplomat responsible for legal and social matters in the Permanent Mission of Zambia to the United Nations in New York. I have been a volunteer all my life. I volunteered in the community while at school and university, and at church, where I taught women and young girls in surrounding villages and in other communities how to read and write. Much of my volunteer work has focused on women's human and legal rights.*

*In this "new normal", it will be incredibly important for volunteers to be regarded as essential partners right from the outset. Governments, the private sector and other stakeholders will need to commit to facilitating and accommodating the important role of volunteers. Gender issues are critical and must be addressed for the volunteers, the communities and/or organizations they will operate in, and the communities they will be assisting. Gender sensitization of all staff at all levels is imperative.*

*The most challenging aspect of being a volunteer is the lack of appreciation and respect. Volunteers are often expected to just follow orders and move at any command. Their contribution is often downplayed. The tasks assigned are often the ones that no one else wants to perform, or are deemed unimportant. Volunteers should be seen as an essential partner and player.*

*For me, the greatest satisfaction is having the opportunity to contribute to solving or ameliorating a problem that concerns people, including those outside and far from your own environment and culture.*

*The spirit of volunteerism seems to have gone down in recent years but it is critical that it be kept alive for the sustainable development of Africa.*

## Chapter 3

# Understanding patterns and trends in volunteerism in the Global South: a multi-country study on volunteering before, during and beyond COVID-19





## Key highlights

- As countries and communities grappled with COVID-19, adults regardless of their age, gender and employment status contributed their time and talents to help others.
- Volunteering to develop new ideas or solutions to local problems increased in most countries while volunteering through civic participation declined.
- Informal volunteering was the dominant form of unpaid help provided, but a significant share volunteered formally.
- The future of volunteering beyond the pandemic is promising as people intend to continue volunteering despite the ongoing challenges.
- Volunteers intend to engage in diverse roles beyond informal volunteering and service provision, working with others to identify innovative solutions to local problems and engaging in civic affairs.

### 3.1. Introduction

Volunteerism is a bedrock and essential thread in the fabric of all societies. However, much of the research about volunteerism focuses on the Global North.<sup>90</sup> In an effort to close the evidence gap, UNV and Gallup undertook a study on volunteerism during the COVID-19 pandemic in eight countries in the Global South: Bolivia, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Senegal, Thailand, Turkey and Uzbekistan. This chapter presents volunteering patterns and trends in these eight countries and highlights the pandemic's impact on both volunteer-state relationships and volunteering. The study, which draws on a survey of over 8,000 people aged 15 years and over (see Appendix C and D for the survey methodology) in March and April 2021, offers insights into volunteering during an unprecedented time, and contributes significantly to the otherwise lacking data on volunteering in the Global South.

The study reveals key patterns and trends in the eight countries. In terms of the

types of volunteer participation, findings show that while civic participation—defined as attending a neighbourhood meeting or contacting a public official to provide an opinion—declined during the pandemic, volunteers' engagement in social innovation—defined as working with others to identify new ideas or solutions to local issues or problems—has increased. In some countries, there was a decline in the overall volunteering rate (which compared changes in volunteer engagement), while in others there was an increase, suggesting that while the pandemic may have led some people to stop volunteering, it may have inspired others to take it up.

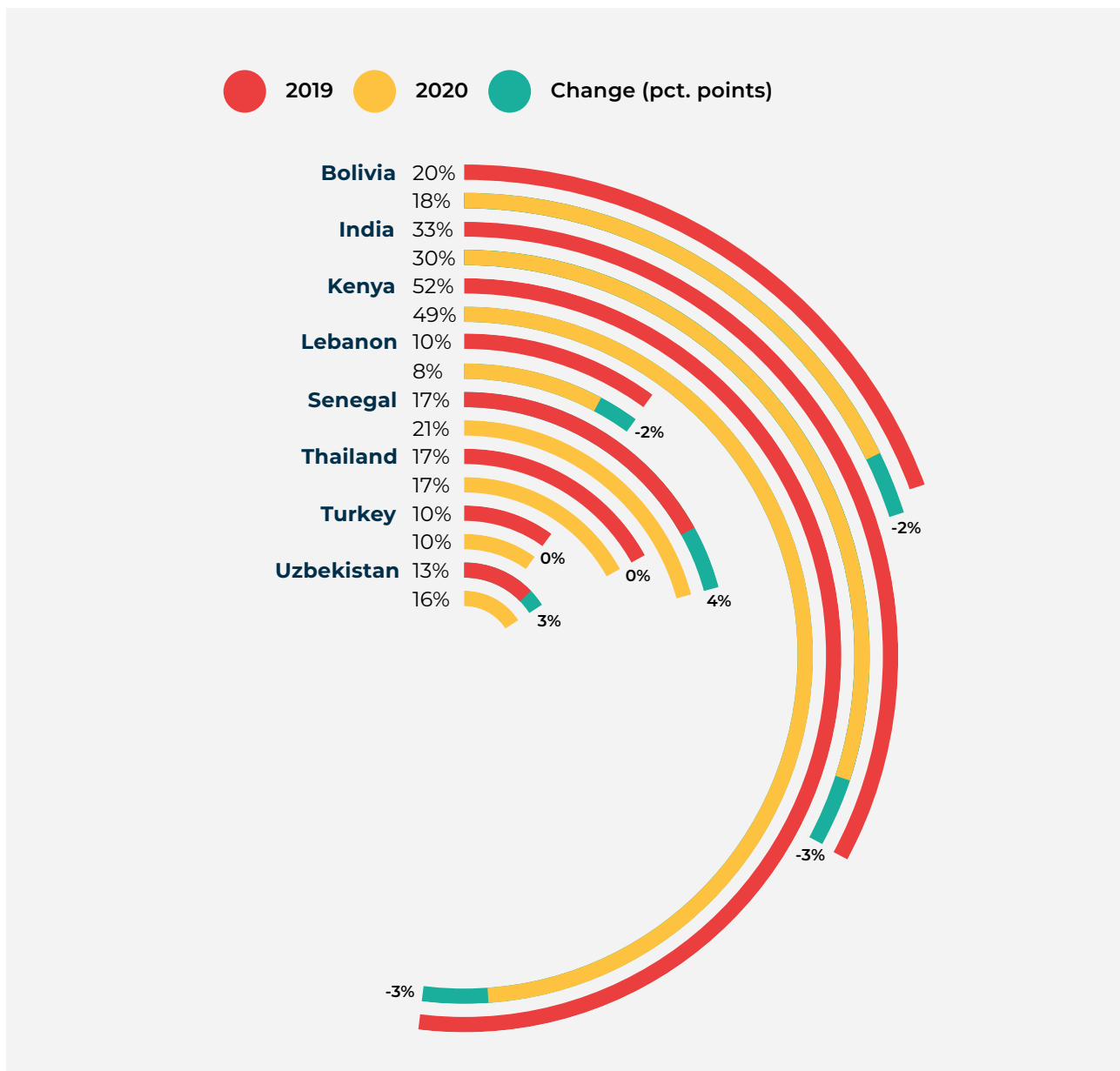
This chapter provides an overview of who volunteered and how within the context of the pandemic, and their plans to volunteer in future. In light of the survey's snapshot of experiences in eight countries, it also considers some policy implications on volunteering and how volunteering activity may be strengthened elsewhere as countries emerge from the pandemic and seek to build forward better.

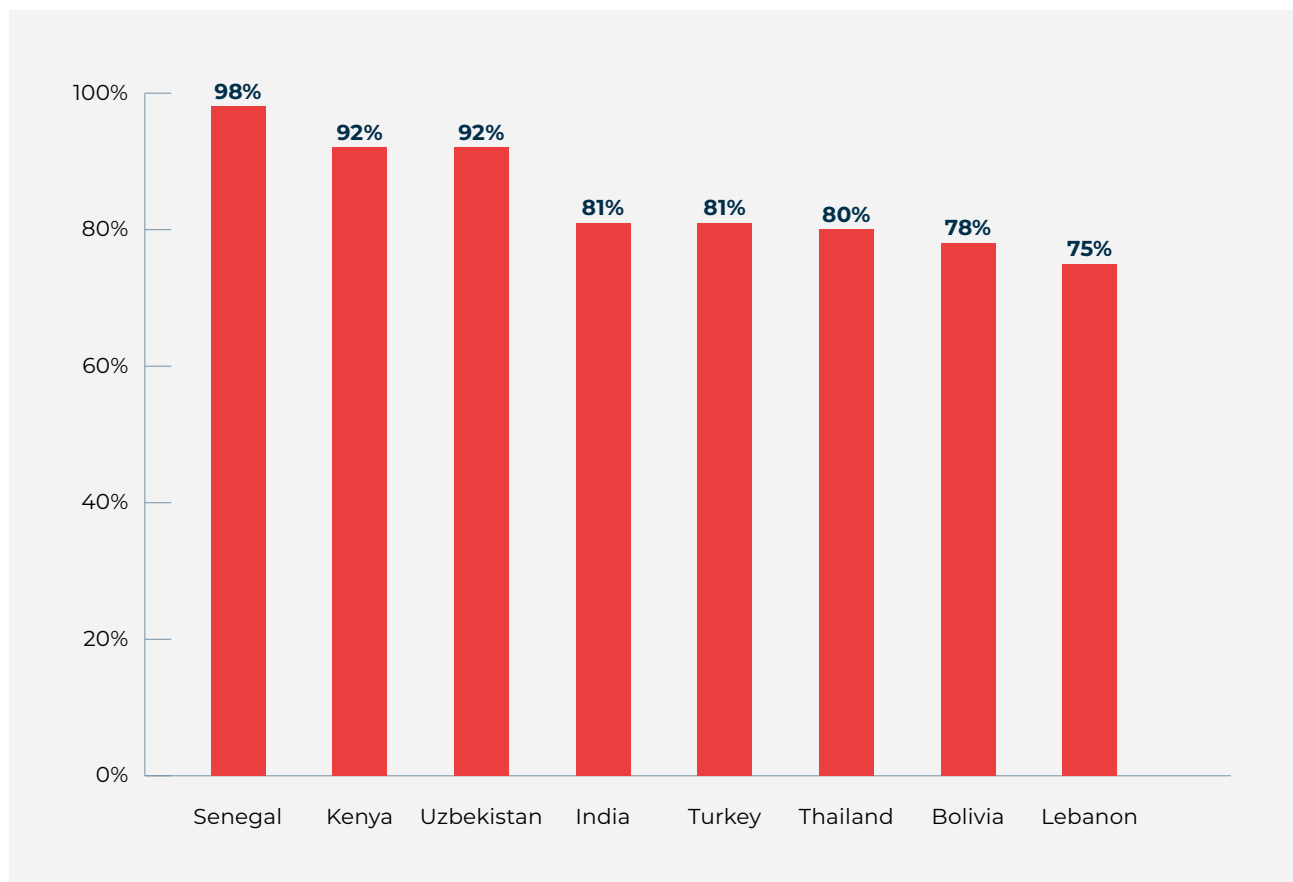
### 3.2. Volunteering patterns and trends in the Global South

The study explored volunteering patterns and trends in the eight countries. As Figure 3.1 shows, in 2019 and 2020, volunteer engagement in these eight countries remained remarkably stable despite the pandemic, with survey respondents indicating that they had volunteered

their time with an organization (formal volunteering) “in the past month”. This is in contrast with experiences in some Global North countries, for example in Australia, where volunteering was adversely affected<sup>91</sup> and characterized by lower volunteer participation, presumably due to public health-related restrictions. These restrictions would have affected formal volunteering, though in some cases this was offset by a rise in informal volunteering (volunteering outside an organization).<sup>92, 93</sup>

**Figure 3.1.** Volunteer rates in 2019 and 2020



**Figure 3.2.** Volunteer action rate by country, 2020

Note: These figures represent volunteering rates among the population and not time commitment to volunteering.

### 3.2.1. Volunteer participation during the pandemic

The majority of people in the eight countries reported having volunteered in some form during the pandemic. As Figure 3.2 shows, the volunteer action rate—defined as participation in at least one form of volunteer activity—was relatively high across countries during this period (March 2020 – March 2021), with at least three in four adults reporting having volunteered either formally or informally. It should be noted that there were distinct age cohort differences in volunteer action, with young adults engaging in each form of volunteering in two of the eight countries.

In terms of the forms of volunteering, they included the following unpaid activities:

- helping people outside your family or with organizations, such as those that help people, animals or the environment;
- making items to donate or distributing donations, such as food, clothing, equipment, or other goods;
- providing help to a government programme, campaign or scheme;
- providing help to an organization or group;
- engaging in civic participation by attending meetings in the neighbourhood or local area, or by contacting a public official to give opinions;
- volunteering time to develop new ideas or solutions to an issue or problem.

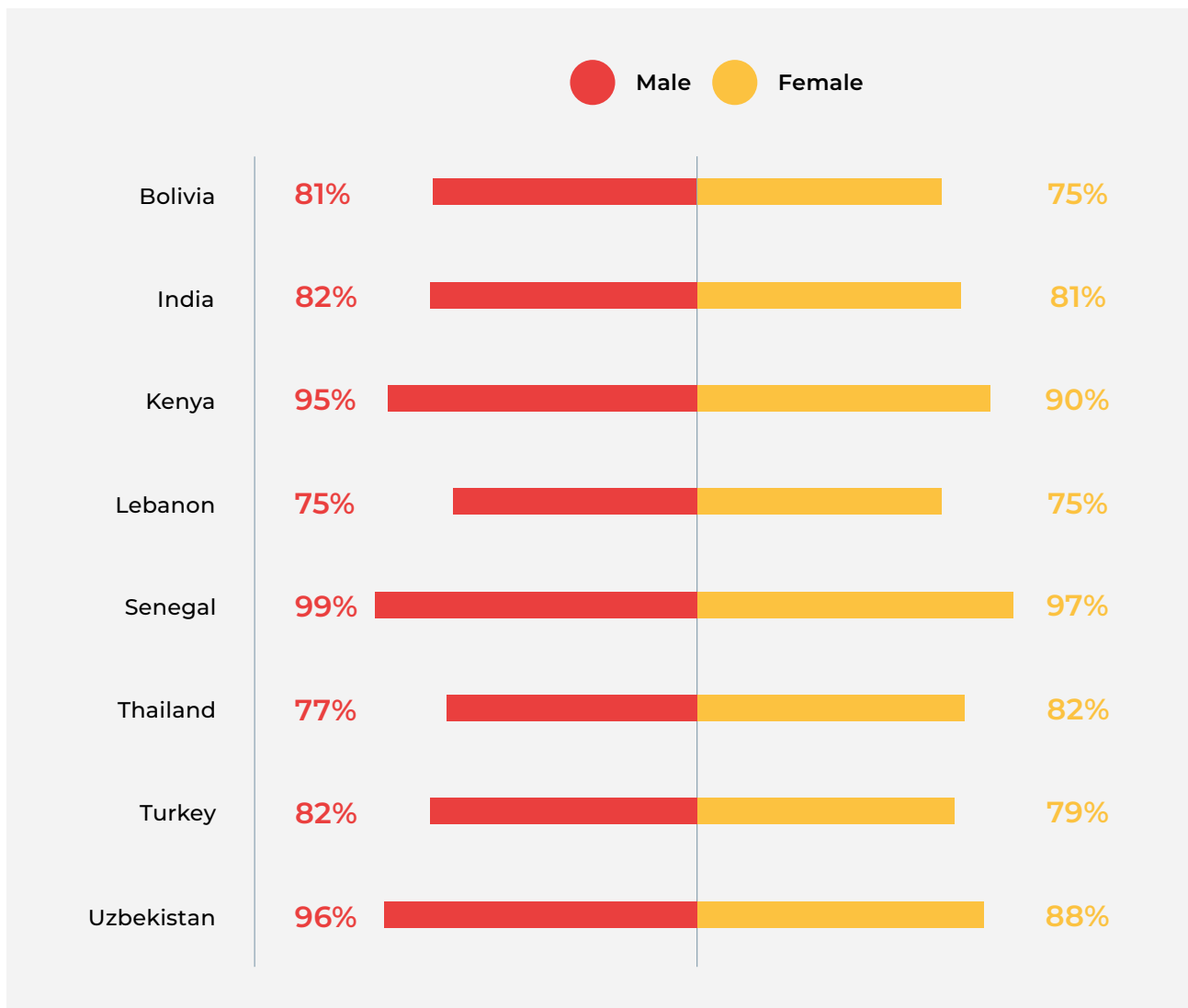
In over half of the countries, employed adults were slightly more likely than unemployed adults to have volunteered in the 12-month period, although in the remaining countries, the differences in volunteering rates between the employed and unemployed were relatively small or non-existent.

### 3.2.2. Volunteering patterns by gender

In the eight countries, there were distinct

gender differences in volunteer action during the pandemic. Apart from Thailand, where women were more likely to volunteer than men in 2020, and to some extent, Lebanon, where men and women volunteered equally, in most countries, men were slightly more likely to have volunteered during the pandemic than women (Figure 3.3). However, there were no significant disparities in terms of volunteering rates across rural and urban populations in most countries.

**Figure 3.3.** Volunteer action rate by country and gender, 2020



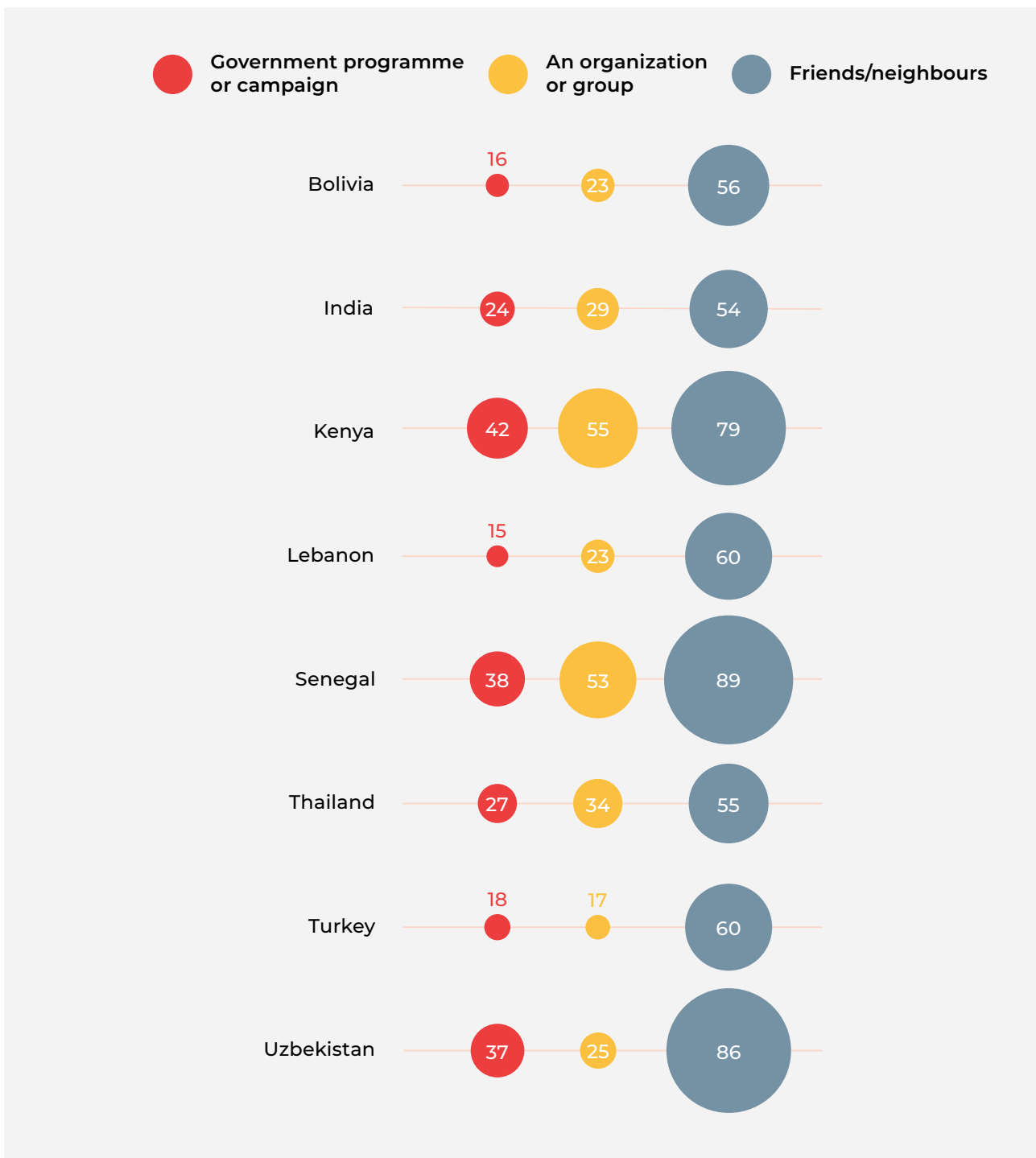


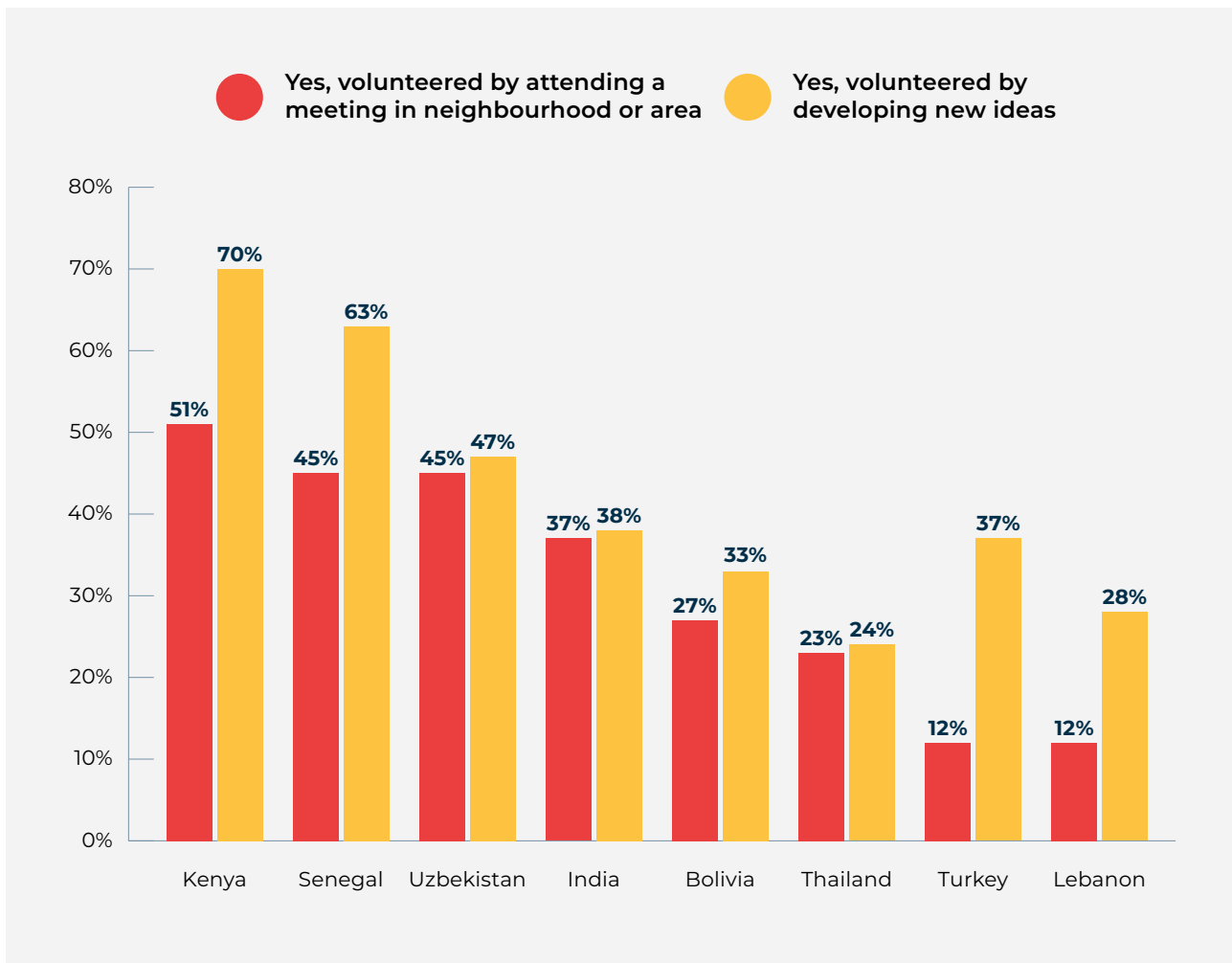
### 3.2.3. Forms of volunteering during the pandemic

Volunteers in the eight countries were more likely to have volunteered informally, by helping friends or neighbours, than formally,

through an organization or institution (see Figure 3.4). That said, many people supported the delivery of health and social services unpaid during the pandemic through a government programme or an organization.

**Figure 3.4.** Volunteering activities in the eight countries, 2020



**Figure 3.5.** Volunteer civic participation and social innovation, 2020

In terms of the types of volunteer activity, there was great variation between volunteers who attended neighbourhood meetings or contacted public officials (civic participation) and those who engaged in the development of new ideas or solutions to an issue or problem (social innovation) (see Figure 3.5).

While civic participation was more common in rural areas and small towns, social innovation was more popular in urban areas in all countries, except in Bolivia where more rural volunteers were engaged in social innovation than their urban counterparts.

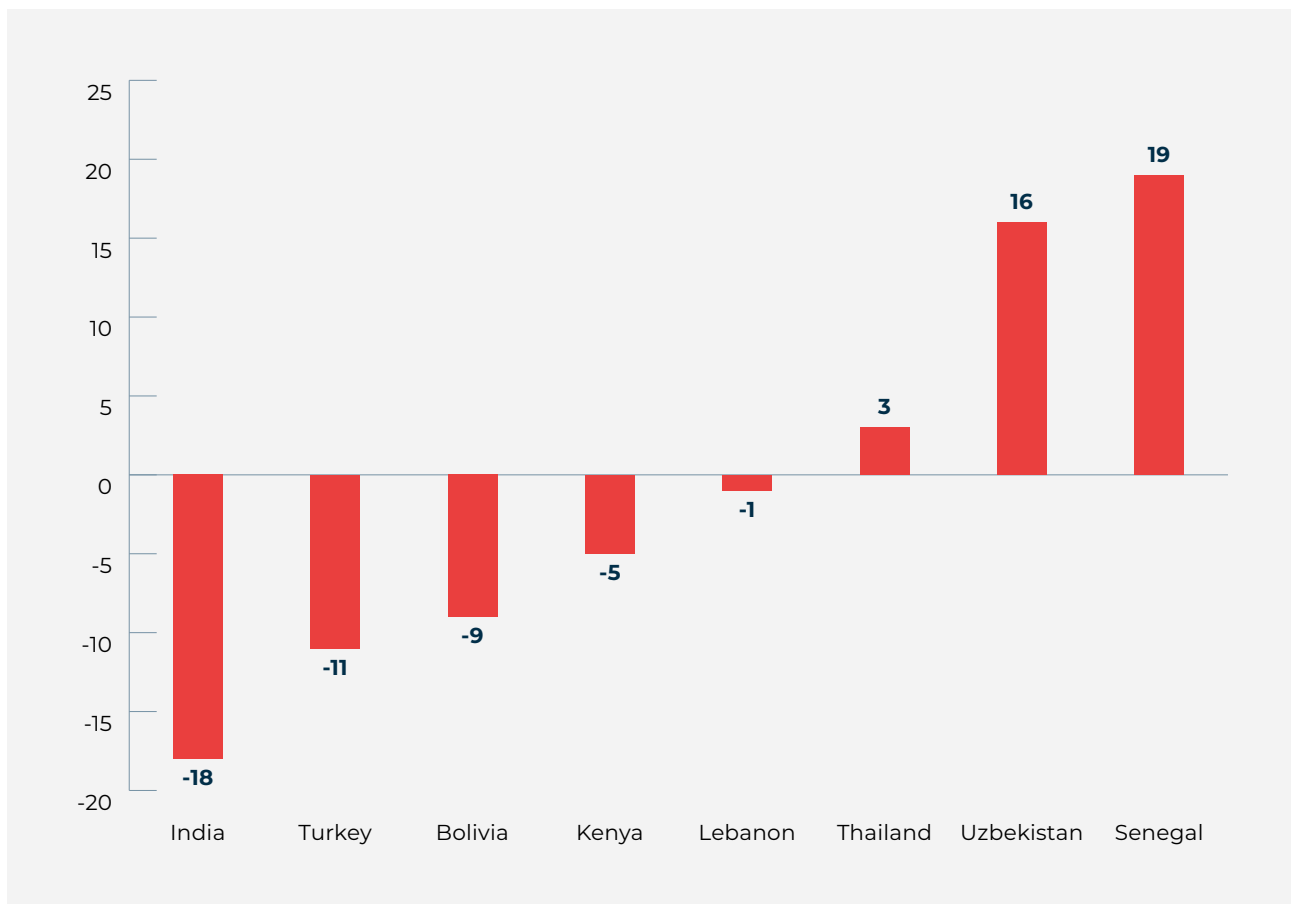
### 3.2.4. Volunteer behaviour in 2019 and 2020

Looking at how the pandemic may have affected volunteers' behaviour in the eight countries, the data reveal significant changes in volunteering in most countries between 2019 and 2020, with less than half of adults in each country reporting that their volunteering was "about the same" in both years (see Figure 3.6). Beyond this, there was no clear pattern in how volunteering changed across the countries. It is plausible that the wide variation across countries in the

degree of infection, the scale of lockdowns and the severity of public health restrictions in the lead up to, and during, the survey's implementation, may have had complex effects on volunteer participation.

A recent study from the United Kingdom found similar effects on volunteering participation, with relatively stable "net" participation during the pandemic, though it also identified many shifts in individual-level or gross participation behaviour.<sup>94</sup>

**Figure 3.6.** Changes in volunteer behaviour between 2019 and 2020

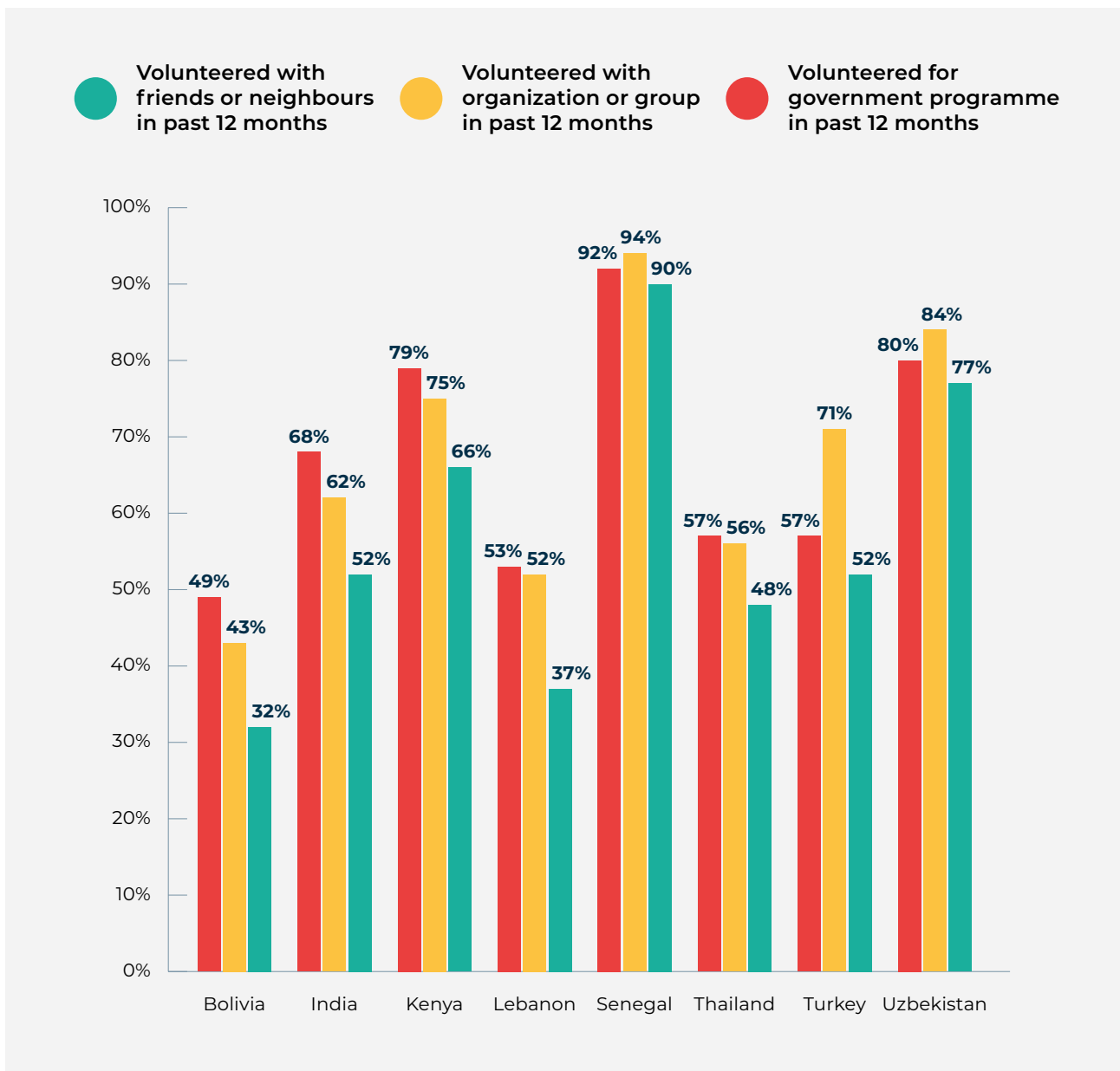


### 3.2.5. Building forward better: volunteering beyond the pandemic

Despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic, most people who engaged in volunteering during this time indicated that they planned to continue volunteering beyond the pandemic. Countries with higher volunteer action rates during the pandemic also had higher prospective volunteer rates for the next 12 months.

Across all countries, volunteers generally indicated that they intended to volunteer informally, including by spending time directly helping people they knew outside their family, and were less likely to plan formal volunteering as part of a group or organization, or engage in civic participation. In terms of future plans, however, people who volunteered through a government programme or with an organization were more likely to have plans to volunteer in the next 12 months than informal volunteers (see Figure 3.7).

**Figure 3.7.** Formal and informal volunteers' plans to volunteer in the next 12 months





In most countries in 2021, even while taking COVID-19-related shifts into account, substantially more volunteers than in 2020 or 2019 indicated that they were likely to engage in social innovation in the next 12 months.

**From a gender perspective, future volunteering plans suggest that more men than women intend to volunteer in all activity types.**

Findings also show distinct differences across age categories. While young adults (aged 15–29 years) expressed their intention to engage in various forms of volunteering, in half of the eight countries, older adults were more likely to report their intention to engage in civic participation.

### **3.3. Volunteers offer a helping hand and much more**

Despite demographic differences, informal volunteering is likely to dominate in the coming years. However, there is also clear interest in a more diverse and multifaceted approach to volunteering, including through online volunteering. Across these eight countries, only around one in 10 volunteers expressed their loyalty to one theme, cause or arrangement.

#### **3.3.1. Informal volunteering**

Informal volunteering in the eight countries was the most popular form of volunteering during the pandemic, consistent with volunteering in the Global South. While largely beyond the scope of government, efforts should be made nonetheless to nurture and support rather than direct informal volunteering.

#### **3.3.2. Volunteering through government programmes**

Despite participation in volunteering through formal government programmes or other entities during the COVID-19 pandemic being lower in the eight countries, strikingly, people who volunteered through such programmes, and in particular government initiatives, were more likely to have plans to volunteer in the next 12 months. To this end, governments should consider how best to harness and leverage volunteers' time and energy to address ongoing challenges in communities.



A volunteer helps migrants access COVID-19 vaccines in Lebanon. Source: UNV.

### 3.3.3. Volunteering as civic participation

In most countries, volunteering as civic participation was already lower than other forms of volunteering and further decreased during the pandemic (see Table 3.1). It is likely that civic participation declined due to pandemic-related restrictions, as local meetings may not have been as frequent in 2020, if held at all.

To address this decline, channels for providing feedback, participating in decision-making and engaging with authorities need to be strengthened while taking into account digital inequalities and hybrid modes of volunteering. In countries with low volunteer action rates, further research on the causes may be needed. These mechanisms should also address the predicted gender gaps in who plans to participate in volunteering in the future.

**Table 3.1.** Civic participation in 2020

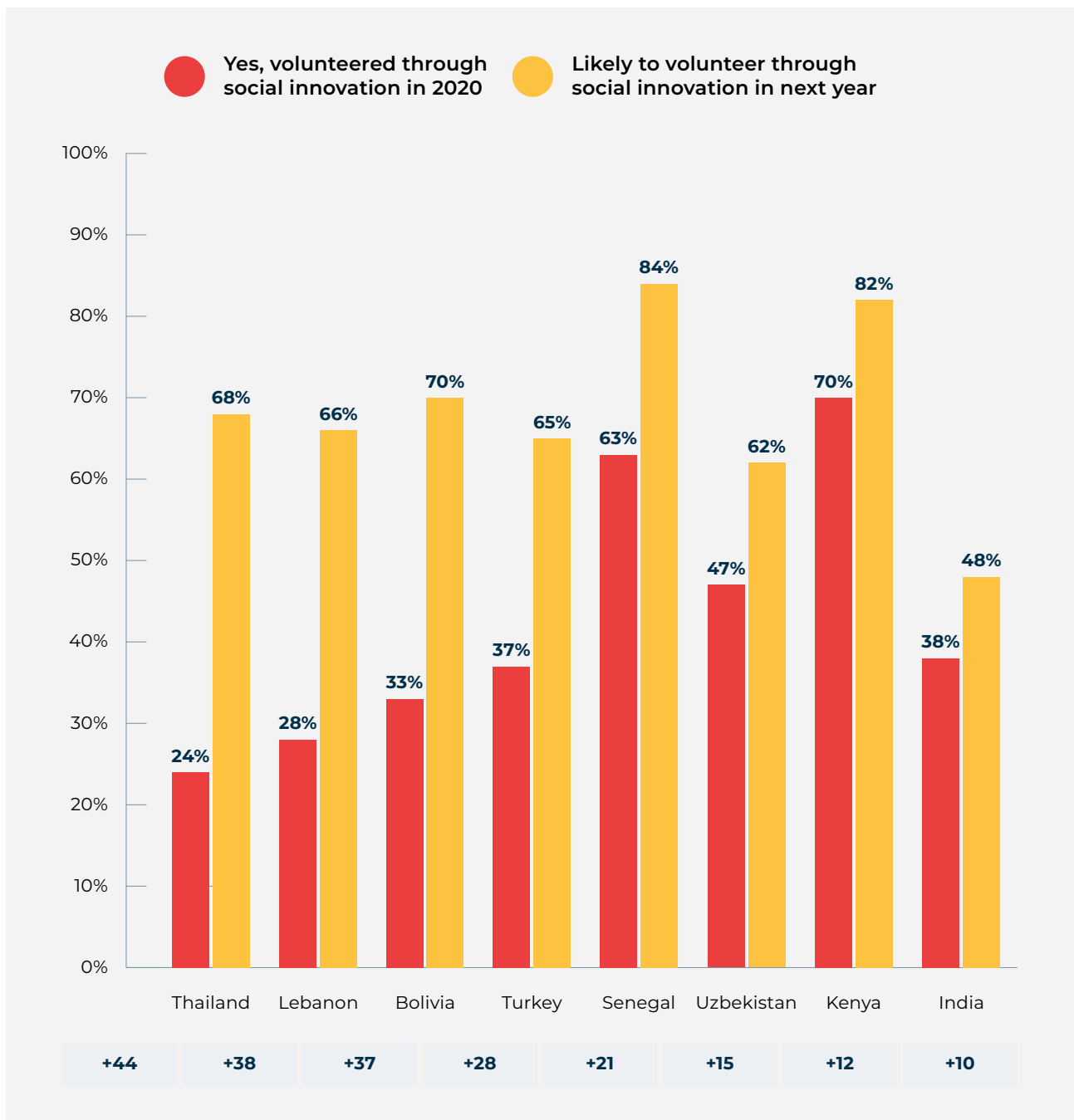
	More	Less	Net difference
<b>Turkey</b>	18%	47%	-29
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	29%	46%	-17
<b>Bolivia</b>	21%	37%	-16
<b>India</b>	33%	46%	-13
<b>Kenya</b>	36%	43%	-7
<b>Senegal</b>	40%	44%	-4
<b>Lebanon</b>	20%	23%	-3
<b>Thailand</b>	25%	23%	2

### 3.3.4. Volunteering as social innovation

In most of the countries surveyed, even taking shifts during COVID-19 into account, substantially more people than in 2020 or 2019 stated that they were likely to volunteer through social innovation in the next year

(see Figure 3.8). Critically, this finding suggests that there may be an opportunity to engage volunteers in finding new solutions to ongoing challenges in communities and suggests promising potential for volunteerism to contribute to “building forward better”.

**Figure 3.8.** Volunteering for social innovation



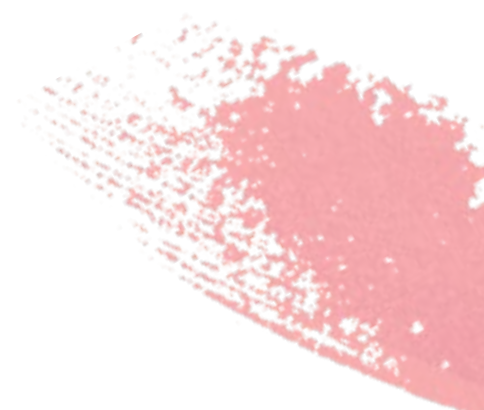
### 3.3.5. An emerging gender gap

While men's high participation in volunteering during the pandemic should be sustained, the effect of women's caregiving

and domestic responsibilities on their ability to volunteer, and the barriers to women's participation in volunteering more broadly, require further investigation.

**Table 3.2.** Future volunteering plans by gender

Country	Likely to give your opinion to local authorities or help them plan or provide local services		Likely to be part of a campaign or initiative to raise awareness of an issue, either online or in person		Likely to contribute new ideas or solutions to an issue or problem, either by yourself or with other people	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Bolivia</b>	48	54	60	59	65	75
<b>India</b>	47	47	39	42	48	48
<b>Kenya</b>	68	77	61	74	77	87
<b>Lebanon</b>	35	42	56	58	65	68
<b>Senegal</b>	83	82	66	66	85	83
<b>Thailand</b>	45	56	54	56	64	72
<b>Turkey</b>	41	48	40	49	59	71
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	42	51	39	40	52	70





### 3.4. Conclusion

This snapshot of volunteering during the pandemic, while limited to eight countries in the Global South, nevertheless provides some important insights that may inform volunteering in other contexts as they recover from the pandemic.

**Despite its impact, the pandemic has not dampened people's interest in volunteering. Prospects for volunteering are promising, with many citing robust plans to volunteer in the next 12 months, and in increasingly diverse ways.**

While informal volunteering seems to be the main way in which volunteers intend to engage going forward, prospects for formal volunteering through government programmes or other organizations are also encouraging. As such, stakeholders in government and other organizations ought to innovate ways to better harness volunteers' time and talents and their potential to take on ongoing challenges in communities.

In terms of trends, the decline in volunteer engagement in civic participation during the pandemic points to the need to explore the opportunities available. Efforts should be made to boost this type of volunteer engagement in the aftermath of the pandemic and beyond, including through online platforms.

Since volunteers' future intentions include participating through diverse forms such as social innovation and civic engagement, governments and other stakeholders should build on this growing interest in volunteering beyond service delivery, and create channels and opportunities that will better leverage volunteers' engagement in these areas.

Finally, with women intending to volunteer less in future, there is a need to better understand and address emerging gender-related barriers. This is especially vital since volunteering remains an important pathway for amplifying women's voices, representation and ownership of development processes.

Taken together, these findings serve as a reminder to policymakers that the economic and social value of volunteering transcends the labour provided and services delivered. More than this, volunteering could be an important channel for people to help shape countries' pathways out of the pandemic and beyond.

A volunteer discusses gender-based violence with students in Malawi. Source: UNV .



## **Volunteer voice: Mohammed Ben Othman from Tunisia on volunteering during the COVID-19 pandemic**

**Volunteers across the world have stepped up during the pandemic. Mohammed Ben Othman, a volunteer Boy Scout, shares below his experience of volunteering in quarantine centres in Tunisia during the pandemic, and what he believes should be the future of volunteering post pandemic.**

*My name is Mohammed Ben Othman. I'm a 31-year-old Tunisian and I joined the Boy Scouts and became a volunteer at the age of five. I never stopped and have been actively engaged in volunteering, including most recently during the pandemic.*

*I supported the state's efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus by volunteering at the quarantine centre in Bordj Cedria from the outset of the pandemic, often working from dawn 'til midnight. As part of efforts to prevent the spread of the virus, I was involved in disinfecting the quarantine centre, distributing food to people in quarantine, collecting hazardous materials for proper disposal by health authorities, and coordinating the placement of people in quarantine.*

*Volunteering during the pandemic was particularly challenging. Volunteers face difficulties in dealing with authorities and the private sector. Despite the growing reliance on the efforts of volunteers by the state, they are only perceived as service providers, not decision makers. Volunteering has many positive and negative aspects, and one of the challenges we sometimes face is the lack of clear tasks and objectives for volunteers.*

*While the role of volunteers has been to ensure a gradual return to normal life by encouraging, guiding and educating citizens to follow proper health protocols, I feel that volunteers need to be better integrated into state institutions in order to be more efficient and active.*

## **Special contribution: Ms. Vani Catanasiga, Executive Director of Fiji Council of Social Services on the role of volunteers in supporting a robust post-COVID recovery**

The Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) is a community-based membership organization that delivers social services to rural and marginalized communities in Fiji. About 80 percent of FCOSS members are volunteer-based groups who support the delivery of basic social services, promote the voice and agency of local communities, and support people who engage in decision-making spaces.

In 2021, despite initially having no COVID-19 response funds, FCOSS provided support to various communities through its volunteers at the district level. In addition to supporting communities in lockdown with food, providing surge support to government teams for contact tracing, and supervising testing and isolation facilities, volunteers also helped in data management during vaccination campaigns and provided home-based care. FCOSS volunteers' experience in coordinating service delivery at the community and district level during crises made them better able to respond to the immediate and emerging needs of the elderly, people with disabilities and female-headed households with multiple dependents.

Through their community observation reports, which included updates from informal settlements, FCOSS was able to show that some vulnerable populations did not receive the government's food distribution during lockdowns and its district hub volunteers alerted authorities to those often forgotten in society. As a result of volunteers' efforts, state authorities provided targeted support, including logistical support and capacity-building, and "safety net" care and protection.

Volunteers have untapped potential for inspiring post-COVID recovery in communities. As Fiji rebuilds after the pandemic, there is growing interest in forging partnerships to address ongoing needs. Increasingly, civil society and intergovernmental bodies are seeking to partner with our volunteer networks and leverage their expertise. Using our experience working with communities, we are exploring how to better engage volunteers to help their communities remain resilient in times of hardship.

With their knowledge and understanding of their communities and commitment to positive change, volunteers may well have what the post-COVID world requires to heal and recover.



## Chapter 4

# Volunteer–state partnerships and deliberative governance





## Key highlights

- Volunteer–state partnerships promote volunteers' voices and agency, leverage volunteers' expertise and experiences, and engender inclusion.
- By engaging volunteers in deliberative processes, state authorities facilitate their inclusion and enable them to contribute to finding viable solutions to complex challenges.
- Volunteers engage in deliberations to claim their space and make their voices heard, particularly when there are different agendas and priorities.
- Engaging volunteers from marginalized communities (rural women, peasant farmers, indigenous groups) in decision-making contributes to long-term and sustainable solutions and ensures ownership in development.

### 4.1. Introduction

Across countries and regions, volunteers from marginalized groups—women, people with disabilities, slum-dwellers and the urban poor—are devoting their time, expertise and knowledge, and collaborating with state authorities in various deliberative processes, with the goal of shaping development outcomes. Drawing on case study research from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ecuador, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal and Tunisia, this chapter focuses on models of volunteer–state partnerships in deliberative governance in the Global South.

The case studies, which provide insights on how diverse interests are brought together and the aspirations of volunteers and state authorities are met, also shed light on new ways of working between volunteers and state authorities, and how deliberative governance mechanisms can foster inclusion of marginalized groups and build more equal societies.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into four parts. Section 4.2 introduces and defines the concept of deliberative

governance, and describes the key processes involved. The case studies in this report are briefly introduced in section 4.3. Section 4.4 then outlines the key components of the deliberative models emerging from the case studies. Finally, the strengths and challenges of these models are discussed in section 4.5.

### 4.2. More than discussion: what is deliberative governance?

Deliberative governance processes broadly encompass forums or spaces where volunteers can participate in dialogue or in setting strategic priorities, and are often used by public entities to engage citizens more directly in solving some of the most pressing policy challenges.<sup>95</sup> Deliberative governance processes do not involve a predetermined agenda or choice and are more likely to give voice and agency to a wider range of citizens. This chapter explores how volunteer–state partnerships can give voice and agency to volunteers from diverse groups and communities, and with different aspirations and interests.

### Three key characteristics of deliberative systems



#### Authenticity

**Deliberation must be voluntary and reflective**



#### Inclusivity

**Deliberative systems must provide opportunities and develop capacities for all people to participate**



#### Consequentiality

**Deliberative systems must aim to achieve an outcome such as an agreement or course of action**

Deliberative systems have three key characteristics: authenticity, inclusivity and consequentiality.<sup>96</sup> To be authentic, deliberation must be voluntary and reflective. To be inclusive, deliberative systems must provide opportunities and develop capacities for all people to participate. To be consequential, deliberative systems must aim to achieve an outcome such as an agreement or course of action. It should be noted that while consensus is often viewed as the ideal, deliberation need not lead to it. Rather, it is critical that people are provided with an opportunity to express their self-interests and preferences to stakeholders (government officials, volunteer-involving organizations and even their fellow citizens) while making conflict visible.<sup>97</sup>

In assessing volunteer–state partnerships in deliberative governance processes, the chapter examines how volunteers engage with governments in decision-making processes. As volunteers devote their

time to participate in these processes, it is important that they participate freely (linked to authenticity). How volunteers participate and how the processes accommodate their needs is important. For deliberative processes to be inclusive and increase their legitimacy, volunteers should have an active role on how these spaces are created and shaped. Deliberative processes can then become a vehicle through which marginalized groups such as women can claim their space in public decision-making processes.<sup>98</sup>

Who creates spaces for participation and who engages in these spaces remain critical questions.<sup>99,100</sup> Although deliberative spaces can be created by the state or by non-state entities, including civil society groups or volunteers, this can result in unequal processes that favour privileged groups.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>102</sup> In such spaces, marginalized groups such as women, ethnic minorities and poorer populations may be further sidelined in these processes and their voices not heard.<sup>103</sup>

### 4.3. Introducing the case studies

Volunteer–state partnerships in deliberative governance focus on volunteerism within the context of communities in countries and regions in the Global South. Volunteers from marginalized groups, including indigenous communities (Nepal), rural women (Kyrgyzstan), farmers (DRC and Tunisia) and activists (Ecuador) collaborate with their governments to tackle a variety of issues, from climate change (Ecuador and Nepal), agriculture (DRC) and a water crisis (Tunisia) to women’s rights (Kyrgyzstan) and heritage conservation (Nepal). Recognizing that volunteer–state partnerships are characterized by unequal power relations, the case studies help illustrate how new ways of working that enable volunteers to play a greater role in decision-making alongside the state can make spaces more inclusive and contribute to outcomes that better respond to the needs of marginalized communities, while providing the basis for a shift in power relations.

While the case studies from Nepal and Ecuador were developed through primary research (interviews and focus groups), the other three are based primarily on secondary sources.<sup>104</sup>

Two forms of volunteerism are evident in the case studies. In Nepal and Kyrgyzstan, volunteer efforts were aimed at helping communities respond to emerging issues through discussions and collective decision-making—often called mutual aid<sup>105</sup>—while in Ecuador, Tunisia and DRC, volunteers engaged in meetings and public dialogues.



A volunteer maintains paths to promote ecotourism in Peru. *Source:* UNV.



### 4.3.1. Guthis and Barghars, Nepal

**Nepal's volunteer-based Guthi<sup>106</sup> and Barghar institutions within the Newar and Tharu communities, respectively, are rooted in traditional and cultural processes.**

Among the Newars, Guthi is still predominantly practised as a social institution that determines the rights and obligations of Newars towards their community. Volunteerism under Guthi and Barghar takes the form of social and cultural activities where individual choice is considered less important than broader social and cultural goals (such as the preservation of cultural heritage).

As such, they are characterized as mutual aid and self-help groups where individuals and communities work together for the common good, addressing shared problems.

With Nepal's shift to a federal form of government, local governments maintained and strengthened their relationship with Guthis and Barghars to promote deliberative processes. This enabled them to participate in decision-making and set their priorities in community development. Local governance also provided opportunities for volunteers to engage in planning and implementation of projects. While Guthis and Barghars<sup>ii</sup> traditionally engaged in cultural and religious activities, the new state system, which recognized traditional models of governance, led to increased participation of Guthis and Barghars in planning and implementation of projects. In this context, partnerships with local governments enabled them to engage in deliberative governance processes and paved the way for their growing influence. This model strengthened the deliberative capacities of local informal institutions like Guthi and Barghar and increased their capacity to influence the state's micro system for planning and implementation of development activities such as natural resource management. This is the focus of the case study.

<sup>ii</sup> In Nepal, the term "Guthi" also refers to a land tenure system that oversees the management of land donated for religious purposes. Elsewhere in the country, the Guthi system is mostly practised as this type of land tenure system, but among the Newars (who are the focus of this case study), Guthi is still predominantly practised as a social institution that determines the rights and obligations of Newars towards their community.





### 4.3.2. Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano, Ecuador

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**The Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano [Latin American Future Foundation – FFLA] promotes a culture of collaborative dialogue between multiple stakeholders, among them volunteers who engage in various sectors across Latin America to find alternative solutions to sustainable development challenges.**

The foundation seeks to generate new capacities, strengthen the development of public policy and address conflict in collaborative situations. The case study explores how FFLA's dialogue for sustainable development programme provides spaces for volunteers to engage in discussions on issues surrounding climate change and sustainability.



### 4.3.3. Agricultural and Rural Management Council, Democratic Republic of the Congo

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**The Agricultural and Rural Management Council (CARG) is a mechanism comprising civil society, traditional leaders and farmers, among them volunteers who partner with government institutions to address challenges that farmers face.**

Historically, consultation frameworks for peasant organizations were often grouped into a federation and defended the interests of farmers.<sup>107</sup> With time, these federations evolved and transformed into more formal structures to allow farmers to participate in decision-making. As CARG has evolved into an intermediary mechanism between peasant farmers and the state, some farmers have volunteered their time and talents to CARG and helped to shape and advance the interests of their fellow farmers.<sup>108</sup> This case study examines the mechanisms involved when peasant farmers volunteer their time to CARG and how they shape agricultural policies and financing at the local level.



#### 4.3.4. Nebhana Water Forum, Tunisia

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**The Nebhana Water Forum is a multi-stakeholder platform created to address water scarcity in the Kairouan region in Tunisia.<sup>109</sup>**

The purpose of the platform is to develop a sustainable and integrated water management approach. Tunisia has very limited water resources, 82 percent of which are used by the agriculture sector.<sup>110</sup> While the platform involves multiple stakeholders, the case study explores the partnership between two groups with divergent views on water management in the region—farmers (some of them volunteers) and the government—and their efforts to address water management issues in a collaborative way.



#### 4.3.5. Alga, Kyrgyzstan

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**Founded in 1995 by active rural women living in a collective farm, Alga is a voluntary women's group that operates in villages across six districts in the eastern part of the Chui region in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>111</sup>**

Its name, which comes from the name of the collective farm where the founding group of women lived, means “moving forward” or “going ahead” in Kyrgyz. The case study explores how the volunteer organization represents the voice of Kyrgyz women in local government deliberative processes.



A volunteer receives tika and blessings from elders after finishing Guthi rituals in Nepal.  
Source: UNV.



## 4.4. Key features of volunteer–state partnerships in deliberative governance

The four key features of deliberative governance in volunteer–state partnerships are discussed in the following subsections.

### Box 4.1. Summary of mechanisms involved in volunteerism for deliberative governance

#### Who volunteers or participates?

Community-based volunteers coming from socially marginalized groups (peasant farmers, indigenous groups, rural women, young people etc.) are those who volunteer in community forums, discussions and meetings, as they are directly affected by the issue or topic being deliberated and shared. Not everyone wants to participate or are convinced by the need for people–state discussion.

The “seat” at the decision-making table is created in two ways: (1) state-sponsored public forums invite people from these groups to volunteer their time and knowledge and (2) local governments call on pre-existing institutions and organizations that facilitate volunteering to extend discussions to marginalized groups.

Volunteers can participate (especially in the second strategy) either directly or through representatives from the volunteer-involving organization. This has implications for inclusion and voice, namely who gets to have a seat at the table and how they are heard in these spaces.

#### What is the extent of participation?

The case studies demonstrate several ways in which discussions can become more participatory, from going from house to house to invite household representatives, to gathering information and insights from group members. While representation targets are at times put in place, these are not always evident in forum discussions, and more “powerful” participants may dominate the conversation. Facilitation skills and careful design of the deliberation method helped to address these issues.

#### For what outcome?

People’s participation in deliberative governance has led to more responsive and sustainable outcomes that help address the needs of the most marginalized. Volunteerism has proved to be a pathway to strengthen collaboration between people and states. But such relationships are constantly changing due to differing agendas, priorities and needs, both of volunteers and state institutions.



A volunteer and member of the Guthi institution takes part in a religious procession. Nepal’s volunteer-based Guthi institution supports and partners with the Government to preserve cultural heritage. *Source:* UNV.

#### 4.4.1. Promote agency and voice

The case study in Nepal is an example of how deliberative governance mechanisms can engender volunteers' agency.

Under the evolving federal system, both Guthi and Barghar are mutual aid groups that have utilized deliberation and partnered with state authorities in governance systems, as well as becoming increasingly involved in community projects. At the local level, both the Barghar and Guthi have partnered with the local government around issues of cultural preservation. Under the evolving mechanism, Guthi and Barghar have been integrated into decision-making processes which has enabled them to influence decisions. As part of its partnership with local authorities, Guthis' involvement in the planning process has given them agency and amplified their voice, allowing them to advocate for the preservation of cultural heritage rights. Nepal's shift to a federalized government structure in 2015 enabled these local institutions to participate in decision-making and set their priorities on community development. Local governance has also provided opportunities for volunteers to engage in planning and implementation of projects. Local governments maintained and strengthened their relationship with Guthis and Barghars to promote deliberative processes, and local government officials increasingly engaged with Guthis and Barghars to expand decision-making in public resource management, infrastructure and disaster response (see Box 4.2).

#### 4.4.2. Leverage volunteers' expertise and experiences

Across the case studies, volunteer–state partnerships illustrate that deliberations allow for diverse points of view to be heard,

with volunteers providing knowledge and expertise that frequently resulted in sustainable solutions. Often, volunteers' knowledge and ideas merge with often called “expert” knowledge from bureaucrats and other government officials. For example, farmers who volunteered with the CARG (DRC) offered first-hand insights to local government officials on how agricultural prices and tax responsibilities were impacting their livelihoods and suggested how to prevent these price surges.<sup>112</sup>

In Ecuador, FFLA volunteers from local communities who were experiencing the impacts of climate change engaged in dialogues, including through networks such as the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), in which they supported policymakers from developing countries to implement development policies aligned with climate issues.

In Nepal, Guthiyars brought to discussions principles of resource management that are rooted in their culture and traditions. For instance, a Guthiyar explained that the annual festival they co-organize called Sithi Naha is “not only based on religion, it also is a basis of our resource management, environment conservation and governance. Before the notion of world environment was known in the Newar community, our ancestors were aware of the need to clean the water resources...It is referred to as a type of cleaning campaign based on our tradition.” These culture-specific beliefs and practices provided useful insights for local environmental planning.





### 4.4.3. Facilitate inclusion

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**In the case studies, deliberative processes were created to facilitate and foster inclusion.**  
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In Nepal, Barghar volunteers partnered with the local government to build a dam (see Box 4.2). This volunteer–state partnership enabled the inclusion of Barghars in decision-making on a public project, which resulted in the construction of a stronger structure that aligned with both the volunteers' needs and the local government's aspirations. Meanwhile, Guthi who partnered with local authorities in restoring and maintaining temples, waterspouts and other monuments established a co-funding mechanism that culminated in the preservation of some historical monuments.

In Ecuador, the FFLA ensures that minority groups, particularly women, are not only included but centralized in the spaces that they create and the issues that they influence or advocate for within certain government policies. This is in spite of the lack of mechanisms and specific spaces for these groups in the foundation's governance bodies.

In Tunisia, one part of the Nebhana Water Forum's three-part method for dialogue is an exploratory session.<sup>113</sup> For example, a small group of farmers (without state

representatives) were able to engage in an open dialogue about water use, their aspirations and the significance of water in their farming, without any pressure to stick to predefined talking points (see Box 4.3).

The case studies show that it is not only state authorities that take the initiative to engage the public in a deliberative process. Volunteer and mutual aid groups also took on leadership roles in these spaces, giving them the authority to highlight a problem or issue to be discussed. For example, a Barghar stated that "...we have also called a meeting to discuss a community issue and we invited the ward chair and the mayor to join us." Farmers in CARG (DRC) and women leaders in Alga (Kyrgyzstan) were, at times, the ones being invited by state authorities to participate in council meetings and stakeholder dialogues.

These features point to how deliberative spaces can be inclusive, representative and rooted in community values and practices. This is not entirely true for the Guthis in Nepal where despite some changes, processes remain exclusive to certain castes and genders. Aside from these exclusions, volunteers and mutual aid group members were not only "invited" to deliberative spaces but also created their own to discuss issues that were high on their agenda. Deliberation was not always formal; there were also informal, unstructured activities in which people's stories and lived experiences were highly valued.





A volunteer and Guthi member helps to reconstruct a temple which was destroyed by the 2015 earthquake in Patan, Nepal. Source: UNV.



## 4.5. Strengths and challenges of deliberative systems

These case studies highlight some of the strengths and challenges of deliberative systems when utilized as an approach to facilitate volunteer–state relationships.

### 4.5.1. Volunteers can help with difficult decisions and contribute to more responsive outcomes.

As the case studies illustrate, volunteers enhanced decision-making, with their expertise and experiences helping to achieve outcomes that were more responsive to their communities' needs.

In Kyrgyzstan, Alga partnered with several local and regional government bodies, including the Supervisory Council of the Chui region.<sup>114</sup> In 2015, Alga launched the Follow Your Voice campaign which sought to increase women's participation in electoral processes and represented their interests in state bodies.<sup>115</sup> While Alga represents Kyrgyz women members, it also drew on opinions gathered through their educational campaigns. They were then able to share the insights gained from these campaigns with local councils. These insights proved useful when local governments had to make difficult decisions on complex issues surrounding women's political and civic participation, domestic violence, and women's rights.



A volunteer works on a construction project in Nepal.  
Source: UNV.

#### Box 4.2. What it took to build a dam

Barghars collaboratively engage in different communal work to build infrastructure such as roads, temples and canals. The region of Rajapur was experiencing severe floods during the monsoon season, which damaged farmlands and consequently, people's livelihoods. To address this shared community problem, the Barghar leader went from house to house asking representatives from each household to attend a meeting on the issue and then later to volunteer to construct the dam itself. The Barghar leader explained, "As per their availability, men, women, young and old participate as volunteers. They set out to the dam early in the morning with their lunch and snack. They fill the ditch with stones to irrigate water in the canal. It takes three to four days to build a dam." Traditionally, the community used stone, mud and their manual labour to build these dams, though they often did not last as long as intended.

It turned out that building the dam was also a priority for the local municipality, having seen the destruction brought by flooding to agricultural activity in the area. This led the Barghar and the local municipality to deliberate on collaborative action. The ward chair explained that the planning process started with collecting views from the community members. Local government officials were also invited to join the Barghar's community meetings. The Deputy Mayor of the Municipality stated that "traditionally, Barghars only use their solutions but nowadays, they have become more participatory and welcome new ideas and solutions during these public gatherings. Decisions were not individual but communal and aligned with the local government's aspirations." Subsequently, the volunteers started using tools such as Gabion wire to wrap the stones so that the structure could withstand heavier flooding. They used their traditional skills and knowledge combined with more modern approaches to engineering to build a stronger dam, funded by the municipality.

*Source:* UNV primary research.

In Nepal, the partnership between the Barghar and local government in the Municipality of Rajapur demonstrates how the know-how of the Barghar combined with the local government's funding and engineers' technical expertise led to the construction of a more viable and sustainable dam that could protect farmers' land from flooding (see Box 4.2). While Barghars had previously relied on their indigenous/traditional knowledge and had worked independently to address flooding, the partnership with the state made this easier (for example, in terms of co-funding) and led to more sustainable outcomes.

Similarly, as part of Guthis' partnership with state authorities to restore and preserve cultural buildings, including many temples and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage sites in Lalitpur in Kathmandu City that were destroyed in the 2015 Nepal earthquake, they engaged in planning alongside the local government. This allowed the Guthis, who have a long history and tradition of preserving their cultural heritage, to engage effectively with the local government and ensure that their priorities were aligned. Participating in the planning process offered the Guthis opportunities

to listen to traditional institutions in the governance mechanism, and the deliberative process enhanced decision-making on the preservation of the sites.

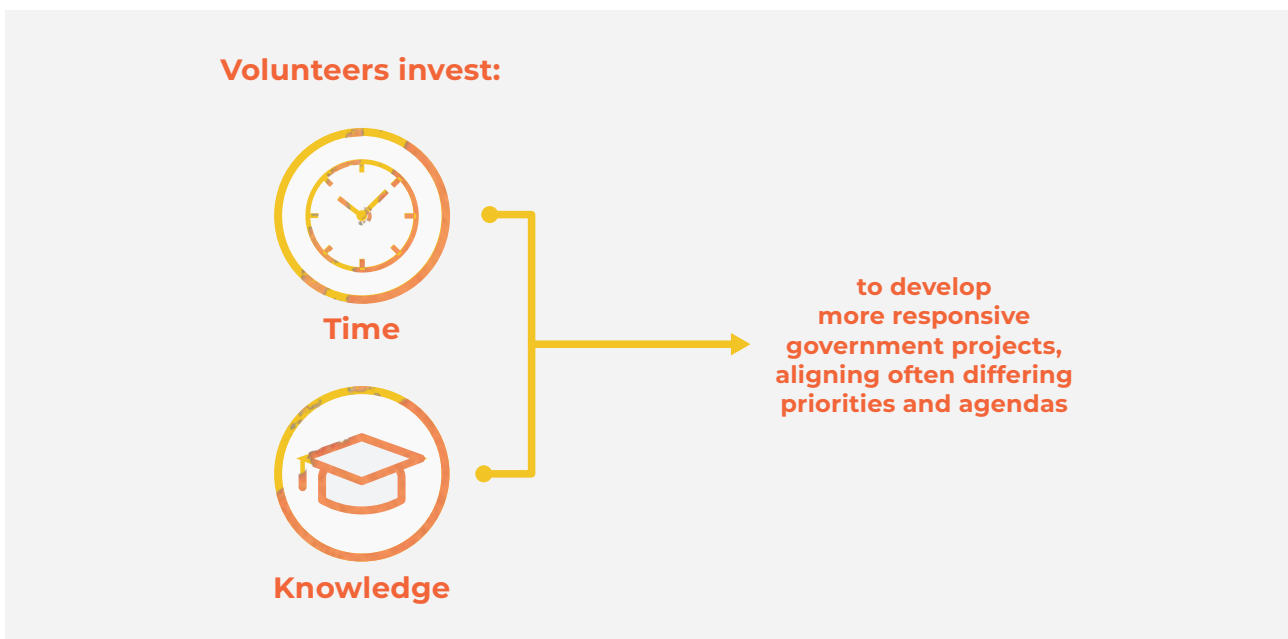
These examples show how people volunteered their time and knowledge to develop more responsive government projects, aligning often differing priorities and agendas. Volunteers were willing to step in and “think with” local officials, contributing context-specific knowledge and supporting government projects. Within these deliberative spaces, the experiences of the public played an important part in increasing understanding between those participating in the deliberations.

It should be noted, however, that the “outcomes” of deliberation are not always clear. For example, in Ecuador, FFLA’s engagement in discussions did not result in policy change. Since FFLA served to liaise between state authorities and civil society, and aimed to create spaces for dialogue between them, FFLA’s goal was to influence government policy by advocating for marginalized groups. While FFLA’s partnership with state authorities may have helped amplify the voices of these groups, it

did not influence outcomes in favour of them or the communities it represented.

#### 4.5.2. Volunteering can foster inclusion in deliberative spaces but may have limitations.

These case studies demonstrate that deliberative processes provide avenues for volunteers from marginalized groups to take on a central role in making decisions about public services and programmes that affect them, thus bridging the gap between communities and the state authorities. While the impetus for volunteers’ collaboration with state authorities to address challenges varied—from dissatisfaction with government services for specific groups (Alga in Kyrgyzstan) to the desire for more sustainable flood management (the Barghar in Nepal)—in all cases, volunteers were keen to influence decisions on issues that mattered to their communities and for the greater good. Through deliberative governance mechanisms, Kyrgyz women (Kyrgyzstan), peasant farmers (DRC and Tunisia), and indigenous groups (Nepal and Ecuador) were able to participate in public policymaking at the local and national level.





**Box 4.3. Peasant farmers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo volunteer their time to ensure equitable financial processes**

Through deliberation, peasant farmers who volunteered with CARG influenced agricultural prices between producers and buyers and discussed taxes with the state. The CARG coordinator noted that “when there are surcharges of the sales price or harassment by civil servants which negatively influence the price of agricultural products, the members of the state present in the council are called upon to give explanations.” As many stakeholders were involved, there were often conflicts and disagreements. The dialogues nevertheless provided peasant farmers with the opportunity to present their counterarguments and propose new terms. The CARG coordinator added that “this is how the tax nomenclature is decided and is accessible to the peasant farmers. Once the peasant farmers arrive at the market with their agricultural products, they know what they have to pay or not.”

A similar process is in place for preparing and validating the provincial budget. Before CARG, the budget was prepared at the provincial level without the farmers and therefore did not consider their standard of living. Now, the draft budget is submitted to CARG, which convenes a meeting of all the members for review. According to another CARG member, “if we find that a particular section is wrong, we prepare a report highlighting our changes and we send it to the provincial level.” He continued, “We try to look at the classification system at the provincial level and at the national level. If it does not coincide with the standard of living of the population, we make slight modifications at the level

of the different entities.” Through these deliberative processes, the financial components of the public agricultural procedures are able to reflect the realities of the poorest farmers in the area.

*Sources:* Interviews with CARG Provincial Officer and Permanent Secretary, 12 and 14 July 2021.

In the case of CARG, peasant farmers attended deliberations discussions with state authorities to raise concerns that may not have been addressed otherwise. As is illustrated in Box 4.3, issues around the costs of agricultural products and local budgeting had a direct impact on these farmers' lives and livelihoods. Having a venue to present their views and share their concerns on how decisions were made fostered inclusion while ensuring that their needs were considered.

As some of the case studies illustrate, challenges remain in ensuring that deliberative spaces are inclusive. In Nepal, deliberative processes reflected existing differences among marginalized groups. For example, the Guthi volunteers engaged in deliberative processes were mostly male members of the Newar community (an ethnic group with different caste groups) in key positions, although over time, some of their activities were opened up to women. Similarly, for the Nebhana Water Foundation (Tunisia), it was difficult to ensure that deliberative processes fostered inclusion among the vast and diverse groups of farmers affected by the water crisis (including in terms of their geographical spread).<sup>116</sup>

Given the diversity of marginalized groups, their issues are too disparate and dependent on contextual realities to propose how challenges related to deliberative processes can be adequately addressed. However, as the CARG and Guthi cases suggest, bringing in groups with similar experiences and

backgrounds to discuss an issue first can enhance prospects for further deliberations, including with state authorities.

#### **4.5.3. Deliberative spaces can address power inequalities between people and states but not eliminate them.**

Findings from these case studies showed that deliberative spaces are not neutral. Wider social hierarchies often influence deliberative space, especially when marginalized groups are involved. In the case of the Nebhana Water Forum (Tunisia) and Alga (Kyrgyzstan), both volunteers and state authorities had reservations about whether deliberation was the best approach. For the Nebhana Water Forum, an ongoing divide between people, civil society organizations (CSOs) and the state following the Arab Spring in Tunisia contributed to their reservations.<sup>117</sup> As a result, in this case, gaining buy-in from volunteers to ensure that dialogue would enable reconciliation and better agricultural planning was essential.

For Alga, there was clear tension between local village heads and villagers, who were reluctant to work together for fear that it might be disadvantageous and difficult. Alga members were present in local council meetings, conferences and invited council members to participate in their organization's meeting.<sup>118</sup> This demonstrated their commitment to partnership, which earned the community's trust. In the case of FFLA (Ecuador), while unequal power relations with state authorities dominated deliberative processes, their impact on outcomes was unclear. A facilitator of the FFLA dialogues stated:

*Sometimes governments try to monopolize the debate. Our role is to mediate and guarantee everybody (beneficiaries, NGOs [non-governmental organizations], social organizations, academics, minorities and non-privileged groups etc.) has a space and, for that, we start all processes with transparency. This generates trust. We have already started processes with many criticisms from governments, or sometimes the political agents try to use the processes as a space for self-promotion and to include their own political interests. Other times, governments don't want to join us to avoid becoming a target of criticism. Our role is to find ways to avoid these conflicts.*

However, strategies to reduce power differences and ensure marginalized groups' participation in deliberative processes were effective. For FFLA, "[w]hen we create a project, we think about quotas for women, indigenous people etc., that will allow them to participate. This includes paying for their transport, for a place where they can leave their children."

Findings show that addressing inequalities prior to initiating partnerships can create a strong foundation for an effective volunteer-state partnership (see Box 4.4). Nevertheless, it does not guarantee that the partnership will be effective. As the Nebhana Water Forum model of deliberation shows, not everyone who engages in these venues is ready to deliberate.

In Nepal, Guthi and Barghar buy-in to the deliberative processes may have been significantly better in large part due to the homogeneity of these groups, which may have allowed the volunteers to engage freely. This was not the case for the Nebhana Water Forum: for the farmers, the divide was made worse by a water policy that favoured the middle class, with little control over illegal drilling.<sup>119</sup> This unequal power relationship was not only recognized but also addressed through the deliberative processes. Expectations and aims were made clear and farmers were given enough information to enable them to participate effectively in the forum.

These power dynamics continue to change.

Similar to the Nebhana Water Forum (Tunisia) situation, in Nepal, while the relationship between the local government and the Guthi has often been productive, in recent years, tensions between the Guthi and the federal government have mounted following unilateral efforts by the government to pass the Guthi Bill in 2019, which aimed to nationalize all Guthis, both public and private, and regulate all religious and cultural activities.<sup>120</sup> The Guthiyars interviewed for this research stated that “the bill could remove the right of Guthis to preserve their cultural heritage and practices.” Through a series of peaceful protests by the Guthis themselves, the bill was withdrawn. Here, a conflict with the state resulted in state policies being influenced.

#### Box 4.4. Preparing for deliberation in Tunisia

The Nebhana Water Forum model<sup>121</sup> in Tunisia began with an exploratory stage where the farmers were given the space to voice their ideas, opinions and assessment of the issues. These took place in small groups with very little structure. Facilitators created a non-judgemental atmosphere with no push for a particular position. The aim of this open dialogue was to persuade the farmers that engaging in deliberation with state authorities was an effective option to solve disagreements about water management. After this, there was a transversal dialogue within the stakeholder group in which the farmers discussed among themselves, separate from the local administrators. This was to enable farmers to learn from each other and engage with one another's issues. Only when these processes were complete were the farmers and government officials brought together in a collaborative dialogue.

Sources: Kühn (2017) and Diehl (2020).



## 4.6. Conclusion

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**Volunteerism plays an important role in deliberative governance. Volunteer–state partnerships, particularly those that engage volunteers from marginalized groups, play an important role in fostering inclusion in processes that may not otherwise accommodate these groups.**

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As the case studies have illustrated, for the farmers, women and indigenous groups who volunteer in deliberative governance mechanisms, these processes not only enable them to have their voices heard and be taken seriously in public governance, but also empower them to influence outcomes.

Issues of inclusion and voice—who gets to participate and how—are vital, especially in decisions that are value-based (e.g. preserving cultural heritage in Nepal) and those that require long-term solutions (e.g. agricultural policies in DRC). While the inclusion of marginalized groups helps amplify the voices of those who are least heard, challenges remain for volunteers who engage in these processes, as in some instances, deliberative spaces often reinforce

existing power imbalances. This was the case in Ecuador, where more “powerful” interests dominated the deliberations.

As the case studies show, volunteers’ engagement with state authorities fostered solidarity and relationship-building and resulted in outcomes that were more relevant to local needs. In the case of the Guthi and Barghar in Nepal, local government authorities drew on institutions set up to facilitate volunteering (such as Guthi and Barghar), thereby creating more space for deliberation. Moreover, deliberative processes conferred legitimacy and enhanced trust while increasing ownership and ensuring more responsive outcomes.

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**However, as the case studies have shown, these benefits can only be achieved if inclusive approaches are embraced, although their features may be influenced by local contexts.**

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Clearly, volunteer–state partnerships that engage people from marginalized groups in deliberative processes have a role to play in building more equal and inclusive societies. While they may not necessarily eliminate existing inequalities, they help amplify unheard voices, resulting in outcomes that are more responsive to communities’ needs.



## **Volunteer voice: Sumak Bastidas from Ecuador on the importance of promoting indigenous voices in deliberative governance**

**New spaces of community deliberation, when organized in traditional ways, may undermine efforts of inclusion rather than supporting them. Chapter 4 has shown that who gets to participate in these spaces is an important consideration in creating inclusive social contracts. Sumak Bastidas, a member of an indigenous community in Ecuador, shares how volunteerism could pave the way for indigenous groups' voices to be heard in public decision-making.**

*I'm Sumak Bastidas, a member of Ecuador's Kichwa indigenous community. I have extensive experience as a volunteer and have served in various capacities, including as a former National Coordinator of the UNV initiative for a global project that ensured access to, and fair and equitable distribution of, benefits on the use of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources.*

*Volunteers have a role to play in creating a fairer society in rural and indigenous communities in the aftermath of the pandemic. Volunteers can support the design of policies, programmes and projects that contribute to improving the quality of life of the most vulnerable populations in social, economic, environmental, cultural and environmental issues.*

*Volunteering can ensure that the voices of women and the perspectives of indigenous communities are included in people–state relationships by strengthening the capacities of indigenous peoples and local communities in national and international frameworks related to the protection of traditional knowledge and the sustainable use of animal and plant life.*

*The most exciting aspect of volunteering has been the opportunity to contribute to the strengthening of capacities of indigenous communities, bringing government policy closer to remote territories and raising the visibility of indigenous women in the protection of biodiversity and traditional knowledge.*



## **Special contribution: MD Tazul Islam MP, Honourable Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Bangladesh**

In 1973, for one of the first times in the modern history of Bangladesh, our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took the courageous initiative of involving state volunteers in the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) for war-ravaged Bangladesh.

This laid a firm base for institutionalizing the engagement of volunteers in development processes. Bangladesh has always been a pioneer country in fighting disasters. Once again, this is visible in this global COVID-19 pandemic, during which volunteers have done a tremendous job of stepping up and raising awareness of handwashing and personal hygiene to protect the most vulnerable.

Traditionally, volunteerism is deeply rooted in Bangladesh. Over the years, volunteers have played an important role in the socio-economic and political context of the country. Volunteerism is increasingly seen as an essential ingredient in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Fostering volunteerism is very important in Bangladesh for increasing civic engagement and citizen participation, and for ensuring the attainment of SDGs and government long-term development goals including Vision 2041 and the Delta Plan 2100. Volunteers are very important partners for our Ministry, especially at the local levels. We view them very much as an extension of the municipalities as they ensure trust, accountability and respect from the communities. As such, the Ministry engaged 171 UN Community Volunteers in 20 city corporations/municipalities across the country through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). They are an active part of the Livelihoods Improvement of Urban Poor Communities (LIUPC) Project, which is being implemented under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives. As the urban centres and populations to benefit from employment opportunities grow, this project aims to improve overall economic growth, income equality, employment and poverty.

In 2020, despite the challenging COVID-19 pandemic, project milestones included the establishment and strengthening of existing local service delivery mechanisms, enhancement of linkages to the communities, and the capacity development of concerned local officials working at the local level. Volunteers have made a significant part of these results possible, since the project has put special emphasis on community empowerment and better urban local service deliveries. Volunteers were drivers of community-based actions, mobilizing communities to actively engage in participatory poverty mapping or community development committees while also being committed to and raising the capacities of the urban poor on these matters. In this way, they are ensuring that the voices of the poor are louder and that the process is more inclusive.

During the pandemic, UN Community Volunteers are directly coordinating safety and awareness-raising activities on the front line. Through regular counselling, they motivate their communities to get vaccinated. They are also actively raising awareness on safety measures and hygiene practices, and providing support to slum-dwellers and other urban poor people to protect themselves from COVID-19. This has been invaluable: the volunteers belong to these communities and they are able to understand the local realities, create a bond and form new relationships.

To give you a better picture of what our UN Community Volunteers are busy with, here are just a few examples. They mobilize community-based organizations and work alongside the community development committees to prepare, for example, the Community Action Plans by prioritizing improvements to community infrastructure, keeping in mind climate-resilience factors and the need to address socio-economic challenges in line with the local requirements. Volunteers also organize and facilitate assessment, monitoring and evaluation with the urban poor at the city level. All this demonstrates their robust nature and capacity to mobilize resources and staff at the local level. This in turn has helped achieve well coordinated and effective response activities, in coordination with the local government and development agencies.

My Ministry is advanced in terms of partnering with volunteers. In 2020, the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, WaterAid and UN Volunteers (UNV) Bangladesh jointly launched the countrywide Bangladesh Volunteer Award initiative, which recognized the country's most dedicated and hardworking volunteers. The launch was widely covered by national media. Following this unique initiative, I am now seeing that other government bodies are being encouraged to initiate several volunteer recognition programmes.

The ongoing crisis stemming from the pandemic also forced us to rethink our engagement of volunteers using traditional governance models. Therefore, giving volunteers the appropriate skills to be an auxiliary workforce that can engage in development activities is of the utmost importance for us. For a number of months now, together with volunteers and volunteer-involving organizations as well as whole-of-government ministries, we are collectively co-creating a first-of-its-kind National Volunteer Policy, since we all realize the need for the well organized and effective coordination, management and maintenance of volunteerism in Bangladesh. The policy will help embed volunteerism within our national development policies, significantly strengthening local government institutions. It also mainly centres on core themes of promoting and mainstreaming volunteerism in national development, narrowing the rural-urban divide, attaining SDG targets, and undertaking human resource development with a broad-based inclusiveness strategy. In my view, the formulation of the National Volunteer Policy will help bring the voluntary activities of individuals and groups, as well as the private sector and development partners, into the mainstream and give government recognition to volunteerism. We have organized consultations at the national and subnational levels in order to provide a space for volunteers and other stakeholders to express their views, listen and be heard as we design the policy.

I strongly believe that locally based planning solutions and the participation of direct beneficiaries of local government initiatives can be significantly strengthened by the creativity, innovation and local wisdom of volunteers.



## Chapter 5

# Volunteer-state partnerships and co-production of services



## Key highlights

- Volunteers are often part of the communities in which they work and are experts on the issues faced by marginalized groups. Their expertise is therefore important in the co-production process.
- Volunteer and state authorities leverage partnerships for mutually beneficial outcomes.
- Volunteers' participation in the co-production of services helps orient government programmes to the needs of marginalized groups while enhancing the delivery of these services.
- Volunteers play the role of mediators and brokers of information. They help marginalized groups to navigate highly bureaucratic processes that are often difficult to access and to obtain services from state authorities.

### 5.1. Introduction

Globally, as countries and regions grapple with complex development challenges, the need for people and institutions to work together to address them has become even more vital. During crises, the demand for services rises and becomes urgent, and the need for co-production increases. As a result, without the participation of the wider community, public services may become more difficult to implement.

Often governments may need to decentralize their efforts and work with volunteers and other civil society actors to co-produce services.<sup>122</sup> Increasingly, volunteers are taking a more active role in the co-production of public services and are collaborating and building relationships<sup>123</sup> with state authorities at various levels. It is within this context that this chapter examines how volunteers and state authorities partner to co-produce services.

To do this, the chapter looks at case study research on volunteer–state partnerships in China, Lebanon, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan

and Senegal. While the role of volunteers in service delivery and programme implementation is well documented, the case studies presented in this report illustrate how volunteers also play an important role in the design, implementation and evaluation of public programmes and services alongside state authorities. In this way, volunteers are not only recipients of public services, but also vital partners in the delivery of such programmes.

This chapter is divided into four parts. Section 5.2 provides an overview of co-production as a concept and framework through which the specific model of volunteer–state co-production is investigated in the case studies. Section 5.3 provides an overview of the four case studies. Section 5.4 discusses the key features of co-production based on the case studies, highlighting their characteristics and the processes involved in the co-production of services in volunteer–state partnerships. Section 5.5 concludes by identifying the strengths of volunteer–state co-production models.



## 5.2. Volunteering: an essential component in the co-production of services

Co-production of services can broadly be understood to mean the engagement of people in the co-development of services that promote their inclusion (design, planning and evaluation). In co-production, diverse groups may engage in the processes in an effort to “fill the gap” in services, while adapting to changing circumstances in their communities and the changing capacities of state authorities.

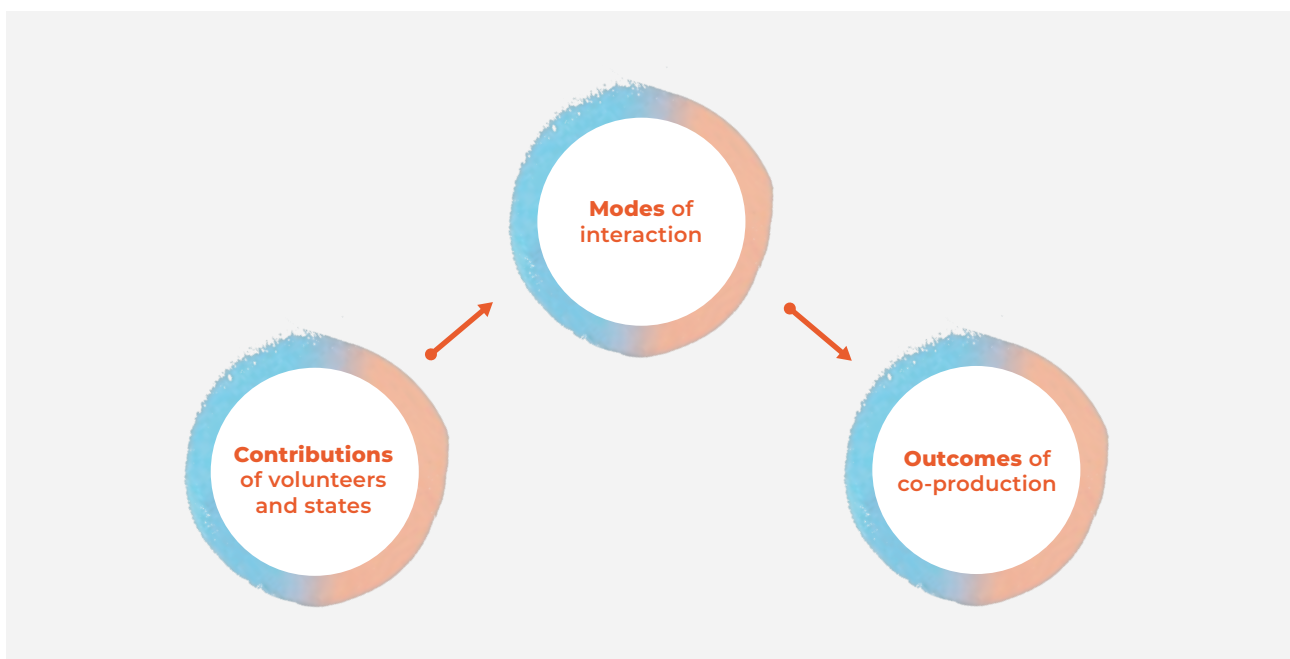
For the purpose of this report, co-production refers to the creative, innovative and collaborative ways<sup>124, 125</sup> in which volunteers and state authorities partner with volunteers to deliver services, thus departing from the “traditional” volunteer service delivery model in which volunteers passively implement pre-designed programmes. While examples of co-production vary and may include local groups in cooperatives and farmers’ groups, this report uses it as an “umbrella concept” to

capture the wide variety of activities that can be undertaken when volunteers and state authorities work together in any phase of the public service cycle.<sup>126</sup>

In co-production, volunteers choose to contribute their time, knowledge and effort to processes that were once exclusively occupied by “experts” and “professionals”. In doing this, these volunteers challenge hierarchies and dominant assumptions about who should participate. In this way, co-production is underpinned by empowerment and autonomy among participants, and fosters adaptability, particularly in response to emerging needs.

While volunteer–state relationships are at the core of co-production, the ways in which the process is approached, expressed and implemented varies. As Figure 5.1 shows, volunteer–state partnerships in co-production processes consist of three elements: the contributions of volunteers and states, modes of interaction, and outcomes of co-production.

**Figure 5.1.** Interrelated elements of co-production between volunteers and states



The first element of the co-production process is the **contribution of volunteers and states** when they work together. This could involve contributing time (e.g. attending planning meetings to help find the most effective way of distributing goods during lockdown), expertise/knowledge (e.g. medical doctors offering their public health expertise) or resources (e.g. local government council funding). Some contributions are vital but intangible, such as understanding and empathy, developing relationships and shaping work cultures. Also included in this element are the different reasons why volunteers choose to participate. These may include dissatisfaction with current services, or the sense of autonomy and active citizenship that comes with participation.<sup>127</sup>

The second element, **modes of interaction**, may be influenced by volunteers' level of participation ("to what extent") in the service delivery process and the stage ("when") of involvement. Co-production involves various stages and processes (e.g. co-commissioning, co-design, co-delivery, co-assessment) and volunteers can be involved throughout the entire cycle or only at specific stages. In some instances, volunteers may play a limited role in the redesign of well-established services. In other instances, state authorities may have limited organizational capacities to enable them to engage productively with volunteers.

The final element refers to the intended **outcomes of co-production**.

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Collaboration between volunteers and state authorities may lead to enhanced public services that are more responsive to the needs of community members.<sup>128</sup>

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While co-production is often framed as a good thing, it should be noted that co-production may result in unintended consequences<sup>129</sup> and can, in some instances, place too much burden on volunteers.

### 5.3. Introducing the case studies

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The case studies discussed in this chapter focus on volunteer–state partnerships in co-production in five countries across diverse geographical regions in the Global South.

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In terms of their structure, the case study organizations in China, Kazakhstan and Lebanon are more structured and formal while those in Kyrgyzstan and Senegal are loosely organized community-based volunteering structures.

As these case studies will show, volunteers from diverse marginalized groups engage in the co-production of services with state authorities in various contexts. In some cases, volunteers themselves are members of the "target group"—for example, students and international volunteers in Lebanon; people with disabilities and their families in China; specialist volunteers in vocational skills in Kazakhstan; and long-standing indigenous community-based volunteers in Kyrgyzstan and Senegal.

The case studies explore a variety of development issues: gender equality issues in Lebanon and Senegal; disability rights and employment in China and Kazakhstan; reproductive health in Senegal; migration in Kyrgyzstan and Lebanon. While the Lebanon case study is based on primary data (i.e. a maxi case study), the others are based largely on secondary data (i.e. mini case studies). The China and Senegal case studies also include interviews with representatives from the organizations.



### 5.3.1. Amel Association, Lebanon

**Founded in 1979, the Amel Association is a non-governmental non-sectarian organization with headquarters in Beirut.**

It has more than 25 centres all over Lebanon that engage with a variety of volunteers. Amel's volunteers are mostly young people and students, as well as international volunteers and a number of migrant development workers and outreach volunteers who are members of the vulnerable communities themselves (refugees or migrants). The organization also works with community-based volunteers who are recognized leaders in their communities. This case study focuses on Amel's project on the rights and welfare of migrant domestic workers who come from African and South-East Asian countries for economic migration. The project was co-designed and co-implemented by Amel's volunteer group.

Lebanon has over 250,000 migrant domestic workers, nearly 70,000 of whom have irregular status. These people are among the most vulnerable groups in the country, with many of them exposed to exploitation and abuse within Lebanon's Kafala system. This system allows a Lebanese citizen to sponsor a migrant worker, who in turn, is responsible for the worker's legal status and their official documentation. Under the system, migrant workers are excluded from Article 7 of the Lebanese labour law which regulates minimum wage, working hours and holiday pay, among other conditions. Moreover, migrant workers are not protected from abuse and can be deported at any time. Migrant workers' sponsors manage their residency and working permits (often keeping their passports) and determine their wages, working hours and holidays, often subjecting migrant domestic workers to unfair working conditions and human rights abuses.<sup>130</sup>



### 5.3.2. China Disabled Persons' Federation, China

**The China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF) was established in 1988 and aims to represent people with disabilities by working directly with the government in public policymaking and the delivery of services for these groups.**

This case study focuses on a district in Shanghai<sup>131</sup> where CDPF is operated by over 1,300 volunteers. Over 130 of these volunteers are themselves people with disabilities. In CDPF's volunteer–state relationship model, both government concerns and those of people with disabilities are represented. This “half government–half public” (*banguan banmin*) approach is a hybrid model whereby CDPF functions as a network that engages volunteers, people with disabilities and governments in service delivery. While CDPF and its local branches exist across all levels of government, including the provincial, prefectural, county and township level, it also involves various organizational forms, from formal non-profit organizations to neighbourhood voluntary groups that are spontaneously organized by people with disabilities and their families and friends.



### 5.3.3. Bajenu Gox, Senegal

**The Bajenu Gox programme is a government initiative launched in 2010 in Senegal's 14 regions.**

The initiative, which centres on the well-respected figure of the *bajen*—a Wolof term meaning “godmother”—who has the role of a counsellor, engages over 8,600 women volunteers who serve as mediators between government health structures and local communities. These women volunteers, called Bajenu Gox, are appointed by a public health doctor to support in the delivery of health services in hard-to-reach areas. As recognized and respected leaders in their neighbourhood, the Bajenu Gox also raise awareness on maternal and child health and are integral to local health planning at the community and district level. The Bajenu Gox attend a series of training sessions organized by the district government on reproductive health to enable them to carry out this role effectively. Through the Bajenu Gox volunteer–state relationship model, the national health system was able to build on and leverage the expertise, practices, relationships and information provided by these traditional women leaders.





### 5.3.4. The Center for Professional Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, Kazakhstan

**The Center for Professional Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities was established as a joint pilot project, supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of Kazakhstan.<sup>132</sup>**

The centre's main task is to help people with disabilities access permanent employment. To do this, local and national volunteers with expertise in career counselling, social work, psychology, legal issues and coaching (some of whom are supported by UN Volunteers) work in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population.<sup>133</sup> Built on partnership, the centre has been successful in its mission. As a result, the initiative has been replicated in 17 regions in Kazakhstan, with volunteers, local authorities and the Ministry working together.



### 5.3.5. Sairon, Kyrgyzstan

**Founded in 1999, Sairon (a Tajik term meaning “passage”) is a volunteer-based civil society organization (CSO) in Kyrgyzstan that aims to protect and integrate refugee and migrant populations from Tajikistan.<sup>134</sup>**

Its activities include providing legal defence and information sessions, obtaining citizenship, and fixing infrastructures in places where refugees live. Sairon works closely with the state administration, the State Committee on Migration and Employment, the Department of Internal Affairs, the passport offices and local self-governments in the concerned regions. The initiative with the local governments on this project has resulted in more than a thousand refugees gaining citizenship in the country.<sup>135</sup>

## 5.4. Key features of co-production

This section looks at the key features of the co-production process.

### 5.4.1. Collaborative structures

Collaborative structures are a key feature of volunteer–state partnerships that have enhanced co-production. With the exception of the Center for Professional Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (Kazakhstan), volunteer–state partnerships are based on long-term collaborations, with deep-rooted volunteer–state relationships providing the basis for volunteer groups' strong reputation and track record. As part of China's pandemic response, CDPF's multi-governance structures at the provincial, prefectural, country and township level were activated to provide much-needed services to people with disabilities during lockdowns. CDPF relied on the volunteer network embedded in its governance systems to provide these services.

In Lebanon, Amel leveraged collaborations in which volunteers played an important role, ranging from consultative collaborations to the active co-creation of agendas and services. These collaborations helped consolidate Amel's reputation as a credible development organization among government institutions in Lebanon, giving student and youth volunteers a solid framework within which to conduct activities and share ideas during government consultations, including innovative and sometimes technology-related ideas.

### 5.4.2. Leveraging partnerships for mutual benefit

The importance of mutual respect and trust among partners has long been recognized. A key feature of co-production in volunteer–state partnerships is the leveraging of

collaboration for mutual benefit, with volunteers bringing innovative solutions inspired by their lived experiences in marginalized communities. Across the case studies, volunteers and state authorities leveraged partnerships for mutually beneficial outcomes in co-production. For instance, in Amel (Lebanon), volunteers sensitized state authorities to the plight of migrant workers, which led the government to provide services. In the case of the Center for Professional Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities in Kazakhstan, volunteers' advocacy for dignified employment for people with disabilities alerted state authorities to the need to better integrate disadvantaged groups in society through the provision of services, culminating in the replication and scale-up of the programme in 17 other regions in the country. Similarly, community-based volunteers in Sairon, Krygyzstan, using their first-hand knowledge of citizenship-related government processes, were able to work with state authorities and help refugees to obtain citizenship. For the government, this meant that these individuals were residing in the country legally.

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**Together, these examples suggest that when volunteer–state partners work together to co-produce services, there is mutual reward.**

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In some cases, the outcomes resulted in long-term institutional support, as evidenced in Amel's domestic migrant workers initiative and their fight to abolish the Kafala system in Lebanon, and the Center for Professional Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities' efforts to scale up employment for persons with disabilities throughout Kazakhstan.

### 5.4.3. Volunteers and service users as experts on their own needs

A common feature in several of the case

studies is the importance of volunteers' leadership and expertise. In Sairon (Kyrgyzstan), volunteers played an active role in government decision-making on which refugee facilities needed to be prioritized at any one time,<sup>136</sup> highlighting the issues that affect refugees and migrant populations the most. In the Bajenu Gox programme, the Senegalese government relied on the leadership of indigenous women volunteers—as well as the “community relays”, young girls who supported them—who were well respected in the local communities. The women's and girls' commitment was not only reflected in the delivery of reproductive health services, but also in ensuring that these services were responsive to what the women needed and their changing needs. Because volunteers were often part of the communities where they worked, they were experts on the strengths and weaknesses of these communities, which proved invaluable in the co-production of policies and programmes.

#### 5.4.4. Gaps in services as catalysts for volunteering

The case studies show that volunteers were motivated to engage in co-production activities in large part due to gaps in services, particularly among marginalized groups. Equally, they wanted to be part of the “real” change that they saw happening regarding the protection of these groups. In Amel (Lebanon) and Sairon (Kyrgyzstan), volunteers advocated for the provision of services for

migrants and refugees who operated in the margins of society. By co-producing services with state authorities, volunteers were able to enhance their capacity to advocate for the needs of marginalized groups and add the issues to state authorities' agenda. Meanwhile, state authorities gained valuable insights about the needs of these communities and how to better meet those needs.

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**This demonstrates how volunteers can play an active role in developing and maintaining reciprocal, long-term relationships with state authorities that lead to the co-creation and co-implementation of state programmes.**

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While the government's failure to meet the needs of marginalized groups may provide impetus for volunteer action, volunteers' expert knowledge on the needs and issues that these communities face is invaluable in the co-production process.

Together, volunteers and state authorities can help shape co-production processes that are effective and more responsive to communities' needs. As the case studies show, the roles played by volunteers and the expectations of state and volunteers in these partnerships are constantly changing.



### Box 5.1. Summary of mechanisms involved in volunteering for co-production

#### Who volunteers or participates?

For many volunteers in the case studies, their journey starts with a concern that their needs are not being prioritized and/or they see a need to improve how these services are delivered. Therefore, the volunteers who participate in, and are invited to, co-production processes tend to either experience inequalities themselves (e.g. people with disabilities, migrant workers, urban women) or be those who advocate for solutions (e.g. student and youth volunteers, international volunteers). There are cases where volunteers themselves are directly involved with state implementation (e.g. Sairon) or they participate via a volunteer organisation that already has strong links with state institutions (e.g. Amel).

#### What is the extent of participation?

Based on these case studies, volunteers and community members co-produce services at certain points of the project cycle. They are most visible in the co-design and co-implementation of programmes. Certain challenges have stopped volunteers and other community members from participating fully. Local volunteers may also experience similar vulnerabilities and face barriers in terms of finance and literacy. They may also find the bureaucracy and red tape difficult to understand and navigate.

#### For what outcome?

When volunteers co-produce services, they can make aspects of these government programmes more relevant to the needs of the marginalized groups. Co-production can also lead to better relationships between people and states, but this has to be nurtured over time.



A doctor coordinates volunteer activities for Amel Association in Beirut, Lebanon to facilitate migrants' access to COVID-19 vaccines. *Source: UNV.*



## 5.5. Strengths and challenges of the co-production models

These case studies highlight the successes and challenges in volunteer–state co-production.

### 5.5.1. Co-producing services that are responsive to marginalized communities' needs

Volunteers' most valuable contribution to the co-production process is the credibility they provide by working first-hand with local communities. In the case of CDPF in China, and Bajenu Gox in Senegal, volunteers were from the communities in which they worked, and their lived experiences—whether as women living in resource-poor contexts (Senegal) or as people with disabilities (China)—provided them with both expertise in their communities and insights into how to address issues.

In these case studies, state authorities engaged in partnerships with volunteers from marginalized groups and relied on volunteers' experiences to inform and shape aspects of their programmes to make them more responsive to these communities' needs. Volunteer experts in the Center for Professional Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (Kazakhstan), for example, paved the way for a more holistic approach to helping people with disabilities access employment.<sup>137</sup> In addition to complementing state employment services with an individualized approach, a wider range of services, from psychological and legal support to career advice, contributed to better outcomes for these groups. After returning to work, personal coordinators are assigned to beneficiaries to help them to adapt to their new job over a period of six months and develop the necessary professional skills.

Amel's vaccination project, co-implemented by the Lebanese Ministry of Health and youth volunteers (see Box 5.2), illustrates how local volunteers helped steer the Ministry's focus towards the needs of migrant workers. Building on volunteers' efforts to provide information and assistance, the Ministry ensured that migrant workers received life-saving jobs. The partnership also formed the basis for youth volunteers, through Amel, to work with the Ministry to develop more service platforms to better respond to migrant domestic workers' needs. This highlighted how volunteer–state partnerships in co-production could respond to the needs of local communities while providing enduring solutions to their challenges.



A volunteer assists migrants queuing for COVID-19 vaccines at the Dora Roundabout in Beirut, Lebanon.  
Source: UNV.

### Box 5.2. Volunteers and local government working together to vaccinate migrant workers

When Lebanon started vaccinating its citizens against COVID-19, many migrant workers, especially those who did not have the legal documentation (“undocumented” migrant workers), did not receive vaccinations. Four Amel volunteers launched a campaign to raise awareness that migrant domestic workers also have a right to be vaccinated and be protected from COVID-19. The student volunteers provided the migrant workers with information on the vaccination, created application forms, supported the Amel team in coordinating the activities, and helped migrants complete the forms and locate vaccination centres. Through these efforts, 15 migrant domestic workers were vaccinated in the pilot phase, which later led to registration and access for hundreds of migrants (and counting). Amel's leadership team brought this volunteer-led initiative to the attention of the Ministry of Health, an institution with which Amel has partnered for over 40 years. One staff member said:

“The volunteers [who started this campaign] helped us to pressure the Ministry in understanding that there are big numbers of migrant workers who want to get the vaccine. Without the long-term cooperation between the state and Amel, we would not have been able to scale up the project and make a difference.”

As part of the partnership with the Ministry, volunteers are able to reach the government office directly, participate in decision-making alongside the Amel team, and liaise on behalf of migrant domestic workers, many of whom lack IDs, phone numbers and email addresses. Recognizing the challenges associated with contacting migrant workers, Amel worked with state authorities to develop an online health services platform for the many migrant workers who do not have access to a phone or emails. Amel is currently co-designing this platform with the Ministry of Health for migrant workers, many of whom do not have access to health insurance or even to the Lebanese public health system. Volunteers' enthusiasm and efforts have motivated Amel to allocate more time to this valuable cause.

Source: UNV primary research.

### Box 5.3. Making women's needs a priority

Every fifteenth of the month, a district meeting is held in communities in Senegal, bringing together the doctor, midwives and other agents, the Bajenu Gox, and community relays. The objective of these monthly meetings is to take stock of the month's activities, assess the results achieved, discuss the problems encountered and find possible solutions. This is an opportunity for the Bajenu Gox and their community relays to share the concerns of the women that they have worked with during the month. They renew their supply of vitamin A and deworming medicines, and communication and work aids such as activity report sheets.

*Source:* Interview with a Bajenu Gox in one district in Dakar.

The Bajenu Gox in Senegal address women's reproductive health concerns and help integrate them into decision-making spaces. Unlike Amel's initiative, Bajenu Gox, which comprises community volunteers, is a government-initiated health programme. Recognizing its inability to provide reproductive health services in hard-to-reach areas, Senegal's public health system authorities engaged Bajenu Gox women leaders to develop the women's reproductive health service in these areas. As the findings of the case study show, the district team consulted the Bajenu Gox intensively before making decisions.

According to a Bajenu Gox volunteer who was interviewed for the case study, "when there is a new programme, the doctor always asks the BGs [Bajenu Gox] for their opinion on the relevance of the strategy to be developed, or their perceptions on the buy-in of the populations of a new approach, etc."

She adds, "The people listen to us a lot; we are doing important work and there are no problems between the state authorities (at the district level) and the Bajenu Gox. The collaboration is going well. The work is easier now compared to the beginning when there were a lot of barriers and people were not listening to us."<sup>138</sup>

Through co-production, state authorities have been able to develop programmes that are relevant to the needs of the most marginalized groups. Included in this process are volunteers and states engaging in collaborative needs assessments. For example, Sairon (Krgyzstan) was instrumental in helping to identify the best possible approach for rebuilding shelter provisions for Tajik refugees.

**Volunteers at the Center for Professional Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, alongside staff members, were able to design employment training programmes that were tailored to the capacities and priorities of people with disabilities in Kazakhstan.<sup>139</sup>**

Such partnerships can make projects more relevant and responsive to the communities' needs.

Volunteers were also able to provide new perspectives and approaches to address persistent problems. Amel's working relationship with the state, for instance, shows how volunteer groups can move beyond coordinating (and/or asking "permission") from state authorities and play key roles in co-designing and co-implementing social services for the most vulnerable. A key finding from the China case study was that mutual aid networks within CDPF played a significant role in increasing the resilience of the services for people living with disabilities during the pandemic.

Because many volunteers themselves may experience marginalization, addressing volunteers' own needs and safety remains a challenge. The Bajenu Gox receive no remuneration for their work: "there is no money, there is no salary for the BG, we work for our neighbourhood, we work for our country."<sup>140</sup> Volunteers are left with less time for themselves, for their families and for other economic activities.

A volunteer with a visual impairment in CDPF stated, "After participating in some programmes of the China Disabled Persons' Federation, we have changed. We participate

in various activities actively. We have a better life."

These examples highlight the importance of reciprocity in volunteer–state relationships.

### 5.5.2. Local volunteers as mediators of bureaucratic processes and information

State activities can often become very bureaucratic. As emphasized in the co-production model described in section 2, individuals need enough information on the issues and familiarity with the institutional processes to participate effectively.

#### Box 5.4. Empowerment through citizenship

Sairon (in Kyrgyzstan) has been involved in all stages of co-production for programmes that help Tajik refugees and migrant populations to obtain citizenship. Volunteers from Sairon organized a series of round table discussions with village communities and local self-government bodies. These included discussions with passport departments and representatives from international organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). A simplified citizenship process was agreed and Sairon volunteers were trained in this new process. Volunteers then acted as consultants and liaisons to ensure that the refugees they worked with satisfied these requirements. A chief officer in a passport office said, "Without the help of Sairon, we could not deal with the many documents for acquiring citizenship."<sup>141</sup>

Source: Burke and others (2007).

The case studies have shown that volunteers can play a key role across different stages of the co-production process, from co-development of ideas to co-implementation (as in the case of Sairon). In Amel, migrant domestic workers need to have a government ID (or a copy), a phone number and an email address to be able to register for a vaccination. These can all be denied to them by their employers.

A volunteer helps a migrant with his paperwork to access COVID-19 vaccines in Beirut, Lebanon. Source: UNV.





*We are trying to encourage access to vaccination for migrants but because lots of them don't have IDs, they are scared to go due to the risk of being detained. So, we need to "walk with them". This is where volunteers play a huge role. There is so much information required on the COVAX platform, whenever you want to register for the vaccine. So, we volunteers help the migrant workers deal with this information, helping them get hold of a phone number as some don't have mobile phones and this is a must for registration on the COVAX platform. We would give these directly to Amel, and Amel, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, deals with the issue.*

– Youth volunteer in Beirut

Amel volunteers have helped ensure that these groups can access government services, including the vaccination programme, during the pandemic. Volunteers help service users navigate bureaucratic processes and have designed platforms that take into account their specific needs. A similar approach was developed by the Kyrgyz Ministry of Internal Affairs to simplify the citizenship application process for Tajik refugees. This decision was facilitated and implemented through their working relationship with Sairon. The strength in the co-production of services with volunteers lies in its ability to bridge the gap between state authorities who provide services and the various marginalized groups who use these services, thereby improving service provision.

A key challenge in volunteer–state partnerships is some volunteers' difficulty navigating bureaucratic processes. In Senegal, many Bajenu Gox's low levels of literacy and education limit their ability to

produce sufficient-quality activity reports. To address this challenge, state authorities have recruited community relays to assist with report writing. In Lebanon, many youth volunteers have to learn more about the legal systems and understand the Kafala system before they can support others. As one youth volunteer stated, "I would probably say that Amel made me more conscious about some of the legal aspects to do with the service." Amel also works with short-term international volunteers, many of whom come from universities abroad. Over the summer, these volunteers stay in Lebanon as interns and receive training/orientation on local cultural practices. A member of Amel said, "... you can't just leave [volunteers] alone—you will need to guide them, you need to provide time for them, train them as much as we can."

As these case studies show, volunteers can help community members navigate complex bureaucratic processes in order to access state services. Yet sometimes, volunteers themselves also need support in understanding these processes so that they can be of assistance.

### **5.5.3. Volunteer–state co-production develops trust and accountability**

As discussed earlier, a key reason why volunteers want to work with state authorities is because they are dissatisfied with the way local authorities address important development problems such as migration, disabilities and reproductive health. This could be viewed as a deficit of trust between states, service users and volunteers. In the case of Amel, migrant workers were often reluctant to approach state authorities despite urgent needs such as shelter, or in cases of human rights abuses, due to fears of detention or deportation. By helping them navigate state processes under the leadership and guidance of Amel, youth volunteers were able to help restore migrants' trust and link them to the services that they needed.

*A lot of the migrant workers are undocumented and because they don't want to be identified by the government or their countries, they feel safer resorting to NGOs [non-governmental organizations] because they consider them to be safe spaces, and Amel's philosophy is based on dignity.<sup>142</sup>*

It is clear from this interviewee's statement that youth volunteers were able to create an environment where migrant workers felt safe and heard. As a consequence, they also had a positive impact on the partnership with state authorities, nurturing trust between themselves, state authorities and the recipients of these development programmes. Since 2011, Amel has adopted a holistic approach to the issue by establishing a programme for the support of migrant workers and victims of trafficking, working closely with government institutions such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Labour. Amel's volunteers co-implemented emergency support programmes, distributing basic supplies during lockdown such as food parcels, hygiene kits and non-food items, and helped undocumented workers access support such as cash for rent and voluntarily return to their home countries. Amel also participated in stakeholder dialogues, provided up-to-date data and raised awareness of migrant domestic workers' rights and duties. These activities have been instrumental in helping the Lebanese government find alternatives to the Kafala system that will ensure dignified work and living for migrant domestic workers.

Working with the Bajenu Gox has helped the Senegalese health system become more responsive in its service delivery. Although the focus is on women and their

reproductive health, men were found to consult often with the Bajenu Gox on issues such as tuberculosis, smoking and sexually transmitted infections. The Bajenu Gox are so trusted in the communities that men ask for their help when they need to go to hospital to have their babies delivered.

Trust is fundamental for developing collaborative volunteer–state partnerships. Trust needs to be built and when it breaks down, it needs to be restored. The case studies show that volunteers can nurture communities' trust in the state authorities and vice versa.

## 5.6. Conclusion

Volunteerism plays an important role in the co-production of services. Volunteer–state partnerships that engage people from marginalized groups in co-production illustrate new ways of working that engage people from marginalized groups in co-production, thus fostering inclusion.

Volunteer–state partnerships in the co-creation and co-implementation of services often leverage volunteers' lived experiences, knowledge and expertise. As a result, they can help shape outcomes that are more responsive to the needs of marginalized communities. That said, the benefits from such partnerships accrue to both volunteers and state authorities.

Volunteer–state partnerships in co-production can lay the foundation for more equal and inclusive societies when their initiatives are aligned with communities' needs. What is more, given that many volunteer–state partnerships have existed for a long time, the viability and long-term prospects of such partnerships are promising.

## Volunteer voice: Florina Qupevaj from Kosovo<sup>iii</sup> on maintaining mental health and well-being during the pandemic

**During crisis, volunteers step in to address the need to respond swiftly to critical social issues in their communities. Florina Qupevaj, a volunteer for Kosovo's psychological helpline, shares her experience of co-implementing a COVID-19 mental health helpline during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

*I am Florina Qupevaj, I am 22 years old and I am at the end of my studies in the field of psychology at the University of Pristina. Since the main reason I chose to study psychology was to help myself and others, I did not hesitate to become part of the psychological helpline during the COVID-19 pandemic. Together with volunteer psychologists, we provided psychological support to people who felt the need to share their concerns or problems with someone.*

*The psychological helpline was opened in April 2020 by the Ministry of Health, at a time when all people were locked in their homes and were trying to protect themselves and their families from the new virus that was spreading across the world.*

*The support we provided via the psychological helpline was motivated by desire and goodwill. We endangered ourselves, our families and many others around us to come to the aid of others.*

*Being a psychologist in Kosovo is not easy, as there is a great lack of awareness about mental health. For this reason, we have worked very carefully to convey accurate information to people. However, I think that the work done by the psychological helpline should be further supported by institutions, along with awareness of mental health and recognition of the importance of psychologists in Kosovan society.*

*I often remember those times when people were totally isolated and, after a long phone call, I heard them saying, "I feel much better, like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders." The feeling I experienced on the other side of the phone cannot be described in words.*

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<sup>iii</sup> Hereafter referred to in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

## **Special contribution: Reflections on a corporate volunteering initiative during a crisis – Leyla Perea, Head of Voluntarios Telefónica and Member of the volunteer corporate platform Empresas que Inspiran, Peru**

Voluntarios Telefónica [Telefónica Volunteers] is a corporate volunteering programme aiming to transform the lives of those less fortunate through time, effort, knowledge and resources, in accordance with social work, values and the strategy of the company.

We are, in turn, part of Empresas que Inspiran [Inspiring Enterprises], the first national corporate volunteering platform, developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The platform seeks to position the value of corporate volunteering and its strategic contribution to the company, collaborators, and society, as a means for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from its most precious asset: its collaborators.

Voluntarios Telefónica mobilizes more than 2,600 annually and leverages its partners to support the implementation of the SDGs. Since 2007, we have been supporting volunteers who provide help to vulnerable groups in 21 cities, and promoting their inclusion in local and community development.

Normally, we offer a wide variety of face-to-face volunteering opportunities to our collaborators, family and friends who often engage in aid campaigns, volunteer activities for a day, and more recently, in the transfer of knowledge and skills. Most of our partners not only become leaders of their own social initiatives, but also aspire to become agents of social change.

As a result of the pandemic, we have redesigned our entire programme and initiated virtual and easy-to-execute volunteering activities that allow our partners to participate while taking advantage of the programme's resources and strengthening its relationship with other strategic entities.

During the pandemic, we had to quickly reorganize the corporate volunteer programme's activities. Voluntarios Telefónica evolved from and in response to the emerging health needs of vulnerable groups during the pandemic. We pivoted and established a network that would allow us to mobilize our telephone volunteers without exposing them to health risks through face-to-face interactions.

Voluntarios Telefónica launched different calls for virtual volunteering nationwide to make possible donations of bespoke biosafety equipment for firefighters and medical personnel, deliveries of food and cleaning supplies to different shelters and reception centres, and digital



activities targeted at children through school programmes or digital literacy for the older ones.

A key achievement during the pandemic was Voluntarios Telefónica's "Maratón de Iniciativas Ágiles" [Agile Initiatives Marathon], a rapid pandemic response campaign that took place between June and August 2020. The initiative was so successful that we ran it twice, in June and August, in 22 cities as well as the capital, Lima and several provinces, with over 1,200 volunteers providing support to more than 5,300 people.

During the lockdown, we forged strategic partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), churches, municipalities and regional governments in an effort to better understand and respond to local communities' needs. With funding from the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations, we created opportunities that allowed volunteers to engage in social programmes. Besides helping us to better understand communities' needs and reach those most affected by the pandemic, these strategic partnerships have enabled us to operate more efficiently. Meanwhile, the private sector made great efforts to generate volunteer activities and the state, through the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations, also created opportunities that allowed corporate volunteers to commit to various social programmes.

By working in partnership with others, we can achieve extraordinary things. In this regard, the Empresas que Inspiran platform has an essential role by helping to reactivate corporate volunteering in other companies. We want to continue forming alliances that allow the participation of the different actors of the corporate volunteering ecosystem, in line with the SDGs and citizenship empowerment.

## Chapter 6

# Volunteer-state partnerships and social innovation



## Key highlights

- Gaps in services often provide the impetus for and help catalyse social innovation, with volunteers the main drivers of this.
- As experts on the issues in their communities, volunteers can generate new ideas to solve community challenges, resulting in more socially responsive development.
- Innovations facilitated by volunteers can lead to social transformations by changing social norms, attitudes and values, and lead to more sustainable outcomes.
- By helping to facilitate new ways of working, volunteers can play a role in reconfiguring power relations between people and states.

### 6.1. Introduction

Ongoing development challenges such as climate change, intensifying inequalities, political polarization and the COVID-19 pandemic mean that people and institutions increasingly find themselves working in crisis mode. For instance, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations—including those set up by volunteers—have had to address immediate needs while keeping up with the spread of the disease.<sup>143</sup> Some volunteer groups have repurposed themselves while others have formed spontaneously, often providing innovative high-tech and non-tech solutions in response to immediate and urgent community needs.<sup>144</sup>

Social innovation broadly refers to the development of new ideas or processes that aim to address gaps. Long-term social problems, and the emergence of new ones, mean that people and institutions have to think outside the box and implement new and cutting-edge initiatives. In the context of volunteerism, volunteers are often involved in

generating, implementing and disseminating new ideas and practices that address a social need. Evidence from this report also suggests that people are increasingly interested in volunteering for activities related to social innovation (see chapter 3).

Drawing on case study research on volunteer–state partnerships in Colombia, Kenya, Malawi, Trinidad and Tobago, and a project that spans the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, this chapter explores how volunteerism can be a driver of social innovation and volunteers' involvement in shaping and facilitating new ways of working, and implement new solutions to address sustainable development challenges.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into four parts. Section 6.2 discusses definitions and key processes involved in social innovation. This is followed by an introduction to the case studies in section 6.3. Section 6.4 outlines the key components of the different social innovation models illustrated by the case studies. Finally, section 6.5 addresses strengths and challenges.



## 6.2. The role of volunteering in social innovation

In essence, social innovation implies a new way of doing things in an effort to respond to or tackle an issue. Often, social innovations can lead to new or improved relationships that make better use of assets and resources.<sup>145</sup> In the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s report on social innovation in South-East Asia, "inclusive social innovation describes the pursuit of innovation that has social aims, and local context, at its heart. One can think of it as either—and both—a more inclusive approach to innovation, or a more innovative approach to driving social inclusion."<sup>146</sup> Social innovation has also been used to refer to innovations in technology and business<sup>147</sup> that focus on responding to social needs, empowering and enhancing the capabilities of communities.<sup>148</sup> In terms of public services, social innovations need to be co-designed and co-produced with end users so that they can build on communities' capacities while delivering more direct impacts.<sup>149</sup>

It is well documented that social innovation is likely to lead to sustainable outcomes when there is active citizen participation in public policy decision-making and implementation.<sup>150,151</sup>

This includes volunteers who use their time and knowledge to share new ideas aimed at tackling ongoing development challenges. Increasingly, platforms such as social innovation laboratories and accelerators provide spaces for people to develop solutions to ongoing challenges. Since volunteers frequently work with marginalized populations and are embedded in local communities, they are often open to learning.<sup>152, 153</sup> For these reasons, volunteers

are well placed to contribute to social innovation. A research study on volunteering in the Global South also showed that volunteers helped to facilitate the merging of outside and indigenous knowledge, resulting in solutions that were both locally appropriate and sustainable.<sup>154</sup>

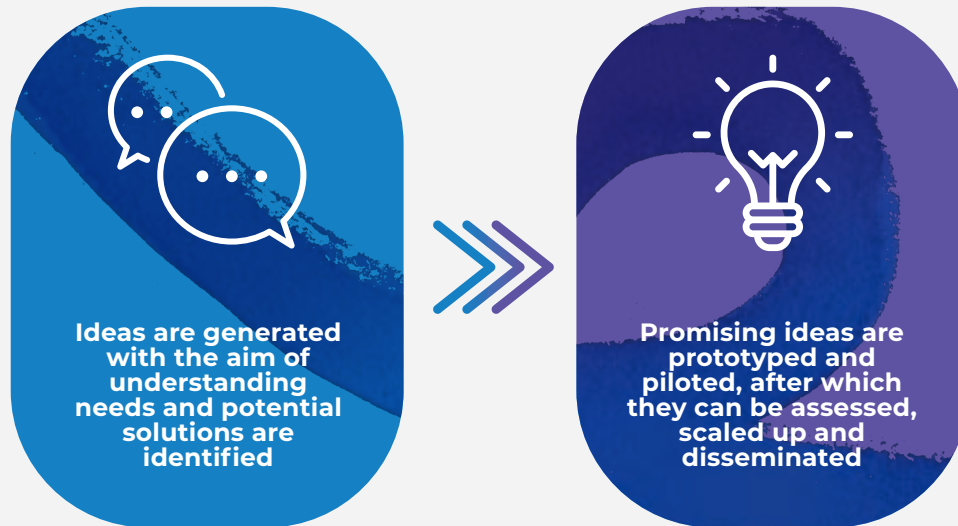
Newness is often considered a defining feature of social innovation. But what exactly should be "new" for something to be considered innovative? Innovative solutions might not be entirely new. Instead, they might involve new combinations of existing elements.<sup>155</sup> For instance, an innovation could involve reworking existing volunteer activities to make them more responsive to current needs. Kudumbashree, a women's self-help group in India, did exactly that, adapting its existing community organizing methods, networks and leadership to effectively respond to COVID-19.<sup>156</sup> Social innovation also involves the development of new products and services, such as new Open Government platforms in Buenos Aires, Mexico City and Montevideo which aim to increase people's participation in public policymaking.<sup>157</sup>

Crucially, technology can be used to develop and disseminate innovative ideas, through volunteer-led online hackathons or volunteer-matching platforms, neighbourhood social networking sites, and more.<sup>158</sup> However, as mutual aid initiatives have moved online, they have in some cases excluded groups such as people living in poverty, people living in remote areas and those on a low income.<sup>159</sup>

Social innovation can be thought of as a process. Social innovations often begin with ideas generated with the aim of understanding needs, and identify potential solutions.<sup>160</sup> As an initial step, listening to the voices and concerns of marginalized groups to develop a deep understanding of the issues they face, and their ideas for potential solutions, is vital. Next, promising ideas are developed, prototyped and piloted, after



## The process of social innovation



which they can be assessed, scaled up and disseminated. An important part of these stages is learning. It should be noted that social innovations may not always work or be disseminated. However, those involved in social innovation can learn from the process. For the purpose of this report, the case studies below illustrate how volunteerism can contribute to this process.

Finally, social innovations can be described according to the kinds of relationships they create and facilitate.<sup>161</sup> They might generate social connections between and within population groups and institutions that were previously less connected. Often, social innovation can involve shifts in power relationships, and an increase in beneficiaries' abilities to address their own needs.<sup>162</sup> In some instances, "some of the most effective methods for cultivating social innovation start from the presumption that people are competent interpreters of their own lives and competent solvers of their own problems."<sup>163</sup> As a result, there may be some overlap as elements of deliberative governance and co-production may be considered to be social innovations, such as in public governance.<sup>164</sup>

The case studies in chapters 4 and 5 illustrate how new ways of working between volunteers, community members and state authorities can facilitate shifts in power relations. In this chapter, the case studies illustrate how volunteerism can contribute to or influence social innovation processes.

### 6.3. Introducing the case studies

The case studies discussed in this chapter focus on volunteer–state partnerships in social innovation in seven countries across diverse geographical regions in the Global South. The case studies, which span SIDS in the Pacific (Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu), the Caribbean (Trinidad and Tobago), Africa (Kenya and Malawi) and Colombia in Latin America, demonstrate that volunteers can play an important role in the process of social innovation. In Trinidad and Tobago and Malawi, volunteer-led organizations have facilitated ideas and relationships that represent new ways of

thinking and working between volunteers and states. The case studies also show that social innovation need not be novel; it can involve new ways of using old practices or applying old practices in new settings. The case studies from Colombia, Kenya, Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu illustrate the kinds of innovative programmes and ideas that can emerge when state authorities engage in reciprocal relationships and partnerships with mutual aid groups and other organizations that facilitate volunteerism.

The case studies consist of volunteers from a wide array of marginalized groups,

including young people (Malawi and Trinidad and Tobago), peasant farmers (Colombia), slum-dwellers and urban poor people (Kenya), and women market vendors (Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu). Volunteers tackle a variety of issues, from sexual and reproductive health and rights (Malawi), youth participation (Trinidad and Tobago) and rural health (Colombia), to slum-dwellers' rights and urban development (Kenya) and women's economic empowerment and rights (Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu). While the Malawi case study was developed from primary sources (interviews and focus groups) and secondary sources, the rest are based solely on secondary sources.



### 6.3.1. Art & Global Health Center, Malawi

**The Art & Global Health Center (ArtGlo) is a volunteer-led youth organization in Zomba, southern Malawi.**

Among ArtGlo's volunteers are youth from key populations, including people living with HIV. For the purpose of this chapter, the case study focuses on ArtGlo's work on youth sexual reproductive health and rights, and HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, particularly among key populations. ArtGlo collaborates directly with community members (in districts such as Zomba, Chiradzulu and Phalombe) via existing community-based organizations (CBOs) (such as Vision for Development and Tiwasunge CBO in Chiradzulu), and with state authorities (notably, the local police of victim support units, district youth offices and district social welfare offices). The organization, which specializes in participatory art as a tool for social change, has created an environment in which local community members are supported to build leadership skills while actively influencing health delivery systems.



### 6.3.2. Muungano Alliance, Kenya

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**Slum-dwellers and the urban poor make up half of Kenya's population but only occupy 2 percent of the country's land area.**

The Muungano Alliance is a Kenyan federation consisting of three entities that represent the interests of slum-dwellers and the urban poor: Muungano wa Wanavijiji, the Kenyan federation of slum-dwellers (the social movement component); the Akiba Mashinani Trust, the Kenyan urban poor fund (the resource mobilization component); and Slum Dwellers International (SDI) Kenya (the capacity-building and technical support component).<sup>165</sup> The alliance, which comprises slum-dwellers and the urban poor, represents this population, and works to influence changes in practice and policy, particularly national policy for urban development.



### 6.3.3. Volunteer Center of Trinidad and Tobago, Trinidad and Tobago

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**The Volunteer Center of Trinidad and Tobago (VCTT) is a pioneering volunteer-based organization whose goal is to connect various sectors (non-governmental organizations [NGOs] and government institutions) and develop high-impact volunteer activities to encourage sector growth.<sup>166</sup>**

Its activities include an online volunteer-matching platform, the first national assessment of volunteering in the country, an online/offline youth mentorship programme, and civic education projects in schools.



#### 6.3.4. Model of Integral Care for Rurality, Colombia

**The Model of Integral Care for Rurality (MICR) is a health programme based in Sumapaz, in the rural area of Colombia's capital, Bogota.<sup>167</sup>**

Co-implemented with Bogota's public health system company (Subred Sur), the initiative aims to improve rural health care quality and access in one of the world's largest paramos.<sup>168</sup> With only 2,500 inhabitants, access to health care services has always been a challenge here, and this has been compounded by poor nutrition, armed conflict and a lack of drinking water. The MICR has brought together a community of peasant farmers and the regional health system to develop more inclusive and responsive health care initiatives.



#### 6.3.5. Markets for Change, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu

**Markets for Change aims to increase the voice and participation of market vendors in the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, where the majority of market vendors are women.<sup>169</sup>**

The programme has supported the development of vendor volunteer associations in the three countries. By June 2017, there were 10 registered market vendor associations in Fiji, two in the Solomon Islands and three in Vanuatu. These associations work with government institutions to develop accessible and gender-responsive infrastructure and on-site services.



## 6.4. Key features of social innovation in volunteer–state partnerships

This section looks at the key features of social innovation in volunteer–state partnerships.

### 6.4.1. Gaps in services catalyse innovation.

In the case studies discussed, gaps in services among marginalized groups provided the impetus for, and helped catalyse, innovation, with volunteers being the key drivers of these processes. Given that marginalized groups' voices are not always heard, their needs tend to be less visible. For young people living with HIV in Malawi, peasant farmers in Colombia and slum-dwellers in Kenya, social innovation emerged from their needs. ArtGlo's (Malawi) initiative to engage health workers in participatory workshops was born out of the need to challenge the stigma and discrimination faced by minority, marginalized and socially excluded people, which limited their access to health services.

MIRC's (Colombia) long-term innovative health care model evolved from years of working with Sumapaz farmers on the specific issues they face as dispersed populations, particularly poor health care quality and access.<sup>170</sup> In the other case studies, gaps emerged following a crisis or emergency, such as the impacts of COVID-19 on youth mental health and employability in Trinidad and Tobago.

Across the case studies, volunteers were drivers of innovation. In the case of Muungano Alliance, for example, slum-dwellers volunteered their time and knowledge to develop unique profiling tools and community mapping methods, while informal settlers collected data to better understand the situation in the city's slums. The data generated by the volunteers helped in the development of urban planning strategies that took into account the unique

needs of slum-dwellers. In the case of VCTT, data generated from VCTT's National Volunteering Survey became an important resource for the government and other NGOs.<sup>171</sup> In ArtGlo (Malawi), youth volunteers co-facilitated participatory arts-based activities to ensure a better understanding of the issues faced by key populations. As members of these communities, the volunteers saw and heard issues (e.g. discrimination, stigma, misinformation) first-hand that were otherwise unknown to state authorities because they were too far removed from communities. District youth officers and health workers were occasionally invited to these sessions to learn from the volunteers and apply this new understanding to their planning and programme development.

### 6.4.2. Volunteers generate new ideas and solutions.

The relationships developed by volunteers with local communities helped generate new ideas and solutions. Student and youth volunteers in ArtGlo (Malawi) worked with their peers to develop project proposals in areas ranging from sexual and reproductive health to education and creative arts (for example, a project on youth mental health). ArtGlo mobilized funds so that these activities could be implemented. The organization also links with volunteers in relevant local government offices who can then serve as their partners. In Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, the active participation of the market association produced concrete ideas on how the local government could develop more gender-responsive market governance structures and systems. In Fiji, for example, based on the fact that the majority of market vendors are female, the local council committed to building a small hut for breastfeeding women and increasing the number of female toilets in the market.<sup>172</sup>

### Box 6.1. Summary of mechanisms involved in volunteering for social innovation

#### Who volunteers or participates?

Local volunteers who are concerned about gaps in their specific areas such as engagement of key populations, youth participation and employment, market management and healthcare.

#### What is the extent of participation?

Evidence in this chapter points mostly to local volunteers' participation in generating ideas. It is difficult to assess to what extent they are involved in other stages of innovation, such as dissemination and evaluation. Local volunteer groups were also able to pivot and change their main focus in response to a changing environment, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

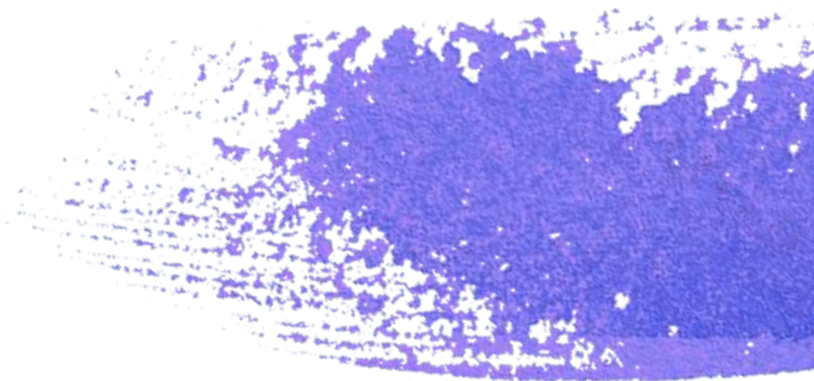
#### For what outcome?

The innovative outcome is less about developing entirely new products or services, and more about finding innovative ways of working. These include developing community-generated data for project design, transferring old approaches to new contexts, building new cross-sectoral relationships, and repurposing tested tools to address new issues. These innovative ways of working, co-facilitated by local volunteers and volunteer organizations, lead to social outcomes such as changes in perspectives, social norms, values and attitudes.

### 6.4.3. Partnerships facilitate inclusive structures.

The partnerships facilitated inclusive structures that allowed for the development of new relationships between people and states. In ArtGlo (Malawi), the involvement of other civil society organizations (CSOs) (such as Vision for Development and the Tisuwange CBO) have become an important part of network-building. More importantly, ArtGlo (Malawi) helped develop new relationships between minority groups such as key populations, people living with HIV, local district health officers and district executive committees. This is in a country where homosexuality is still highly criminalized. In the Model of Integral Care for Rural Areas (Colombia), these partnerships are cross-sectoral. Rural farmers engaged with the public health sector, academics and environmental scientists to find solutions that improved health care access, with team members making home medical visits and helping community members access medical specialists.<sup>173</sup>

These features highlight the important role that volunteers play in helping state authorities understand social problems and finding solutions that are responsive to communities' needs. Volunteers can help innovate ideas and put them into action. Volunteers also contribute to social innovations by co-developing methods and tools for understanding community problems. The ideas that these generate then become a basis for further innovative actions.







A volunteer leads a debate on issues relating to gender-based violence to an audience of students and parents in Malawi. Source: UNV.

## 6.5. Key strengths and challenges of social innovation models

As volunteers engage in tasks, they help generate new ideas and solutions and reconfigure relationships. As a result, the social innovation process is strengthened. However, there are challenges too. This section explores both sides of social innovation models.

### 6.5.1. Innovative platforms can enhance understanding of marginalized communities' issues.

Several of the case studies show that developing innovative platforms facilitates understanding of community issues. Crowdsourcing platforms, at times aided by technology and developed by volunteers, enhanced outcomes for marginalized communities. The Muungano Alliance (Kenya)'s unique community-centred slum assessment methodology, which was co-developed with a slum-dwellers' association, provided state authorities with a more accurate assessment of Kenya's informal settlements.

In addition to increasing understanding of the challenges faced by slum-dwellers and the urban poor, it provided the basis for a COVID-19 government response that was tailored to their needs (see Box 6.3 for more details).<sup>174</sup> Platforms and methods developed by VCTT (Trinidad and Tobago) and Muungano Alliance (Kenya) were able to reach a wider range of target populations, thereby creating a more comprehensive picture of the issues and challenges.

By contrast, innovative approaches used by ArtGlo (Malawi) (see Box 6.2) and Markets for Change (SIDS) enabled volunteers to engage with local government authorities, such as district health officers and urban planners, and target populations, such as people living with HIV/AIDS (ArtGlo) and women market vendors (Markets for Change). For Markets for Change (SIDS), more than 600 market vendors in Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu participated in a series of workshops to help create more structured market associations.<sup>175</sup> In Vanuatu, a first-of-its-kind association with about 1,000 members—the majority of them women—was established. With a collective voice, the vendors were able to advocate for their needs to local market managers (such as additional toilets for women) and influence the market budget allocation.<sup>176</sup>

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**A female market vendor in Fiji (the only woman kava seller at Tavua market) stated, "I continue to raise issues with the council on the market facilities. We pay our stall fees and we would like the market facilities to be improved."<sup>177</sup>**

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In ArtGlo (Malawi), participatory arts-based strategies and approaches led to more open discussion between state authorities and volunteers from key population groups about the discrimination and challenges that key populations and people living with HIV face.



A volunteer from ArtGlo's Make Art for Women's Activism project coordinates student performances on gender-based violence in Malawi. *Source:* UNV.



### Box 6.2. Participatory arts-based strategies to tackle difficult issues

ArtGlo uses participatory art as a tool for social change. It creates an environment in which local community members are empowered to make informed decisions on the issues that affect them and build leadership skills, while actively influencing equitable health delivery systems. ArtGlo's participatory art method is one of its core strengths and unique attributes: song, dance, poetry, drawing, theatre and drama are used to spark important conversations during community meetings, as well as within workshops and training programmes with local district officers. These participatory techniques are viewed as an innovative approach to health and community engagement. In addition, these techniques combine traditional elements of performance, particularly drama, dance and local songs. This has contributed to behaviour change strategies. A young volunteer explained:

“We do dramas and songs which helps people from our communities understand the dangers of violence.”<sup>178</sup>

These participatory activities have also been well received by government workers. For instance, during a health workers' workshop in Thekerani, Thyolo, youth and key population volunteers performed a play depicting the challenges faced by young members of key populations when accessing health services. The volunteers played the roles of both client and health worker. They portrayed how they often feel discriminated against when disclosing their sexual orientation and leave the health clinic without receiving any services or suggestions for follow-up. This drama technique is called “forum theatre”: health workers and other participants were asked to intervene on aspects of the performance as thought were inappropriate. Participants then shared points of reflection. A health worker said, “Through the role play, I realized I didn't take time to listen to key populations that came to the hospital. I also did not respect their privacy but now I am ready to change.”<sup>179</sup> Another commented, “I will do my part to be welcoming to key populations in my health care centre. I want them all to know they are welcome and will be treated with dignity.”

Sources: Interviews through case study research and ArtGlo (2020a).

ArtGlo (Malawi)'s approach is an innovative way of facilitating discussion, creating an open environment for both the health workers and the key population volunteers. The approach centres on the social aspects of innovation, such as changing social norms, practices, relationships and attitudes. It is worth noting that issues around youth sexuality, sexual health and associated topics such as gender violence and abuse remain

taboo in these communities as well as many other places in Malawi, partly owing to legislation in this area. For these volunteers, key populations and people living with HIV, expressing themselves through drama seemed to be a less threatening way for them to share the issues they face. At the same time, the health workers heard these issues directly from those who experience them, but in a less confrontational way.

These examples illustrate how volunteers can contribute to innovative approaches to community assessment and people–state dialogues. Such approaches offer new ways for public policymakers and local state authorities to engage with, and gain a better understanding of, those groups who are most impacted by social stigma and other issues (e.g. informal settlements in Kenya). The outcome is more responsive policymaking and programme development.

### 6.5.2. Socially innovative approaches lead to new ideas and change, even with limited time and resources.

Several case studies demonstrate that volunteers play a role in innovative responses to social needs in situations where time and resources are limited.

In Sumapaz, Colombia, farmers' access to health care has long been limited due to lack of resources but this has been made worse by food insecurity, lack of drinking water, poor nutrition and various armed conflicts. The Model of Integral Care for Rurality (Colombia) is a socially innovative health initiative in which groups of peasant farmers take a central role in co-designing the health programme.<sup>180</sup> For instance, medicinal herbs that are commonly used in the rural community, better management of organic waste and home gardens were studied and integrated into the health provisions. According to their website, "the model integrates community and technical knowledge, recognizing the practical knowledge of the farmer about his/her [sic] environment and the intersectoriality." Despite limited resources and staff, the project was able to develop a long-term, innovative project that led to better health

outcomes, with the Sumapaz region recording the best health indicators in infant mortality and a reduction in acute and chronic malnutrition. This is also an example of social innovation building on the indigenous knowledge of farmers and their communities.

Crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic put volunteer–state relationships to the test and prompt the need for context-relevant and innovative interventions. During the pandemic, ArtGlo (Malawi) capitalized on their expertise with youth training to address COVID-19 disinformation and lack of access to health information in communities, and community-based youth volunteers collaborated with the Ministry of Health in the dissemination of life-saving COVID-19 information to these communities. A Health Surveillance Assistant who participated in one of ArtGlo's workshops shared, "This is a typical rural area. People have no radios or any source of information. When COVID-19 preventive measures were put in place, a vehicle with a loudspeaker drove around the villages disseminating COVID-19 messages. It was not an effective strategy. It left people with more questions than answers. Thanks to [the] Umunthu programme for the timely interventions that we are doing, people now understand, and they are observing restriction measures."<sup>181</sup>

This demonstrates the flexibility of a relatively young NGO to quickly step in to support new needs, especially when they have built good working relationships with the community.

In Kenya, the Muungano Alliance also played a significant role in shaping the government's COVID-19 response (see Box 6.3).

### Box 6.3. Community-generated data for an innovative COVID-19 response<sup>182</sup>

Stakeholders in Kenya recognized the Muungano Alliance's strength in generating community data on Nairobi's informal settlements which are typically absent from the government's census, including through community mapping exercises, slum profiles and household surveys.

The data, which focus exclusively on the unique characteristics of informal settlements (e.g. small with densely packed populations), have fostered an understanding of poverty in the city (through street maps, visuals and statistical analyses).

During the pandemic, this community-generated data became even more important. The Muungano Alliance partnered with Kenya's national COVID-19 taskforce to develop a COVID-19 health care response that was tailored to the needs of informal settlers. Given that informal settlements differ spatially from other neighbourhoods, data collected by Muungano, which included real-time data (every two to three days) across 10 informal settlements, were used to inform the country's COVID-19 strategy.

The data generated by the Muungano Alliance showed that residents of informal settlements had limited access to health care facilities. The alliance worked with these communities in a mapping exercise to identify possible isolation centres within the settlements, including traditional health centres, churches and school buildings. They developed context-specific isolation guidelines so that residents could quarantine properly and receive health care and treatment. It is expected that these improvements will lead to increased social understanding and cohesion, as well as to enhancing informal settlers' capacity to contribute to government programmes.

*Sources:* Banyai-Baker, Mwangi and Wairutu (2020) and Muungano Alliance (n.d.).

The Muungano Alliance's experience points to the need to tailor responses to individual communities and groups. Here, it was important to understand the situation and realities of Kenyan slum-dwellers. Reliance on community participation to identify isolation centres meant that these spaces were safe for community members to use, thereby helping to limit the spread of the virus in such densely populated areas. Their experience also demonstrates how the organization, together with mutual aid groups and volunteers, was able to swiftly apply old approaches to newer contexts and crisis situations.

In the case of VCTT (Trinidad and Tobago), technology played a role in responding to the needs of young people and students for

education and employment. VCTT launched the "Me to We" movement, an online and offline youth mentorship platform that links "underperforming" young people from Trinidad and Tobago's secondary school with a group of volunteer mentors trained in coaching, mentoring and working with young people.<sup>183</sup> With resources from several private donors and NGOs, VCTT was able not only to mobilize a number of youth volunteers, but also to respond to the urgent need to address youth's mental health, employability and development, particularly during the pandemic.

These examples show that volunteers draw on assets in their communities, including existing relationships and mechanisms, and

leverage technology, to foster new ways of working with state authorities. With these new ways of working come new solutions that better respond to the needs of their communities and make a real difference, despite limited time and resources.

### 6.5.3. Volunteers facilitate new ways of working and help reconfigure power relations.

Volunteers can help facilitate new ways of working. As the case studies have illustrated, volunteers bring together otherwise unconnected groups to think of solutions together, in some cases reconfiguring power relationships between groups.

VCTT (Trinidad and Tobago), for instance, created an online volunteer-matching platform that curates a range of development projects in Trinidad and Tobago and Latin America. Volunteers can choose a project based on their capabilities and interests. A unique feature of the platform is that it categorizes projects according to which of the SDGs they could best contribute to. The volunteering activities carried out by young people as part of these projects could be seen as part of a wider, global strategy for development.<sup>184</sup> Opportunities are also grouped by theme such as teaching and training, fund-raising and event organizing. This platform co-exists with a volunteer-led, on-site school project called V Challenge which promotes civic participation and volunteerism in school.<sup>185</sup>

In the Muungano Alliance (Kenya), three CSOs were already working together. Each had a specific role, having been brought together by their shared advocacy of the rights of informally settled populations. As part of the alliance, slum-dweller associations

engaged in what the association described as “horizontal learning exchanges”. These involved localized urban poor associations learning from each other’s projects. This is one way in which potentially innovative projects such as income-generation, re-planning of a settlement or building a toilet block, can be disseminated across an alliance. This approach builds on the notion that “doing is knowing”, where the pool of knowledge and new ideas created through these exchanges become a community asset.<sup>186</sup>

Building and maintaining people–state relationships has also been helpful in turning innovative ideas into actual projects. For example, ArtGlo (Malawi) funded project proposals developed by their volunteers, but partnerships played a key role in making these proposals a reality (see Box 6.4).

ArtGlo (Malawi) demonstrates that the relationships and linkages developed between volunteers, community members and state authorities are vital in turning ideas into reality. This echoes the findings in previous chapters that volunteers play a role in creating spaces for deliberation (chapter 4) and in co-producing and co-implementing government programmes (chapter 5). It is also clear in the case of ArtGlo that volunteers were keen to create relationships with a variety of stakeholders and to develop a sense of solidarity with other actors.

The innovation and impact that the MICR (Colombia) has achieved over the years has partly been attributed to the cross-disciplinary nature of the team. Rural communities offer their practical knowledge about everyday farming while academics and public health officers contribute scientific knowledge and other assets. For instance, agronomists have been looking at medicinal plants that are heavily used by the community: “We articulated with the integrative medicine component and developed actions so that the families



complement the conventional treatment given by the Subred Sur and can have a greater adherence and health approached in a holistic way.”<sup>187</sup>

However, access to information necessary to generate ideas remains a challenge,<sup>188</sup> as outlined in chapter 4 on deliberative governance. For example, a study in three markets in Fiji found that knowledge about municipal bylaws was severely lacking.<sup>189</sup> Only a few women had received information on these aspects through noticeboards or public announcement systems, and more than 50 percent of those surveyed expressed their preference for learning about these issues via word of mouth. The kind of information that they wanted included fisheries bans and new legislation that affected their source of income.

#### **Box 6.4. From “dreams” to reality: the role of partnerships**

Students with Dreams is a creative leadership programme by ArtGlo in Malawi that engages with student and youth volunteers to think of new ideas to solve a range of different issues, from sexual and reproductive health to education and the environment. These young volunteers develop what ArtGlo call “dreamer projects” which, with its help, are turned into reality. One such project is the Umunthu, which started out as a film documentary looking at discrimination faced by marginalized groups such as LGBTQI people. The project grew from there and a series of workshops were created based on the film’s findings and insights. It became its own programme that aims to challenge the discrimination faced by marginalized groups of LGBTQI youth. The programme has since grown and works with various state actors who participate in the programme’s implementation, such

as the district health office, the district executive committee, government health workers and the Ministry of Health. In its other programmes, ArtGlo (Malawi) learns from and builds on relationships in different districts, and encourages its partners to do the same. One of its partners is the community-based organization, Vision for Development. A CSO leader stated, “One thing that ArtGlo has also done with Vision for Development and other CSOs is close the gap in coordination. We are coordinating with stakeholders like government [and state] ministries. For example, in this programme, we are working with the Ministry of Gender, the Department of Social Welfare, and the Department of Home Affairs—that’s the police. This coordinated engagement helps a lot to work together, not in isolation.”<sup>190</sup> ArtGlo links up with the district health office in Zomba through their joint meetings and workshops. The district health office is involved in all ArtGlo’s health-related, youth-focused, anti-discrimination and community development programmes, from inception to completion. For health service provision, ArtGlo works with the state through the district health management team who mobilize district health staff to join ArtGlo’s workshops. As well as providing programme updates to the district health office, ArtGlo also provides recommendations on health, youth and gender. It does this by feeding into the district implementation plan, having a seat on the Zomba district review committee, or through the district health office. ArtGlo’s findings and recommendations are then shared at the national level through meetings and workshops.

## 6.6. Conclusion

Volunteerism plays an important role in social innovation. Volunteer–state partnerships illustrate new ways of working that engage people in social innovation with gaps in their communities providing the impetus for volunteer action.

As partnerships between volunteers and state authorities in social innovation draw on and leverage volunteers' experiences, knowledge and expertise in their communities, they not only help shape development outcomes that are more responsive to communities' needs, but also play an integral role in spearheading and driving innovation. As the case studies make clear, volunteers contribute to a deeper and more detailed understanding of the issues because they are members of their local communities. For young people in Zomba, the challenge was not necessarily the lack of health clinics but the fear of being discriminated against by government health workers because of their

HIV status or sexuality. ArtGlo's innovative response focused on bringing these two groups together to increase understanding and ultimately lead to the young people accessing the services they needed.

Volunteers' commitment to shared values (often based around ideas of inclusion and equality), their reciprocal relationship with state authorities, and the demand for their voices to be heard further strengthens their contribution towards the social aspect of innovation. Volunteers are therefore a vital asset to state authorities.

Importantly, social innovations that emerge from volunteer–state relationships may not necessarily result in the development of new products and services. Instead, the outcome may take the form of innovative ways of working, including through the establishment of new processes. The use of the Muungano Alliance's 20-year-old profiling methodology in the government's COVID-19 strategy is a good example of this.



A student participates in volunteer-led discussions on gender-based violence in Malawi. Source: UNV.

## Volunteer voice: Sumitra Sahu from India on her volunteering role during COVID-19

**Volunteers generate new and innovative ideas for social impact. During crises, this process can be accelerated. Sumitra Sahu from India shares how self-help groups and other volunteer organizations in her local area came up with fresh approaches to problems during the pandemic.**

*I'm Sumitra, I'm 30 years old and I'm a youth volunteer with the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS). I'm a resident of Rajnandgaon district in Chhattisgarh and have been a volunteer with the organization for the past two years. I faced persecution in my birthplace, Raigarh district—my family was forced to flee from Naxalism, a communist insurgency led by militant insurgent and separatist groups that was rampant, and which made living there unsafe, especially for adolescent girls. In 2011, I benefited from joining a women's self-help group, which enabled me to improve my career prospects, and complete secondary schooling via open schooling.*

*During the pandemic, many vulnerable women and children in Rajnandgaon were at risk of malnutrition as food supplies became erratic. Volunteers came up with simple, cost-effective, local solutions and raised awareness about the need to eat healthy, locally grown food and practice better hygiene. In addition, they introduced a new farming method aimed at ensuring a nutritious food supply to families even in the most remote parts of our tribal villages. For many villagers who lost their livelihoods during the pandemic, this solution also helped them save on expenses, and be more self-reliant.*

*The most exciting part of volunteerism has been providing support to my community and simple solutions to improve their lives. When I help raise awareness on the benefits of healthy behaviour, hygienic practices, how to overcome taboos and how to access useful government schemes, or just open up their minds to think and act with reason, I know I am helping society at large.*

*I feel that my journey as a volunteer has connected me better with the people in my community. I feel that they trust, love and respect me now.*



# **Special contribution: Shaping the future of development in the Sahel region through youth volunteer-government partnerships – an opportunity not to be missed**

## **Reflections by the Special Coordinator for Development in the Sahel, Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye**

Volunteerism is a function of selfless sacrifices, primarily by young people, who desire meaningful change. This ideal is entrenched in the work of the United Nations and is integral to the work of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) and its Support Plan.

The Sahel is a paradox of multiple realities, on the one hand characterized by humanitarian and peace and security challenges, and on the other, a region of bountiful human, cultural and natural resources with immense potential for growth.

For development to be achieved in the Sahel, the selfless sacrifice of its youth is highly desired. With young people comprising more than 60 percent of the region's population, they are undoubtedly the Sahel's greatest asset. How then, can governments in the region, alongside other partners, best leverage young people across the Sahel, many of them volunteers for development?

To harness the region's potential and reverse the negative narrative that is associated with the Sahel, stakeholders need to engage youth in development. Recognizing this, the UNISS, which aims to tackle the Sahel's structural challenges, has made significant strides in articulating ambitious pathways aimed at addressing the root causes of protracted crises and underdevelopment in the region, with Sahelian youth, many of them volunteers, being an invaluable resource in addressing these challenges.

Volunteering is a noble cause that can benefit the people of the Sahel. Young volunteers are agents of transformation who are willing and ready to make meaningful development contributions in their communities; partnering with them to support the development of their countries is one of the most effective ways to shape the region's development.

Indeed, young Sahelians have been at the forefront of responding to the region's various crises and have made numerous contributions in its development, peace and security. As part of the COVID-19 response, for example, 170 UN Volunteers, most of them female, supported the United Nations and governments in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger in addressing emerging needs.



As the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres noted, “I appeal to all governments to promote volunteering, support volunteer efforts, and recognize volunteer contributions to the achievement of the SDGs [Sustainable Development Goals].” To shape the development paths of Sahelian countries, governments in the region must recognize the place of volunteerism and youth, and to be a win-win for all, volunteering must be at the centre of development efforts.

Recognizing the important contributions of young Sahelians, in 2021, the UNISS started an initiative that seeks to reflect the perspectives of young Sahelians in development, including by engaging them in direct conversations (Voices from the Sahel: Conversations, Visions & Solutions) on how the United Nations can better partner with youth to change the negative narrative surrounding the Sahel.

With volunteering bridging the intergenerational gap, tackling the root causes of conflict and rebuilding broken social contracts while leaving no one behind, governments in Sahel countries and other partners who want to meaningfully achieve the development aspirations of the Sahel and the SDGs need to tap into and collectively recognize volunteers' efforts, provide support, and dedicate resources and investments to and for youth-led initiatives, especially those that involve volunteerism.

There is no better time to engage in volunteering.

## Chapter 7

# Conclusion and recommendations: Volunteerism – helping build equal and inclusive societies

16 PEACE, JUSTICE  
AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS



17 PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



## 7.1. Introduction

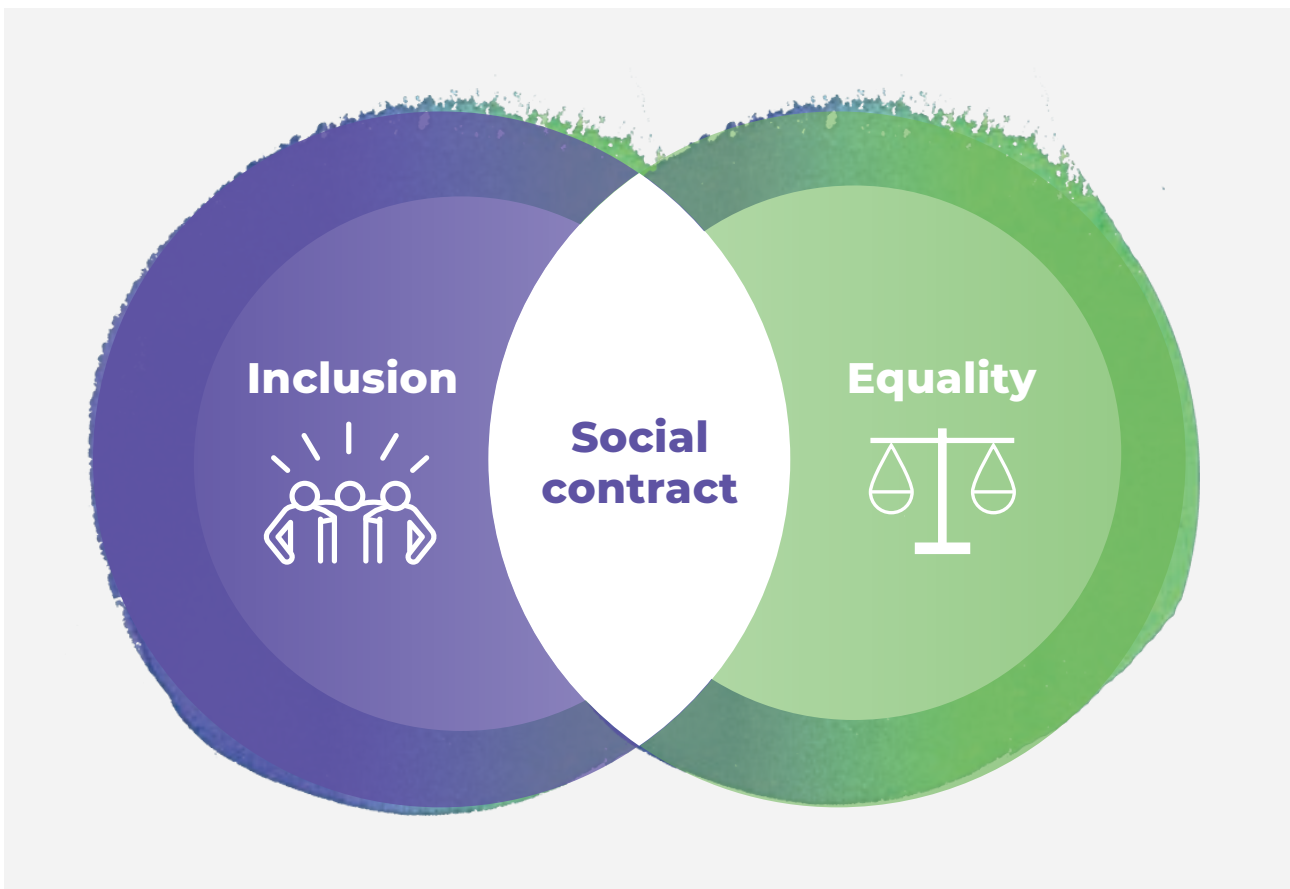
This report provides evidence that volunteerism is a fundamental part of building and strengthening people–state relationships. In turn, these relations lead to better governance that promotes sustainable development and peace, helping to build equal and inclusive societies.

In various ways, volunteers have been answering the call for collaborative people–state decision-making and action. Volunteers have worked with the state, playing

important and diverse roles in deliberative governance, in the co-production of services and in social innovation. Now more than ever, partnerships are critical as communities and countries strive to build forward better towards a more equal and inclusive future that leaves no one behind.

Volunteer–state partnerships are an important mechanism for expanding volunteers' roles in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and can play a role in laying the foundation for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century social contract that is founded on inclusion and equality, and responds to the needs of communities.

**Figure 7.1.** A social contract for equal and inclusive societies





In addition, partnerships between volunteer groups and state authorities have been identified as important mechanisms for expanding volunteers' roles in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in this important Decade of Action.

Drawing from the findings of the research, this final chapter identifies the key messages of the report and provides policy recommendations for policymakers, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), volunteer groups and other development actors.

## 7.2. Key messages: volunteering's contribution to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century social contract

Public participation in governance has already been recognized as central to co-production and collaboration with the state, particularly in relation to building equal and inclusive societies and developing a new social contract. This SWVR reveals the value that voluntary participation can bring to public decision-making. Individuals—especially those in the most marginalized communities—can become active collaborators, stakeholders, advocates and leaders.



A group of volunteers come together from different organizations for nature conservation in Peru. Source: UNV.





## Volunteerism can help build a culture of collaborative decision-making.

### This report has shown that volunteers are committed to inclusion.

Many volunteers contribute to shaping and prioritizing issues that are important to them. Where there are gaps in the way local policies are implemented, volunteers work with local government officials to make public services more relevant and responsive to their needs and those of their communities. With some volunteers working in the community they came from, their sense of solidarity propels them to participate in deliberation, co-implementing government programmes and sharing innovative ideas. Their first-hand and highly contextual knowledge has proved to be crucial in developing innovative and responsive public policies and programmes.

In Nepal, for instance, traditional methods of flood prevention by Barghars were combined with a local engineer's knowledge, which led to stronger and more durable structures for effective flood protection. Through volunteering in public spaces and platforms, these volunteers are aspiring for better governance. In the Malawi case study (see chapter 6), community-based volunteers took new and creative approaches to dialogue so that government community health workers could develop better processes, tailor-made for young people living with HIV.

However, there are also groups and people who may not want to participate, or do not see deliberation and partnership with the state as the solution. This often relates to differing expectations of people and state authorities when developing social contracts. In the case of the Nebhana Water Forum in Tunisia, community members were initially suspicious of partnering with local state institutions. In Kyrgyzstan, it was the village heads and village members who were hesitant to partner with the women's groups, uncertain whether dialogue and partnership was the best way forward. This also illustrates that entering into any partnership relies on the "buy-in" of all parties and highlights how local volunteers, volunteer organizations and state institutions often have different priorities, agendas and focuses.

Still, the desire for better governance, coupled with a community's commitment to help make that happen through volunteerism, helps build a culture not only of accountability, but also of participatory, collaborative decision-making.



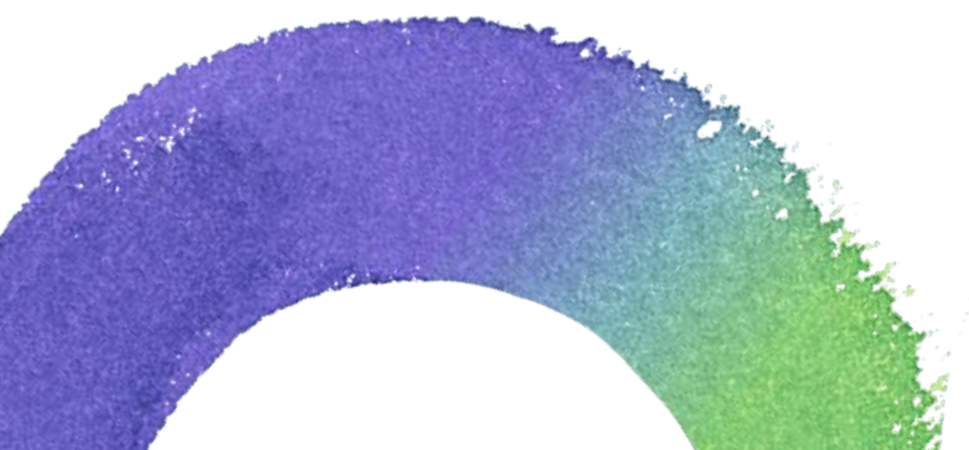
## Volunteerism can alter unequal power relations.

**This report provides evidence that challenges the commonly held belief that volunteers serve “instrumental roles”, mostly filling in the gaps in government services and helping deliver “development as usual”.**

Volunteers have the capacity, through collaboration, to reconfigure unequal power relationships between ordinary citizens and state authorities. For example, peasant farmers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC; see chapter 5) were able to persuade local government officials to revise their agricultural pricing and take account of farmers' spending capacities and realities. This and other examples in the report show that with appropriate support, all groups can take up more active roles as volunteers with voice and agency, claiming their rightful place in decision-making spaces. Partnering with the state has allowed volunteers in Kazakhstan to scale up and reach more people living with disabilities in the country, helping them to find employment (see chapter 5). In this way, volunteerism allows people not only to shape the development agenda but also to own it.

With regards to state institutions and other organizations, this report has found that local governments built on local/informal systems, leadership and practices to create spaces for people-centred discussions. For instance, following the shift to a decentralized governance structure in Nepal, local government units reached out to traditional institutions and mutual aid groups such as Guthi and Barghar to expand the impact of their public discussions (see chapter 4).

The case studies also teach us that adopting an inclusive and participatory approach to public governance can promote people's understanding of, and interest in, equality and shared social responsibility.





## Volunteerism offers diverse pathways to civic participation but remains unequal.

**The case studies show that faced with increasingly complex issues, community-based volunteers have diverse causes to volunteer for and various channels for volunteering.**

Volunteers often engage with multiple activities that match their interests and priorities (a key finding in chapter 3). Their activities are not limited solely to those set by an organization. Instead, volunteers' engagement tends to be more self-directed; they act autonomously and do not focus solely on one role.

Chapters 2 and 3 presented evidence that women are more likely than men to volunteer informally and that they tend to participate in volunteering as a "service" rather than in initiatives that focus on decision-making. This highlights the gender gap in volunteering practices and aspirations. While the surge in volunteering among men during the pandemic should be sustained, more attention needs to be given to gender differences in terms of time spent volunteering. A greater understanding of how women's availability has been affected by wider caregiving and domestic responsibilities during the pandemic is also needed.

Inclusion remains a challenge. In the case of farmers in Tunisia, their geographic spread and vast numbers made it difficult to ensure that they were adequately represented during public discussions (see chapter 4). In addition, community-based volunteers were the end users of many programmes and services that they helped to implement, placing them in the unique intersection of being both the "giver" and the "receiver" of services. Many of the volunteers in the case studies worked with and/or were members of marginalized populations in a community (e.g. peasant farmers, indigenous groups, rural women, informal settlers and people living with disabilities). This meant that volunteers had similar vulnerabilities and experienced similar marginalization to the people they were serving.



## Volunteers build bridges.

**Volunteers are in the unique position of brokering relationships between service providers and beneficiaries, a connection that is weakened by administrative red tape, and differing agendas and starting points.**

Community-based volunteers in these case studies acted as mediators between various groups such as local community associations and state institutions, often helping them to navigate bureaucratic processes. For example, youth volunteers in Amel (Lebanon) were trained to better understand the legislation concerning migrant domestic workers in the country. This knowledge was valuable when helping women domestic workers who needed vaccines but did not have identification cards, and their work included translating important Arabic documents into English (or local languages) so that they were more accessible (see chapter 5). Volunteers serve as effective mediators when dealing with complex processes; in future they could take on similar roles.

The case studies also demonstrate how volunteering cuts across different sectors that are addressing a variety of SDGs. There are volunteer–state partnerships aiming for enhanced agricultural practices (SDG 2), increased women’s participation and gender equality (SDG 5), better employment (SDG 8), inclusive cities (SDG 11) and more. This demonstrates that volunteerism can be a means of localizing and integrating different global goals.

### **7.3. Volunteering towards building equal and inclusive societies: policy recommendations**

Recognizing volunteerism as a powerful and crosscutting means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN Development System’s 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) encourages the UN Development

System, Member States, civil society and the private sector to support efforts to promote the integration of different models of volunteerism in development frameworks.

Based on the research findings, the proposed policy recommendations, which build on UN frameworks, could enable volunteerism to better harness emerging models that can be a resource and asset towards building equal and inclusive societies.





## 1. Address barriers to volunteering faced by marginalized groups.

**Marginalized groups such as people with disabilities, rural women and LGBTQI groups often bear the brunt of inequality.**

If these groups face exclusion, or barriers to participation such as limited mobility, home responsibilities or difficulty accessing information, there may be a need for strategies that make deliberative spaces more accessible to them. Integrating a variety of approaches and channels for volunteer participation in deliberative governance processes across all levels can help in this regard. Examples of this in action include Egypt's National Initiative for the Development of Egyptian Villages (Hayah Karima), a community awareness-raising programme in which state authorities engage youth in leadership in initiatives that are designed to ensure that young volunteers from marginalized communities can engage in decision-making processes.

**Policymakers** can adopt policies to ensure access and inclusion so that marginalized groups and volunteers can address the barriers that limit their participation in deliberative governance processes. Policies aimed at promoting partnerships between volunteers and government and other entities, including the private sector, can be important in this regard. For example, the Philippines' 2007 Volunteer Act mandated national government agencies and local governments to establish volunteer programmes in their institutions in order to promote and encourage partnerships with volunteers. This led to the establishment of the Volunteer Program for Government Service (BBP).

Developing governance structures that enable volunteers to engage in the design and implementation of development programmes in collaboration with state authorities is critical. In Bangladesh, volunteers actively engage in participatory poverty mapping or community development committees where they provide much-needed support in raising the capacities of the urban poor. To foster partnerships with volunteers, government authorities at the national, regional and local level (i.e. municipalities) can develop policies that provide a framework to support the development and integration of partnerships with volunteers within their institutions.

Besides traditional spaces such as citizen assemblies, town-hall meetings and community councils, policymakers may also consider adopting measures to ensure greater access to and inclusion in decision-making by supporting tech-based approaches that complement traditional approaches such as crowdsourcing and open government platforms.



## 2. Leverage partnerships through volunteering.

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**Building on local/informal systems of support, leadership and practices when developing volunteer–state relationships is critical.**

Doing so increases the legitimacy and ownership of development programmes and helps build trust between state authorities and volunteers. Governments, volunteer-involving organizations and other stakeholders should pay greater attention to knowledge systems, practices and informal systems of support, and devise ways to integrate these in designing sustainable volunteering partnerships.

**Policymakers** can leverage pre-existing networks of support, volunteering practices and values when developing policies around volunteerism, particularly those that promote partnerships between volunteers and other stakeholders. Recognizing the importance of partnerships between volunteers, volunteer-involving organizations and the government, Bangladesh is co-creating a National Volunteer Policy with various stakeholders that aims to embed volunteerism within the national development policies and significantly strengthen local government institutions. Besides mainstreaming volunteerism in state institutions, the policy aims to promote partnerships between volunteers, the private sector and development partners.





### 3. Adopt gender-sensitive measures to address inequalities.

**As women face barriers to volunteerism, in particular less engagement in decision-making activities, compared with their male counterparts, their access to decision-making processes needs to be ensured.**

To ensure that volunteerism remains a viable pathway for amplifying women's voices and agency as well as ownership in the development process, the ongoing barriers that women and other gender groups face need to be better understood.

**Policymakers** can adopt gender-sensitive measures that optimize women's participation in volunteering, such as ensuring their access to decision-making processes. Understanding the ongoing barriers that women face in volunteering is important. Studies that assess how collaborative decision-making processes reinforce or challenge gender norms as well as other gender inequalities in volunteerism across countries and regions can help to close this gap.



A group of volunteers come together to discuss the importance of loma preservation in Lúcumo, Lima, Peru. Source: UNV.





A volunteer advocates for the protection of the local ecosystem in Peru. Source: UNV.





#### 4. Leverage volunteers' expertise, knowledge and experiences.

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**As the findings of the research show, public policy discussions and consultations that consider and build on multiple ideas, perspectives, local and indigenous practices, and concepts of volunteering lead to more productive outcomes such as more responsive and tailor-made development programmes.**

It is therefore vital to recognize the knowledge and experience that volunteers from marginalized communities bring and more importantly to harness it for development. In addition, as volunteers tend to engage in diverse civic activities, there is a need to consider diverse approaches to civic participation when developing new volunteer-led programmes and initiatives that align with people's work, leisure, needs and interests.

**Policymakers** should recognize the expertise of volunteers, particularly in relation to facilitating or creating an enabling environment for the full utilization of their skills. This includes adopting policy measures aimed at enabling volunteers from marginalized communities to engage in decision-making processes, which can also build their skills. Policymakers should also consider building on the strong interest in diverse forms of volunteering beyond service delivery, including social innovation and civic engagement.



## 5. Promote social innovation.

### **Volunteer–state partnerships provide an impetus for volunteer action.**

Volunteers' commitment to shared values, which are often based around ideas of inclusion and equality and collaboration with state authorities, strengthens their contribution to social innovation in development where it is needed most.

**Policymakers** should promote measures that support the development of new ideas in order to enable innovations that align with and are more responsive to communities' development needs. To facilitate social innovation, inclusive policies should be adopted that enable marginalized groups to engage. Measures to support social innovation, such as crowdsourcing and open government platforms, should also be considered. However, care should be taken to ensure that any measures adopted do not exacerbate digital inequalities, particularly among marginalized groups.



## 6. Recognize informal volunteers' work and contributions.

### **As informal volunteers in resource-poor contexts generally receive less recognition and less practical support, recognizing their time, effort and contributions is vital and can boost their motivation to engage in volunteering.**

The Bangladesh Volunteer Award, which recognizes the country's volunteers and was launched by Bangladesh's Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives; WaterAid, and UNV Bangladesh, is a good example of this.

**Policymakers** should consider developing mechanisms for valuing volunteers for the work that they do, from recognizing their opinions and their input in decisions, to social protection for volunteers in marginalized communities. Policymakers should also recognize volunteers' contributions through various forms of incentives such as social recognition to meet their desire to feel needed and valued.



## 7. Invest in volunteer data, research and measurement.

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**Estimating the scale and scope of volunteerism remains a challenge as data are scarce and inadequate, which often leads to the exclusion of volunteering activities from development plans and budgets.**

Strengthening the capacities of countries and regions to collect data on volunteerism, including informal volunteerism which is prevalent in the Global South, is critical.

Data collection and measurement are needed to better understand the contribution of volunteering to the development, needs and capabilities of volunteers from diverse backgrounds. Any effort to measure volunteering needs to be disaggregated by factors such as gender, socio-economic status, urban/rural location and age. This helps policymakers and practitioners to gain a better understanding of volunteering in countries and regions and globally.

**Policymakers** should invest in the measurement of volunteering to close the gap in volunteering data, and generate better-quality, more comparable data that captures the contribution of volunteering to development across countries and regions. To close the gap in data and measurement, policymakers should also explore partnerships with entities at the national level (i.e. national statistical offices), the regional level (i.e. with regional organizations) and the international level (i.e. with ILO and other partners) for data collection and better measurement of volunteering.

## Volunteer voices: Reimagining the future of volunteering

**Volunteers from Mali, India and Ecuador reflect on the question, “In the ‘new normal’, is there anything you would like to see done differently in terms of how volunteers work together with other stakeholders, such as government and the private sector?”**

*As the pandemic aggravated Mali’s fragile health system, volunteers were the only actors present on the ground to raise awareness. Going forward, stronger partnerships and better coordination of volunteers and other stakeholders, including government authorities, will be necessary in order to rebuild effectively post pandemic.*

– Makan Dramé, Mali

*In the aftermath of the pandemic, issues need to be approached differently. There will be a need to raise awareness among women, adolescent girls, men and village elders, the state, district- and village-level authorities... After the pandemic we are faced with a new normal, but we also have new challenges.*

*Volunteers have a role in creating a fairer society in rural and indigenous communities post-COVID. As front-line workers at the field level who directly interact with stakeholders, volunteers in rural and indigenous communities have a deep understanding and knowledge of their socio-economic needs. As such, we are better placed to respond with simple solutions to the challenges faced by these communities, whether it is in implementing development programmes, creating awareness and adapting behaviour of local/indigenous communities, or enabling access to government schemes and programmes.*

– Sumitra Sahu, India

*Volunteers should be considered as technical specialists who contribute to the decision-making of strategic actions that are oriented to the reactivation of society through programmes with a focus on gender, interculturality and active participation with other local actors.*

– Sumak Bastidas, Ecuador



## **Special contribution: Nabaloum Boureima, the Director-General, Programme Nationale de Volontariat au Burkina Faso, Burkina Faso's national volunteer programme**

Nabaloum Boureima, the Director-General of the Programme Nationale de Volontariat au Burkina Faso [Burkina Faso National Volunteering Programme – PNVB] explains the role that volunteers, particularly female volunteers, play in Burkina Faso's development.

### **The role of volunteers in Burkina Faso's development**

Burkina Faso has a long-standing history of volunteerism thanks to a tradition that is steeped in solidarity and mutual aid, and this is reflected in its traditional and modern volunteering and civic engagement practices. Building on this, since its establishment in 2008, PNVB, a public entity, has mobilized more than 48,000 national volunteers through its programmes, the majority of whom are young women and girls. Volunteers support several key priority areas, among them health, decentralization and education. As part of efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19, in 2020, 14,172 volunteers provided services to over 7 million people. Besides the national volunteers mobilized by PNVB, some other volunteer initiatives have been implemented across the 13 regions of the country, among them the Volunteer Security Auxiliaries (VADS) programme which, since 2013, has mobilized more than 10,000 volunteers, of whom 35 percent are women. There is also the Green Brigade which has more than 3,000 female volunteers who, over the past 22 years, have contributed to improving urban sanitation and ensured a healthy living environment.

# Appendix A

## Case study research methodology

### 1. Overall methodological approach

The qualitative chapters were developed through qualitative multiple case study analysis drawing from mini and maxi case studies. **Each case study** showcased a particular model of volunteer–state relationship that was clearly linked to at least one of the qualitative chapter themes: deliberative governance, co-production and social innovation. The UNV and the SWVR research consortium commissioned research teams to conduct the fieldwork and secondary research which were then written up into research reports. These commissioned reports became the basis of the qualitative chapters. Each chapter consists of least one maxi case study and **two to three different mini case studies**. The key differences between the two are:

**Maxi case studies** – These were developed using primary data (focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and document analysis), and were detailed written accounts, including extensive excerpts from interviews, documents and focus group discussions.

**Mini case studies** – These were shorter and developed primarily through secondary data, although interviews with a couple of relevant actors were also conducted in China, the DRC and Senegal.

Fieldwork for maxi case studies was conducted in Lebanon (Amel), Malawi (Art & Global Health Center – ArtGlo), Nepal (Guthis and Barghars) and Latin America (Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano [Latin American Future Foundation – FFLA]).

### 2. Research questions

The commissioned research papers addressed two main interrelated research questions:

**RQ1** What are the emerging models of volunteer–state relationships and in what ways do these models enhance or limit the contribution of volunteering to evolving 21<sup>st</sup> Century needs?

**RQ2** What new models of volunteering have the potential to help volunteering more effectively shape a sustainable and inclusive social contract, thereby contributing to building equal and inclusive societies? How do people and States see the role of volunteering in the future?

The first question is conceptually oriented. It sought to gather evidence to increase understanding of the varied forms of volunteer–state relationships, their characteristics, drivers, the diverse actors that shape and animate them, their strengths and weaknesses, and the values that are embedded within these relationships.

The second question is more policy-oriented and forward-looking. It sought to generate evidence and related policy implications/recommendations that would be useful for policymakers in Member States as they develop policies and programmes on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and/or on volunteering. The focus on **building equal and inclusive societies** in this question points to the need to look into issues of power and voice: who gets included in the process of creating sustainable and inclusive social contracts? To what extent can they

shape them? It is important that the policy recommendations developed are specific and actionable.

### 3. Case study selection

The consortium began with a scoping research activity (reviewing academic literature on the topic, non-governmental organization [NGO] reports, websites and blogs) and produced a long list of about 60 organizations. UNV asked the consortium to focus on examples from the Global South, where more volunteering research is needed. The list was categorized using various markers such as region, model and sector. As a collection, the case studies needed to:

- represent different regions, with particular focus on Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS);
- represent different state contexts such as one or two examples from fragile States, or contexts of protracted crises or emergencies;
- represent the full formal–informal volunteering spectrum (e.g. from national volunteering programmes to loosely structured mutual aid, to self-help groups);
- include volunteer initiatives or organizations led by women or young people;
- include examples that cut across development sectors (e.g. health, gender equality, poverty, climate change) to illustrate how volunteerism is embedded within (and could contribute to) various SDGs.

From the list, the research teams selected four maxi case studies (Ecuador, Lebanon, Malawi and Nepal) and 11 mini case studies from the Democratic Republic of the

Congo, Kyrgyzstan and Tunisia, (two mini case studies), China, Colombia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Senegal, Trinidad and Tobago, and one case study spanning three Small Island Developing States (SIDS): Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The research teams chose “telling” (rather than “typical”) case studies,<sup>iv</sup> which meant selecting organizations/institutions/groups that could help investigate the research question and that linked closely with the three partnership models. Other considerations when selecting the case studies included:

- whether they would potentially be a maxi or mini case study;
- whether they were local and community-based institutions (this was necessary; they could be national at most although some case studies included international volunteers);
- whether sectors (e.g. climate change, health, migration) were balanced (repetition of sectors across different commissioned papers was avoided to develop stronger links with a wider range of SDGs);
- any access issues, such as whether it would be feasible to conduct interviews within the case study and with whom.

### 4. Methods

Three interrelated methods were used in the case study research. Given the evolving COVID-19 restrictions, most of these activities were shifted online.

**Semi-structured interviews** were used to investigate targeted questions in line with the research aims and issues that might arise from the observations. The teams interviewed a wide range of actors: local, national and international volunteers, partner communities and when appropriate, development staff and other relevant local

<sup>iv</sup> Mitchell, C. (1984). Case studies. In *Ethnographic research: a guide to general conduct*, R.F. Ellen, ed. London: Academic Press.

development actors. These interviews were also conducted online.

**Focus group discussions** were also conducted with a group of volunteers to share experiences and insights on the topic. This method allowed for a productive exchange and group sharing. Some focus group discussions were conducted online.

**Document analysis (desk-based research)** was used to develop a richer understanding of the context within which the research would take place. The country teams collected a variety of documents, including policy and programme evaluations on volunteer engagement, in each country. Relevant documents relating to the case study programmes were also analysed.

The research consortium also provided support through peer review of research reports and guidance on any issues arising during the fieldwork.

## 5. Ethical considerations

This project was approved by the University of East Anglia School of International Development Ethics Committee. The teams in Nepal and Malawi also received approval from the Kathmandu University School of Education and University of Malawi ethics boards, respectively. The following are key points and principles that guided the ethical conduct of this research:

- Anonymity was ensured. No individual or institution was named/recognizable in the report unless they wished to be in which case, they indicated this on the consent form.
- Confidentiality was ensured. All raw, non-anonymized data were only shared within the commissioned University of East Anglia consortium research team.
- If there were existing power hierarchies, volunteers were recruited directly and

not via the organization's staff members (as there was a danger that volunteers might feel pressured to participate). The teams were cautious when involving gatekeepers to access participants.

- All written consent forms and participant information sheets were in local languages. All participants were provided with sufficient information about the project, and their rights as participants, so that they could give informed consent.
- If a participant could not, or preferred not to, give written consent, oral consent was obtained (and recorded) or they consented via email.
- Teams made sure that they were aware of safeguarding protocols and trained in their use e.g. referring participants to appropriate support; if sensitive issues were raised or when dealing with sensitive issues, researchers could choose not to be alone with participants.
- All data-collection activities followed the COVID-19 restrictions in country (e.g. in terms of the number of people gathering, hygiene measures). Interviews and other activities were shifted online if required.
- Research participants for the maxi case studies were invited to read the case study and extracts from their interviews in the main report, and give feedback.



## Appendix B

# Regional groupings for global estimates and methodology

Africa	Arab States	Asia and the Pacific	Europe and Central Asia	Latin America and the Caribbean
Angola	Algeria	Afghanistan	Albania	Antigua and Barbuda
Benin	Djibouti	American Samoa, United States of America	Andorra	Argentina
Botswana	Egypt	Bangladesh	Armenia	Aruba, Netherlands
Burkina Faso	Iraq	Bhutan	Austria	Bahamas
Burundi	Jordan	Brunei	Azerbaijan	Barbados
Cabo Verde	Kuwait	Darussalam	Belarus	Belize
Cameroon	Lebanon	Cambodia	Belgium	Bermuda
Central African Republic	Libya	China	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bolivia
Chad	Morocco	Cook Islands	Bulgaria	Brazil
Comoros	Oman	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Croatia	Cayman Islands
Congo	Qatar	Fiji	Czechia	Chile
Cote d'Ivoire	Saudi Arabia	French Polynesia, France	Denmark	Colombia
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Somalia	Guam, United States of America	Estonia	Costa Rica
Equatorial Guinea	State of Palestine	Hong Kong, China	Faroe Islands, Denmark	Cuba
Eritrea	Sudan	India	Finland	Curaçao, Netherlands
Eswatini	Syrian Arab Republic	Indonesia	France	Dominica
Ethiopia	Tunisia	Iran	Georgia	Dominican Republic
Gabon	United Arab Emirates	Japan	Germany	Ecuador
Gambia	Yemen	Kiribati	Gibraltar	El Salvador
Ghana		Lao People's Democratic Republic	Greenland, Denmark	Falkland Islands (Malvinas), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Guinea		Macau, China	Guernsey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	French Guiana, France
Guinea-Bissau		Malaysia	Hungary	Grenada
Kenya		Maldives	Iceland	Guadeloupe, France
Lesotho		Marshall Islands	Ireland	Guatemala
Liberia		Micronesia (Federated States of)	Isle of Man, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Guyana
Madagascar		Mongolia	Israel	Haiti
Malawi		Myanmar	Italy	Honduras
Mali		Nauru		Jamaica
Mauritania		Nepal		
Mauritius				
Mozambique				
Namibia				
Niger				

Nigeria	New Caledonia, France	Jersey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Martinique, France
Reunion	Norfolk Island, Australia	Kazakhstan	Mexico
Rwanda	Northern Mariana Islands, United States of America	Kosovo	Montserrat, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Sao Tome and Principe	Pakistan	Kyrgyzstan	Netherlands Antilles
Senegal	Palau	Latvia	Nicaragua
Seychelles	Papua New Guinea	Liechtenstein	Panama
Sierra Leone	Philippines	Lithuania	Paraguay
South Africa	Republic of Korea	Luxembourg	Peru
South Sudan	Samoa	Malta	Puerto Rico
Togo	Singapore	Monaco	Saint Kitt and Nevis
Uganda	Solomon Islands	Montenegro	Saint Lucia
United Republic of Tanzania	Sri Lanka	Netherlands	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Zambia	Taiwan, China	North Macedonia	Suriname
Zimbabwe	Tokelau, New Zealand	Norway	Trinidad and Tobago
	Thailand	Poland	Turks and Caicos Islands, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Timor-Leste	Portugal	Uruguay
	Tonga	Republic of Moldova	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
	Tuvalu	Romania	
	Vanuatu	Russian Federation	
	Viet Nam	San Marino	
		Serbia	
		Slovakia	
		Slovenia	
		Spain	
		Sweden	
		Switzerland	
		Tajikistan	
		Turkey	
		Turkmenistan	
		Ukraine	
		United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	
		Uzbekistan	

## 1. Estimation approach

Regional<sup>v</sup> and global estimates of volunteer rates<sup>vi</sup> for people aged 15 years and over were calculated as weighted<sup>vii</sup> averages of the volunteer rates available in the ILOSTAT database (61 countries) and the volunteer rates estimated in the Gallup survey (eight countries).

The average amount of time spent doing volunteer work was estimated as a weighted average using available data from 22 countries<sup>viii</sup> across all regions.

## 2. Available data

Total regional and global volunteer rates were calculated based on all available data from ILOSTAT and the UNV-Gallup survey on volunteering and COVID-19 (eight countries). Volunteer rates by type of volunteer work and gender were calculated using a subset of the available data from ILOSTAT, since fewer countries collect the data needed for this. Unfortunately, while the UNV-Gallup survey covered both formal and informal volunteering, the data for these two types of volunteering cannot be separated as the survey questions were not designed for this purpose.

## 3. Adjusting for differences in reference periods

Almost two thirds of available volunteer rates (ILOSTAT and Gallup) were estimated using the 1-year/12-month reference period, one quarter using the 4-week/30-day reference period, and the rest using the 1-week/7-day reference period.

Because a 4-week reference period is recommended by the international standards, it was decided to produce global estimates for this period. To do this, volunteer rates estimated using the other two reference periods were adjusted using coefficients calculated as follows:

- Coefficient 1: average volunteer rate calculated for countries using the 4-week reference period divided by the average volunteer rate calculated for countries using the 1-week reference period.
- Coefficient 2: average volunteer rate calculated for countries using the 4-week reference period divided by the average volunteer rate calculated for countries using the 1-year reference period.

Then, the original volunteer rates estimated using the 1-week reference period were multiplied by coefficient 1, and the volunteer rates estimated using the 1-year reference period were multiplied by coefficient 2.

The average number of hours volunteered during a 1-week period was multiplied by four and the average number of hours volunteered during a 1-year period was divided by 12, in order to calculate the average number of hours volunteered during a 4-week period for available countries.

## 4. Estimating national volunteer rates

Before global and regional volunteer rate estimates were calculated, volunteer rates had to be calculated for those countries that do not have statistics on volunteer work available to fill data gaps.

<sup>v</sup> Six regions based on UNDP regional groupings: Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Other countries.

<sup>vi</sup> The share of working-age people who volunteered during a reference period.

<sup>vii</sup> Estimated numbers of people aged 15 years and over (total and by sex, for 2020) were used as weights. Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) (n.d.). *World Population Prospects 2019*. Available at <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/>.

<sup>viii</sup> These are Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Hungary, Ireland, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Switzerland and the United States of America.

For the total volunteer rate (including all types of volunteering and gender), weighted average volunteer rates were calculated using the data available for each region. These averages were then used, within each region, as national estimates for those countries that do not have data on national volunteer rates.

However, volunteer rates by type of volunteering (formal and informal) and gender were calculated differently. Since only two regions (Europe and Central Asia, and other countries) had sufficient data available, only average global rates could be calculated.

### 5. Calculating time volunteered and full-time equivalents

The global estimate of the monthly average number of hours worked by a volunteer was calculated as a weighted average of the monthly values estimated by 22 countries from all regions.<sup>ix</sup>

Full-time equivalents were estimated by multiplying the estimated total number of monthly volunteers by the average number of hours worked per month and dividing the total by 160 (based on the assumption that a full-time worker works 40 hours per week times four weeks per month).

### 6. Interpretation of results

The estimates show the average percentage/number of persons aged 15 years and over who volunteer over the course of a month.

The difference between the 2021 and 2018 estimates does not reflect an increase over time, but mainly the type of data used. The 2018 estimates were calculated using time-use survey data, which apply a very short reference period (e.g. 24 hours), capturing mainly very frequent volunteering (e.g. daily or weekly). Additionally, time-use surveys

have limited capacities to apply more complex data-collection approaches.

Data collected in survey modules, on the other hand, apply longer reference periods which means they better capture volunteer work performed less frequently (even occasionally) and capture a wider range of volunteering activities (leading to higher volunteer rates).

### 7. Impact of COVID-19 on estimates

The COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted people's participation in volunteer work in 2020 and 2021. Most statistics used to calculate these estimates (59 out of 69 countries) were produced between 2010 and 2019. However, in two European countries (Norway and Switzerland) the latest measurements of volunteer work took place in 2020 and the UNV- Gallup survey conducted in eight countries at the beginning of 2021 covered the previous 12 months (i.e. most of 2020).

Data on volunteering in 2020, when strict lockdowns and other containment measures were implemented across the world, have probably impacted the values of global estimates. It is reasonable to assume that COVID restrictions prevented many people from on-site volunteering. At the same time, many people likely switched to online volunteering. Additionally, the sudden increase in the number of people needing assistance because of the pandemic may have generated additional volunteering opportunities. Therefore, it is difficult to say exactly how COVID-19 impacted people's participation in volunteer work.

Overall, the level of volunteering likely did not change due to the pandemic. For example, volunteer rates in Norway and Switzerland in 2020 were similar to rates measured before

<sup>ix</sup> These are Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Hungary, Ireland, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Switzerland and the United States of America.



the pandemic. For countries in which the UNV-Gallup survey was conducted, the lack of pre-pandemic statistics on volunteering

makes it unfeasible to estimate the possible impact of the pandemic.

## Appendix C

### Gallup survey: Methodology

Although the UNV Volunteerism in the Global South survey was fielded as a stand-alone survey, Gallup utilized similar survey-design, data-collection and quality-assurance procedures for the Gallup World Poll, a global survey conducted in more than 140 countries since 2005.

The Gallup World Poll has traditionally relied on two major modes of data collection—telephone and face-to-face interviewing—depending on the level of telephone penetration in a country. However, in 2020, as the immense scale of the coronavirus pandemic became clear, so too did the risk of community transmission from face-to-face data collection. Consequently, it resorted to a contingency methodology based entirely on telephone-based interviews.

Gallup and its partners comply with all government-issued guidance from local authorities as standard practice. It took this government-issued guidance into account throughout the interviewing process, using telephone interviews to comply with social distancing measures.

#### Final country selection

Country selection was based on a mix of low- and middle-income countries, representing

diverse contexts and with coverage across UNV's programmatic regions. Since the methodology relied on phone interviews, phone coverage of the population was also an important factor. Even so, this approach excluded small sections of national populations who could not be reached through phone-based sampling frames.

#### Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was developed by Gallup and UNV, relying on a number of resources to produce a reliable survey instrument that effectively measured all concepts and behaviours of interest. Gallup undertook desk-based research to identify and review existing survey questions relevant to the general research objectives, and relied on International Labour Organization (ILO) model survey tools to measure volunteer work. Additionally, survey methodologists from the Gallup World Poll provided expertise on how to construct an unbiased, reliable and effective survey instrument.

The UNV Volunteerism in the Global South questionnaire (including questions about demographics or personal background) was designed to take on average five minutes in total. It was translated into the major conversational languages of each country.

The final questionnaire was approved by Gallup's Institutional Review Board. Additionally, UNV asked Gallup to affirm that this research was in line with key elements of its own ethical requirements, including:

- **Targeted population:** This study does not directly target any vulnerable populations or groups. It is instead a general survey of the population aged 15 years and over in each of the selected countries. Gallup will not interview any individual under the age of 15.
- **Topic of study:** None of the issues explored in the study have the potential to cause harm to any study participants.
- **Consent language:** All respondents are required to consent to their participation in the study. Gallup's legal department and Institutional Review Board approve all consent language used in Gallup surveys. All consent language is General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant. To ensure compliance with GDPR, no personally identifiable information (PII), such as name, address, telephone number or high-precision Global Positioning System (GPS) data, is transferred to the United States for data processing or any other reason. All computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) data are stored in a secure virtual private cloud in Ireland using Amazon Web Services. All PII data captured for quality control are firewalled so that

only the in-country partner can access it for validation purposes. PII data would typically be deleted one year after the completion of the project.

### General methodological approach and data quality assurances

The sample size in each country was approximately 1,000 respondents.

Gallup administered computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) to ensure study feasibility during the pandemic. This approach was designed to safeguard both respondents' and interviewers' welfare, following international guidelines on containment measures such as physical distancing. During the unprecedented situation that unfolded in 2020, Gallup was able to adapt and proceed with global data collection in over 115 countries.

Gallup employed a stratified dual-frame (landline and mobile) sample design where appropriate or a mobile-only sample approach if mobile penetration provided optimal coverage, and conducted the in-country surveys in the languages specified in Table A1. Samples from each frame were generated through a pure or list-assisted random digit dialling (RDD) approach.

**Table A1.** Country data set information for 2021 UNV Volunteerism in the Global South survey

Country	Mode of interviewing	Language(s)
<b>Bolivia</b>	Mobile only	Spanish
<b>India</b>	Mobile only	Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu
<b>Kenya</b>	Mobile only	English, Swahili
<b>Lebanon</b>	Mobile only	Arabic
<b>Senegal</b>	Landline/mobile	French, Wolof
<b>Thailand</b>	Mobile only	Thai
<b>Turkey</b>	Mobile only	Turkish
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Mobile only	Russian, Uzbek

Although this methodological approach was a necessity, in some of the countries surveyed it resulted in a greater degree of coverage error (the percentage of the target population who could not be reached through this sampling approach).

For some countries, this coverage error may result in greater imbalances in the underlying sample composition in terms of the overall demographic profile of all respondents interviewed in a particular country. To help adjust for these imbalances, Gallup (where considered necessary) relied on an expanded set of demographic factors when calculating post-stratification weights.

### Data weighting

Data weighting is used to minimize bias in survey-based estimates in order to ensure that samples are nationally representative for each country. It is intended to be used for generating estimates within a country. The weighting procedure was formulated based

on the sample design and performed in multiple stages.

In countries where data are collected via telephone—as was the case for all countries in this study—Gallup constructed a probability weight factor (base weight) to account for selection of telephone numbers from the respective frames and to correct for unequal selection probabilities as a result of selecting one adult in landline households, and for dual users coming from both the landline and mobile frame. Adjustment to selection probabilities reflecting the relative frame sizes was a new improvement to the weighting process in 2020 and was implemented in all countries included in the 2021 UNV Volunteerism in the Global South survey.

The base weights were post-stratified to adjust for non-response and to match the weighted sample totals to known target population totals obtained from country-level census data. Gallup made non-response

adjustments to gender, age and (where reliable data were available) education or socio-economic status, as well as, where

necessary, additional factors such as employment status.

## Appendix D

### Gallup survey

	Wording	Response
<b>Q1</b>	Now, I will ask you some questions about volunteering. Volunteering refers to SPENDING TIME helping people outside your family or with organizations, such as those that help people, animals or the environment. Did you spend ANY time volunteering or giving UNPAID help in the past 12 months, or not?	Yes No (DK)/(Refused)
<b>Q2</b>	(If "No" or "DK/Refused" in Q1 ONLY) Have you spent any TIME making items to donate or distributing donations, such as food, clothing, equipment, or other goods in the past 12 months?	Yes No (DK)/(Refused)
<b>Q3 SERIES</b>	Did you volunteer or provide unpaid help to any of the following in the past 12 months?	
<b>Q3A</b>	A government programme, campaign, or scheme.	Yes
<b>Q3B</b>	An organization or group.	No
<b>Q3C</b>	Friends or neighbours.	(DK)/(Refused)
<b>Q4A</b>	Did you volunteer by attending any meeting in the neighbourhood or area where you live or by contacting a public official to give your opinion in the past 12 months?	Yes No
<b>Q4B</b>	(If "YES" in Q4A ONLY) Did you attend neighbourhood meetings or contact public officials MORE, LESS, or about the same in the past 12 months compared to the year before that?	More Less About the same(DK)/ (Refused)
<b>Q4B_1</b>	(If "No" or DK/Refused in Q4A ONLY) Did you attend a meeting in the neighbourhood or area where you live or give an opinion to a public official in the year before that?	Yes No (DK)/(Refused)
<b>Q5A</b>	In the past 12 months, did you volunteer your time to develop new ideas or solutions to an issue or problem? This could be by yourself or with other people.	Yes No (DK)/(Refused)



<b>Q6</b>	In the past 12 months, would you say you volunteered or helped others outside your family MORE, LESS, or about the same compared to the year before that?	More Less About the same (Did not volunteer/ help others in past 12 months) (DK)/(Refused)
<b>Q6A</b>	(If "Did not volunteer/help others in past 12 months" in Q6 ONLY) You said you did not volunteer or help others outside your family in the past 12 months. Please now think about THE YEAR BEFORE THAT. Did you volunteer or help others outside your family during that year?	Yes No (DK)/(Refused)
<b>Q7</b>	Have you made plans to volunteer or provide unpaid help in any way in the NEXT 12 months?	Yes No (DK)/(Refused)
<b>Q8 SERIES</b>	Are you likely or unlikely to do any of the following over the next 12 months?	
<b>Q8A</b>	Spend time directly helping people you know outside of your family.	
<b>Q8B</b>	Be part of a group or organization that provides assistance.	
<b>Q8C</b>	Give your opinion to local authorities or help them plan or provide local services.	Likely Unlikely (DK)/(Refused)
<b>Q8D</b>	Be part of a campaign or initiative to raise awareness on an issue, either online or in person.	
<b>Q8E</b>	Contribute new ideas or solutions to an issue or problem, either by yourself or with other people.	

Note: DK = Don't know.

## Appendix E

### Special focus: A look at the predictors of the prospective volunteer rate

This appendix provides a statistical analysis of the demographic traits or other aspects of a person's background, including past volunteer behaviour, that are strongly predictive of their future volunteer activities.

The analysis provided a clear takeaway: past volunteer behaviour or how a person volunteered was often (though not always) strongly predictive of their future volunteer prospects. Table B provides an estimate of how much more likely a person who said

“yes” to any of the four question items about past volunteer behaviour or activity is to say that they will volunteer in the next 12 months.

In all eight countries, at least one of the items had significant and often sizeable effects. For example, in India, a person who reported being a volunteer in the past year was 7.86 times more likely than a person who did not report volunteering in the past year to say that they plan to volunteer in the coming year.

**Table A2.** Increased likelihood of people who answered “yes” to question items about past volunteer behaviour saying that they will volunteer in the next 12 months

	Volunteered in the past year	Volunteered with a government programme	Volunteered with an organization or group	Volunteered for friends or neighbours
Country	Volunteer action rate (“yes”)	(“yes”)	(“yes”)	(“yes”)
<b>Bolivia</b>	3.94	2.33	Not significant	Not significant
<b>India</b>	7.86	2.93	Not significant	Not significant
<b>Kenya</b>	Not significant	2.71	2.19	Not significant
<b>Lebanon</b>	Not significant	1.78	2.46	2.66
<b>Senegal</b>	Not significant	Not significant	2.86	2.47
<b>Thailand</b>	Not significant	Not significant	1.98	2.06
<b>Turkey</b>	2.46	Not significant	3.39	2.41
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	6.05	Not significant	1.65	Not significant

Note: Only results that are significant at the 95 percent level are shown.

Meanwhile, the demographic attributes included in this analysis often did not have a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of somebody saying they would volunteer in the next 12 months.

## Appendix F

### List of acronyms

<b>ArtGlo</b>	Art & Global Health Center Africa
<b>CARG</b>	Agricultural and Rural Management Council
<b>CBO</b>	community-based organization
<b>CDPF</b>	China Disabled Persons' Federation
<b>CIS</b>	Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>COVID-19</b>	coronavirus disease
<b>CSO</b>	civil society organization
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of the Congo
<b>FFLA</b>	Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano [Latin American Future Foundation]
<b>ICLS</b>	International Conference of Labour Statisticians
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>LGBTQI</b>	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (referred to as "key populations" in Malawi)
<b>MICR</b>	Model of Integral Care for Rurality
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>NMVO</b>	Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organizations
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SDI</b>	Slum Dwellers International
<b>SIDS</b>	Small Island Developing States
<b>SWVR</b>	State of the World's Volunteerism Report
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNGA</b>	United Nations General Assembly
<b>UNRISD</b>	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
<b>UNV</b>	United Nations Volunteers
<b>VCTT</b>	Volunteer Center of Trinidad and Tobago

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## Endnotes

- 1** Burns and others (2014).
- 2** Aked (2015).
- 3** Leach and others (2021).
- 4** Taken from the UN Secretary General's Nelson 2020 Mandela Annual Lecture, "Tackling Inequality: A New Social Contract for a New Era", available at <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/a-new-social-contract-for-a-new-era/>.
- 5** United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD; 2021, p. 3).
- 6** UNV (2011, p. 93).
- 7** UNV (2015).
- 8** UNV (2018).
- 9** UNV (2011, p. 92).
- 10** UNV (2015).
- 11** Burns and others (2014).
- 12** Kwiatkowski and others (2020).
- 13** Couvet and Prevot (2015).
- 14** Mutua and Kiruhi (2021).
- 15** Mutua and Kiruhi (2021, p. 7).
- 16** See also Hazeldine and Baillie-Smith (2015) in the context of humanitarian emergencies and crises.
- 17** Monbiot (2020).
- 18** Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO; n.d.).
- 19** UNV (2021).
- 20** Cabato (2021).
- 21** Eisele (2020).
- 22** Sherwin (2020).
- 23** Volunteering Australia (2021).
- 24** AlOmar and others (2021).
- 25** Please refer to Gombodorj (2021).
- 26** Perold and others (2021).
- 27** Youngs (2020).
- 28** See Green (2020). A group of activists in the US who identify as queer people of colour with disabilities have set up support (e.g. distribution of home-made hand sanitizers, N95 respirator masks and gloves) for fellow people with disabilities and other underserved populations, such as those who are homeless.
- 29** UNV (2020).
- 30** See Appendix A for the full case study research methodology.
- 31** United Nations General Assembly (UNGA; 2018).
- 32** UNGA (2002).
- 33** Dekker and Halman (2003).
- 34** Butcher and Einolf (2017).
- 35** Anheier and Salamon (1999).
- 36** Amichai-Hamburger (2008).
- 37** MacDuff (2005).
- 38** Twigg and Mosel (2017).
- 39** Baillie Smith and others (2020).
- 40** Lewis (2015).
- 41** Hazeldine and Baillie Smith (2015).
- 42** Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003).
- 43** Rochester and others (2010).
- 44** Stebbins (2013).
- 45** UNV (2020).
- 46** Ellis Paine, Hill and Rochester (2010).
- 47** Butcher and Einolf (2017).
- 48** Adler and Goggin (2005).
- 49** Serrat and others (2020).
- 50** Adler and Goggin (2005).
- 51** Ekman and Amnå (2012).
- 52** Butcher and Einolf (2017).
- 53** UNDP (2016).
- 54** Shafik (2021).
- 55** These distinctions were heavily drawn from UNRISD (2021).
- 56** UNRISD (2021).
- 57** Chemhuru (2017).
- 58** Shafik (2021, p. 185).
- 59** McCandless (2020).
- 60** Shafik (2021, p. 25).
- 61** Shafik (2021, p. 6).
- 62** Coole (1994).
- 63** Hickey (2011).
- 64** Shafik (2021).
- 65** UNDP (2016).
- 66** Shafik (2021).
- 67** For instance, volunteers as actors to support social accountability systems. Here, volunteers make the state accountable for their actions, policies and priorities.
- 68** Loewe, Zintl and Houdret (2021).
- 69** This table was drawn from the work of Lee and Levine (2016) on various forms of citizen engagement, from the UNDP (2016) concept of resilient and inclusive social contracts, and from Mahoney and Thelen's (2010; see pp. 18–20 in particular) modes of institutional change.
- 70** UNRISD (2021).
- 71** Abers, Rossi and von Bülow (2021) discuss this in the context of Argentina and Brazil.
- 72** See for instance, Cook, Smith and Utting (2012) in relation to policies on green economy and sustainable development.



- 73** Volunteer–state relationships could, for instance, be understood as part of what Cornwall and Coelho describe as a “participatory sphere” or “spaces of contestation as well as collaboration” (2007, p.1).
- 74** Abers, Rossi and von Bülow (2021). The uncertainty of the pandemic led to a reconfiguration of the role of social movements within Argentina’s government coalition as strong social groups – such as the piquetero movement of informally employed and unemployed poor people – had increased participation. The “Creole Marshall Plan” was developed to urbanize 1,600 shanty towns in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan area, home to 3.5 million inhabitants, most of whom are the country’s poorest populations.
- 75** UNV (2020).
- 76** Chambers (2005); Guijt and Shah (1998).
- 77** Suoza (2001). Participatory budgeting is a process by which people are involved in decisions as to how public money is spent. While it has been effective in taking into account poor people’s priorities, more marginalized segments continue to be sidelined.
- 78** Mahmoud and Súilleabháin (2020 p. 112).
- 79** See Lewis (2015).
- 80** See Milllora and Ahmed (2020).
- 81** Radjabov (2020).
- 82** UNGA (2020).
- 83** UNV (2018).
- 84** UNGA (2002, p. 3).
- 85** UNV (2018).
- 86** ILO (2021b).
- 87** ILO (2019).
- 88** ILO (2021a).
- 89** ILO (2021a).
- 90** UNV (2020).
- 91** Volunteering Australia (2021).
- 92** Volunteer Now (2021).
- 93** United Kingdom, Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2021).
- 94** United Kingdom, Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2020).
- 95** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD; 2020).
- 96** Dryzek (2002).
- 97** Curato and others (2017).
- 98** Rao and Sanyal (2010).
- 99** Cornwall and Coelho (2007).
- 100** Cornwall (2002).
- 101** Sanders (1997).
- 102** Hendriks (2009).
- 103** Sanders (1997, p. 349).
- 104** For a full methodological note, please refer to Appendix A.
- 105** Chapter 1 explains the report’s expanded definition of volunteering.
- 106** Note that this report refers to Guthi institutions in the Newar community and not to the Guthi Land Tenure system in Nepal. The Guthi Land Tenure System is a legal means of management of land donated for religious purposes.
- 107** Ntumba (2018).
- 108** Ntumba (2018).
- 109** Kühn (2017).
- 110** Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO; n.d.).
- 111** Burke and others (2007).
- 112** Interview with CARG Provincial Coordinator, 12 July.
- 113** Kühn (2017).
- 114** Kyrgyzstan, Ministry of Justice (2017).
- 115** National Information Campaign Follow Your Voice (2015).
- 116** Kühn (2017).
- 117** Kühn (2017).
- 118** Burke and others (2007).
- 119** Kühn (2017).
- 120** Shreshta (2019).
- 121** Kühn (2017).
- 122** Steen and Brandsen (2020).
- 123** Needham and Carr (2009).
- 124** Governance International (n.d.).
- 125** Sorrentino, Cicilia and Howlett (2018).
- 126** Nabatchi, Sancino and Sicilia (2017).
- 127** Alford (2014).
- 128** Pestoff (2014).
- 129** Nabatchi, Sancino and Sicilia (2017).
- 130** Rak (2020).
- 131** Reforms on services for people with disabilities in Shanghai began in 2010, five years before government regulations promoted the need to widely address the concerns of people with disabilities in the country. Shanghai is the most developed city in China and has led various social innovations in many areas, including volunteer and non-profit organization development. Shanghai is always selected by the central government to conduct policy experiments and pilots. Services for disabled people in W district Shanghai have undergone reform and development for almost 10 years. The local government has already recognized some improvements. During the pandemic, many self-organizations worked well, which also shows that

the reforms in W district in Shanghai have had some positive outcomes. They have begun to promote the institutionalization of new service delivery models, involving the contracting of non-profit organizations and volunteer participation, and national organizations are now considering rolling out this approach. In this sense, this single district in Shanghai is representative of the national initiative that supports people with disabilities.

**132** UNDP Kazakhstan (2020).

**133** UNDP Kazakhstan (2020).

**134** Burke and others (2007).

**135** Burke and others (2007).

**136** Burke and others (2007).

**137** UNDP Kazakhstan (2020).

**138** Anon. (2021).

**139** UNDP Kazakhstan (2020).

**140** Anon. (2021). Telephone interview by SWVR researcher. Senegal, 12 July.

**141** Aga Khan Foundation (2017).

**142** Anon. (2021a). Interview by SWVR researcher. Lebanon, 3 June.

**143** Fitzgerald (2021).

**144** Spear and others (2020).

**145** Mulgan and others (2007).

**146** Glennie and others (2020, p. 7).

**147** For example, according to Mulgan (2006), business innovations are generally motivated by a desire to maximize profit. However, these differentiations are often blurred in the case of social enterprises, which aim to achieve both social and economic ends. See also Newth (2015).

**148** Mulgan (2006).

**149** Tucker (2014, p. 4).

**150** Biljohn and Lues (2020).

**151** Tucker (2014).

**152** de Wit and others (2017).

**153** See Davies (2012) for more case study examples.

**154** Burns and others (2014).

**155** This draws heavily from discussions in Mulgan and others (2007).

**156** Shamsuddin (2021).

**157** Bonina and Eaton (2020).

**158** Spear and others (2020).

**159** Abrams (2020).

**160** Mulgan (2006).

**161** Mulgan and others (2007).

**162** Mulgan (2006).

**163** Mulgan (2006, p. 150).

**164** Hulgård and Ferreira (2019).

**165** Muungano Alliance (n.d.).

**166** VCTT (n.d.a).

**167** Social Innovation in Health Initiative (2021).

**168** According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (2010), “the paramos form a neotropical high altitude ecoregion distributed mainly along the Andean mountain range in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela...[They] play a fundamental role in sustaining the lives of millions of people, providing essential ecosystem services such as water production for urban use, irrigation and hydropower generation.”

**169** UN Women (2015).

**170** Bautista Gómez, Agudelo and Castro-Arroyave (2020).

**171** VCTT (n.d.b).

**172** Fleming and Tabualevu (2018).

**173** Social Innovation in Health Initiative (2021).

**174** Banyai-Becker, Mwangi and Wairutu (2020).

**175** UN Women (2015).

**176** UN Women (2015).

**177** UN Women (2015).

**178** Focus group discussion, youth club (Vision for Development), 15 July 2021.

**179** Art & Global Health Center (ArtGlo) Africa (2020a).

**180** Bautista, Agudelo and Castro-Arroyave (2020).

**181** ArtGlo Africa (2020b).

**182** Banyai-Becker, Mwangi and Wairutu (2020).

**183** Ghouralal (2020).

**184** VCTT (n.d.a).

**185** VCTT (n.d.c).

**186** Muungano Alliance (n.d.).

**187** Social Innovation in Health Initiative (2021).

**188** Vitukawalu and others (2020).

**189** Vitukawalu and others (2020).

**190** Interview, Team Leader (Vision for Development), 15 July 2021.

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The *2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report : Building Equal and Inclusive Societies* presents new evidence on the relationship between volunteers and the state. It shows how volunteer–state partnerships can redefine power relations to create societies that benefit all. When governments collaborate with volunteers from marginalized groups, these relationships foster new ways of working that engage volunteers as key partners in the creation of development solutions.

We need to draw on the creativity and energy of volunteers. In doing so, we can lay the foundation for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century social contract that is more inclusive and responsive to the needs of communities. This report offers timely insights into the important contribution of volunteers today, and the crucial role they could play in the future as we seek to build forward better towards more equal and inclusive societies.