Report on Volunteering Infrastructure and Trends: Desktop Review, August 2023

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In the spirit of reconciliation we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and the Pacific, and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations peoples today.

This report was developed by Day Four Projects in collaboration with the Australian Volunteers Program. More information about Day Four Projects can be found at www.dayfourprojects.com

Day Four Projects

Summary

This report details the aims, objectives, methods and findings of a desktop review conducted for the Australian Volunteers Program's (the program) Innovation Hub. A detailed Excel Workbook and Infographic accompany this report.

The desktop review sought to understand the context of volunteering in the 25 countries in which the program currently operates, the infrastructure that supports this volunteering, as well as the trends in volunteering (the who, where and how of volunteering).

Overall, we found:

- **State of the data**: Data on volunteering infrastructure was present in every country, though few countries had any laws related to volunteering. Conversely, data on volunteering trends were found in only 16 of 25 countries and were largely incomparable where they are available.
- **Volunteering infrastructure**: There appears to be no substantial and definitive relationship between volunteering infrastructure and HDI ranking, nor region. There also does not appear to be any substantive link between a country having a volunteering law or policy and having a government or non-government volunteering scheme or a government, peak or other volunteering body. Overall, 49 laws and policies inclusive of volunteering were identified in 19 countries. All countries have at least one volunteering scheme operating, with 139 identified of which 101 are led by formal International Volunteering Co-operation Organisations (IVCO) such as the PeaceCorps and UN Volunteers, 38 are led by non-IVCOs (e.g., government- and non-government-led country schemes, religious organisation schemes and other International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs). Red Cross Societies exist in every country, alongside 21 other government and peak volunteering bodies, most of which were country-specific or national bodies.
- **Volunteering trends**: There appears to be no relationship to Human Development Index (HDI) ranking, nor region aside from the Pacific generally lacking data on volunteering. However, the data available do start to create more fulsome pictures in countries, such as rates of volunteering reported through International Labor Organisation statistics (ILOSTAT).

This report is based on a desktop review, which requires data to be available and discoverable via this means. It is therefore possible that additional data relating to volunteering exist and have not been captured through this review. The review did not extend to an analysis of the currency or implementation of volunteering infrastructure, and it's possible that some of the volunteering bodies, laws or policies identified may no longer be operational. Moreover, as the review was conducted in English, other materials related to in-country volunteering efforts published in languages other than English, may be available and beyond the scope of this review.

The program is eager to support efforts that improve the quality and availability of data related to volunteering. If you would like to find out more about this work, or if you are aware of additional data related to volunteering that are not included in this report and associated resources, please get in touch at innovation@australianvolunteers.com.

Project background

The program is committed to supporting locally-led change, and to testing new and different ways of accelerating global volunteering. To help achieve this, the program's Innovation Hub provides a dedicated space for teams to experiment with new ideas, models of volunteering, and ways of scaling impact.

The Global Volunteering Accelerator is a workstream of the Innovation Hub that is focused on the infrastructure needed to accelerate national volunteering. This infrastructure is thought to include a range of conditions and supports, including: policies and legislation; collaborations and other partnerships; training and resources; data from research and evaluation (and mobilisation of data); use of technology; and cultural contexts operating at multiple scales. Governments, NGOs and private sector actors all contribute to strong volunteering infrastructure.

Aims and objectives

The objective of this project was to build a detailed understanding of the context of volunteering in the 25 countries in which the program operates, and the infrastructure that support their volunteering initiatives via a desktop review of available data - in other words, the state of volunteering and volunteering infrastructure across an agreed set of variables:

- Human Development Index (HDI) Ranking
- Volunteering laws and policies
- Volunteering schemes, at national and international levels
- Government and peak volunteering bodies
- Volunteering trends from trusted sources, including volunteer age, profession, gender, sectors for volunteering, and formal and informal volunteering.

The 25 countries were grouped into the following regions as agreed with the program:

- **East and South Asia**: Bhutan, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka
- **Micronesia**: Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands
- **Polynesia**: Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu
- **Melanesia**: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu
- **Asia Archipelago**: Indonesia, the Philippines, Timor-Leste
- **South East Asia**: Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam
- **Africa**: eSwatini, Lesotho, South Africa, Tanzania

Approach and methods

We reviewed:

- All information and sources on the UNV Knowledge Portal, including UN Voluntary Reports
- Google search results:
- Based on searches of infrastructure found on the Portal (e.g., policies, schemes)
- (first 10 pages) for each country covering infrastructure and trends
- Scopus search results from 2016 of volunteering in each country regarding volunteering trends
- Reports and links shared via outreach to key organisations and individuals (i.e., Institute of Volunteering Research, Dr Jugen Grotz; Centre for Global Development, Prof Matt Baillie Smith; UNV Portal team)
- Data shared by the program's in-country teams after reviewing the draft Excel sheet (all teams responded aside from eSwatini, Laos, Indonesia, Lesotho, Tanzania and Vietnam)
- Other volunteering schemes and peak volunteering as relevant (i.e., UNV, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), the US Peace Corps, JICA's Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, Volunteer Service Abroad New Zealand (VSA NZ), World Friends Korea, France Volontaires and the Red Cross).

We also held a data interpretation session with key stakeholders from the program, including some Regional Directors, at which we tested key findings, and examined how the program could use the findings and this resource into the future.

Definitions

Volunteering infrastructure is the enabling conditions that support volunteerism and includes environmental contexts, operational structures and implementation capacities. This review captured data on a subset of this infrastructure: national organisations with a primary responsible for mobilising or managing volunteers; and laws and policies that relate to national volunteering.

Volunteering schemes are the programs and initiatives that mobilise volunteers to deliver development outcomes. This review has focused on schemes operating at an international or national level.

Volunteering trends provide a more detailed picture of the nature of volunteering in each country. This review focused on capturing existing research into: volunteer demographics, volunteering location, nature/type of volunteering, and any other trends observable.

Findings

Overview, including the state of the data

- **State of the data**: Data on volunteering infrastructure were present in every country, though few countries had any laws related to volunteering. Conversely, data on volunteering trends were found in only 16 of 25 countries and were largely incomparable where they are available. Measuring volunteering has not been a priority for many governments, and even in instances where governments are gathering data, differences in definitions and methods can make it challenging to make comparisons and contrasts.
- **Volunteering infrastructure**: 49 laws and policies inclusive of volunteering were found in 19 countries. All countries have at least one volunteering scheme operating - including those run by IVCOs and non-IVCOs (e.g., government- and non-government-led country schemes, religious organisation schemes and other schemes associated with INGOs - with 139 identified in total. Red Cross Societies exist in every country, alongside 21 other government and peak volunteering bodies, most of which were country-specific or national bodies.
- **Volunteering trends**: There appears to be no relationship to HDI ranking, nor region aside from the Pacific generally lacking data. However, the data available do start to create more fulsome pictures in countries, such as rates of volunteering reported through ILOSTAT.

Figure 1: State of the data below identifies data availability across the focus areas. Trend data availability is separately broken down by "who", "where" and "implementation" in the *Figure 5: Volunteering Trends.*

Figure 1: State of the data

≥ 160	≥4 data points

Region	Country	HDI Rank	Laws	Policies	Schemes	Principal Bodies	Other Infrastructure	Trends
Africa	eSwatini	144	-	2	4	1	2	-
	Lesotho	168	-	-	3	1	1	-
	South Africa	109	-	2	5	1	-	3
	Tanzania	160	-	2	5	1	1	1
Asia Archipelago	Indonesia	114	10	-	4	1	-	3
	Philippines	116	1	1	9	6	2	3
	Timor-Leste	140	-	2	7	2	-	1
East and South Asia	Bhutan	127	-	2	2	2	-	1
	Mongolia	96	-	-	5	2	-	2
	Nepal	143	-	3	6	5	1	2
	Sri Lanka	73	2	4	7	2	-	1
Melanesia	Fiji	99	-	1	8	2	-	-
	PNG	156	1	1	18	2	-	2
	Solomon Islands	155	-	-	8	1	1	-
	Vanuatu	140	-	1	7	2	-	-
Micronesia	FSM	134	-	2	4	1	1	-
	Kiribati	136	1	3	2	2	-	2
	Palau	80	-	2	4	1	-	-
	RMI	131	-	-	2	1	-	1
Polynesia	Samoa	111	-	-	5	1	1	-
	Tonga	91	-	-	4	1	1	-
	Tuvalu	130	-	1	1	1	3	1
South East Asia	Cambodia	146	-	1	9	4	-	2
	Laos	140	-	1	4	1	1	2
	Vietnam	115	2	1	6	2	2	1
Grand Total			17	32	139	46	17	28

Volunteering Infrastructure

Commonalities and differences between regions, relational impact of HDI rank

There appears to be no substantial and definitive relationship between volunteering infrastructure and HDI ranking, nor region. For example, there are laws in at least one country in all regions except Africa (where three of four countries have two policies each relating to volunteering) and Polynesia (with Tuvalu only having a policy relating to volunteering). Further, of the five countries with an HDI ranking of less than 100, only one has laws relating to volunteering (Sri Lanka) and two have no laws or policies relating to volunteering. Conversely, Indonesia with an HDI ranking of 114 has 10 laws relating to volunteering. Similarly, Vietnam has two such laws (HDI ranking 115), and the Philippines (HDI ranking 116), Papua New Guinea (HDI ranking 156) and Kiribati (HDI ranking 136) each have one law.

Further, there did not appear to be a substantive link between a country having a law or policy and having a government or non-government volunteering scheme or a government, peak or other volunteering body. Specifically:

- Of the 19 countries that had a law or policy, only 12 or 63% had such a volunteering scheme or body;
- Of the six countries that had a law or policy, four or 66% had such a volunteering scheme or body.

The only volunteering bodies identified in countries across Polynesia and Africa, and largely in Micronesia was their national Red Cross Society. East and South Asia and Asia Archipelago appear to be the two regions with the most government and peak volunteering bodies operating, closely followed by South East Asia.

Volunteering laws and policies

Forty-nine (49) laws and policies inclusive of volunteering were identified in the review:

- Thirty-one (31%) of laws and policies inclusive of volunteering related to youth, 25% to a national volunteer service or policy, 24% to "other", 12% to disaster and emergency management and 8% to development and/or development cooperation. See Figure 2: Volunteering Laws and Policies Analysis below for detail.
- Nineteen (19) of the 25 partner countries have a law or policy inclusive of volunteering. Lesotho, Mongolia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga have no such laws or policies.
- Indonesia (10), Sri Lanka (6) and Kiribati (4) are the countries with the most laws or policies (≥4) inclusive of volunteering.
- In Indonesia, most of these fall into the "other" category (e.g., The Regulation of the Maritime Security Agency Number 13 of 2021 concerning Sea Guard Volunteers, The Regulation of the National Narcotics Agency Number 8 of 2018 concerning the Competency Standards of Anti-Narcotics Volunteers, Law No. 9 of 1964 - Indonesian Volunteer Movement).
- In Sri Lanka, three of five relate to national volunteer services or policies (e.g., The Voluntary Social Service Organisations (Registration and Supervision) Act (1980), and a draft National Volunteering Secretary Act (2021)).
- Kiribati has policies or laws across the four main categories aside from "national volunteer service or policy" (i.e., Kiribati National Youth Policy Framework and Action Plan 2018 - 2022, Development Cooperation Policy (created 2015), Strategic Roadmap for Emergency Management (SREM) in Kiribati 2020 - 2024 and the Kiribati Red Cross Act 2021).

Figure 2: Volunteering Laws and Policies Analysis
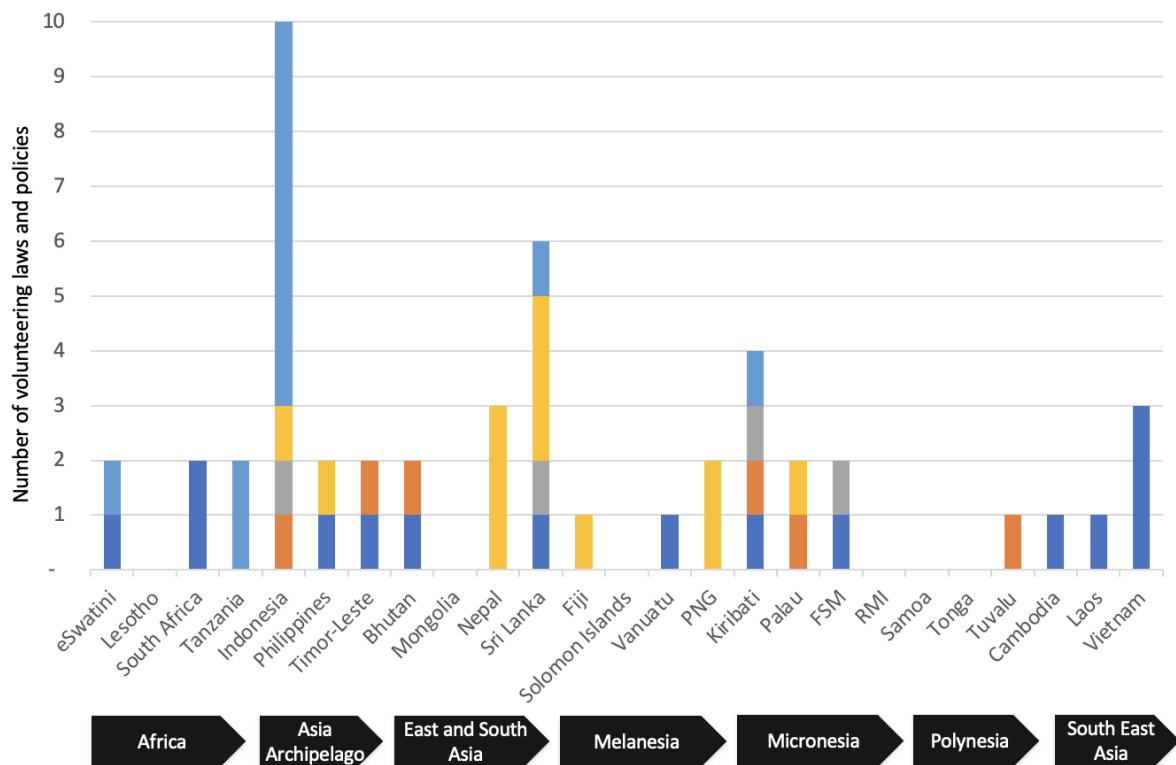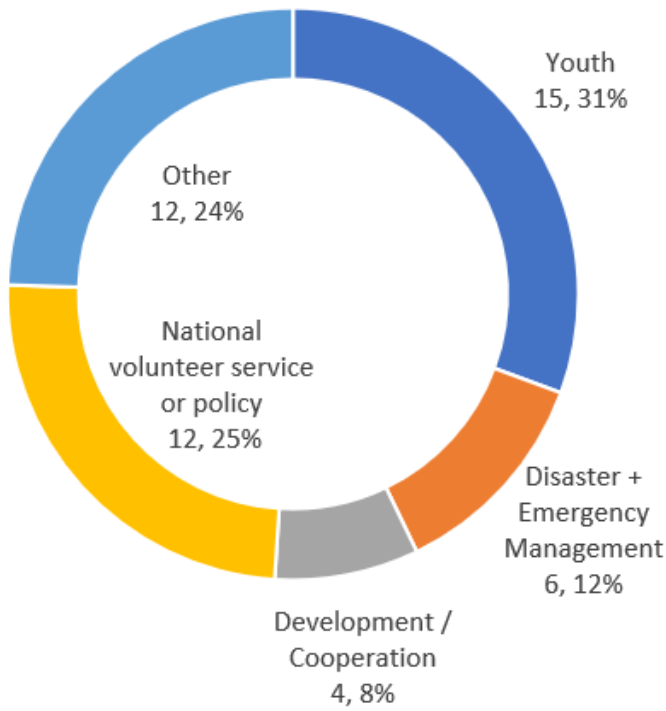
Volunteering schemes

Volunteering schemes were distributed across the program's 25 countries of operation. These schemes included those led by IVCOs, governments, and non-government organisations at the regional, national and international level. Overall, Papua New Guinea had the largest number of schemes (17), while Tuvalu the smallest number (1). Further details for non-IVCO schemes and IVCO schemes are provided below, and in Figures 3 and 4.

Details related to the activities of IVCOs in each program country were obtained through a desktop review of each IVCO's publicly available data (which vary in specificity across IVCOs). Details related to non-IVCO volunteering schemes were obtained from a combination of desktop searching and analysis (as outlined in the methods section) and recommendations from each country program team. Some program country teams may have been more motivated to report on non-IVCO schemes, which may influence the total number of schemes identified (e.g., many religious organisation schemes were identified in Papua New Guinea).

Thirty-eight (38) non-IVCO schemes were identified in the review:

- 22 country volunteering schemes led by government or non-government organisations were identified in 14 program countries. These included national youth development programs and youth volunteering services in Sri Lanka to the West 'Are' Rokotanikeni Association volunteer-run savings club and Pacific Games volunteers in the Solomon Islands.
- Nine (9) religious organisation volunteering schemes were identified in Papua New Guinea and the Federated States of Micronesia (e.g., Jesuit Volunteers International and the Lutheran Church of Australia International Mission).
- Seven (7) other volunteer schemes associated with INGOs were identified in Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Timor-Leste (e.g., Australian Doctors International, Save the Children Vanuatu, and MOVE - a Portuguese volunteer organisation for which little information could be located).

One hundred and one (101) IVCO schemes were identified in the review:

- All countries but eSwatini appeared to have some level of UNV engagement in the country. The UNDP's Markets for Change volunteer program also operates in Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.
- JICA's Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers operate in 22 of the 25 program countries (all but Lesotho, Kiribati and Tuvalu).
- The US Peace Corps operates in 17 of the 25 program countries. The Peace Corps doesn't operate in Bhutan, Kiribati, Tuvalu or Laos, and it has ceased operations in four countries (Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Papua New Guinea).
- VSA New Zealand operates in 9 program countries: all of Melanesia, as well as Timor-Leste, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga and Cambodia.
- The UK-based VSO operates in six program countries (Papua New Guinea, Nepal, Cambodia, Philippines, eSwatini and Tanzania).
- Korea's World Friends Korea operates in 14 program countries across all regions except Polynesia.
- France Voluntaires operates in six program countries (Fiji, Vanuatu, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and the Philippines).

Figure 3: Volunteering schemes: Non-IVCO schemes (e.g., country schemes, religious schemes and other schemes)

Country schemes (government or non-government led)
Religious organisation schemes
Other non-government and non-UN international schemes (e.g., Australian business volunteers)
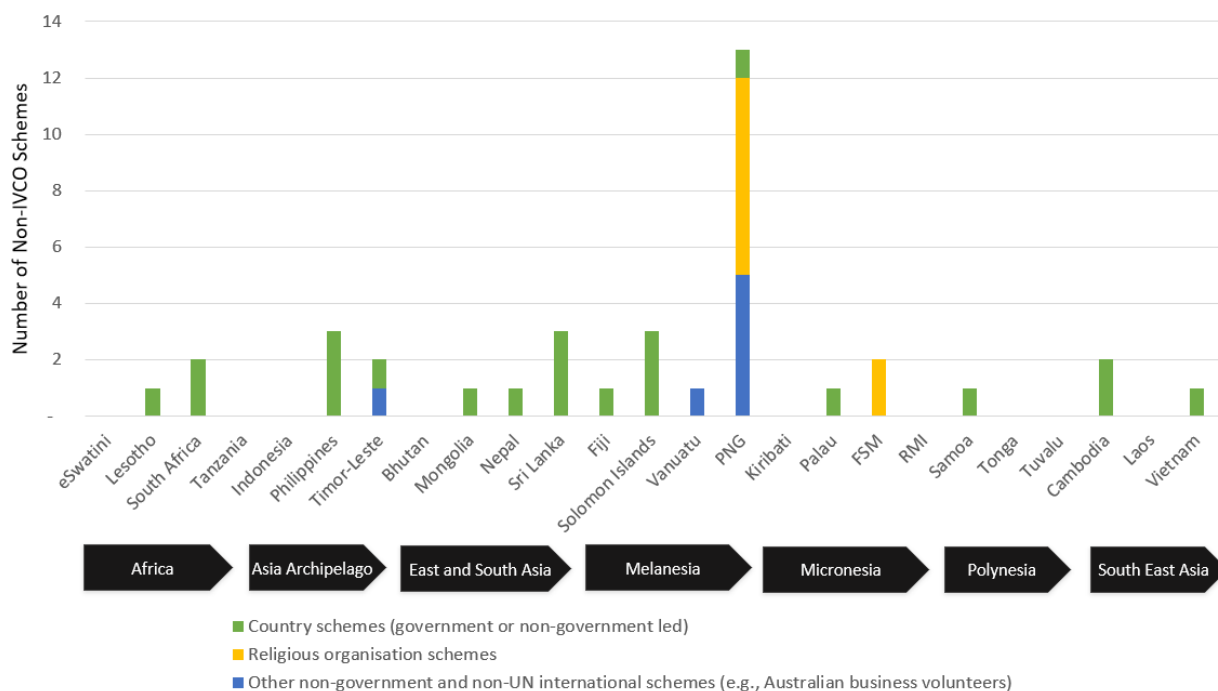
Figure 4: Volunteering schemes: IVCO schemes

UNV ■ VSO ■ US Peace Corps ■ JICA ■ VSA NZ ■ World Friends Korea ■ UNDP ■ France Volontaires
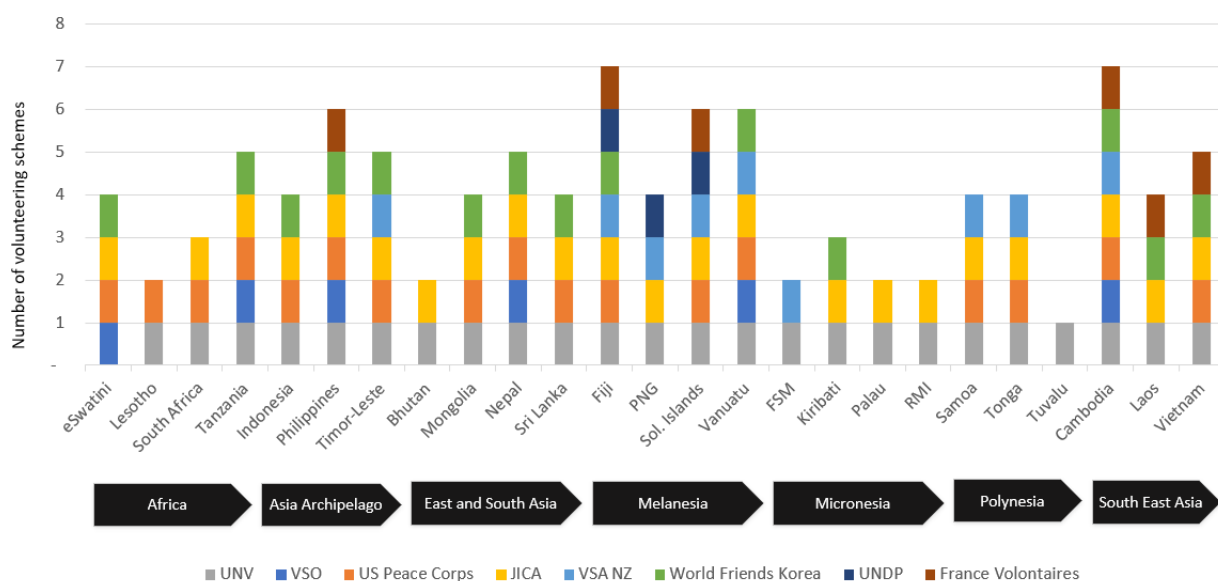
Government and peak volunteering bodies

When we examined government and peak volunteering bodies, we found: 21 national government, peak volunteering or other bodies in 12 countries, and Red Cross Societies in every country. Five bodies were found in the Philippines, 4 in Nepal, 3 in Cambodia (see Table 1 and the Excel Workbook for further details related to each country).

Country	National government, peak and other volunteering bodies (excluding Red Cross Societies)
Bhutan	**De-Suung (Guardian of Peace) Programme** - a value-based personal development program to encourage greater citizen engagement in nation-building

Kiribati	**Kiribati Family Health Association** - an NGO service provider working to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights
Fiji	**Fiji Council of Social Services** - a community-based membership organisation (around 80% volunteer-based groups) that delivers social services to rural and marginalised communities
Papua New Guinea	**The Office of the National Volunteer Service** - established through the National Volunteer Service Act, the sevice promotes, encourages and instils principles and values of volunteerism among skilled, professional Papua New Guineans
Vanuatu	**Youth Challenge Vanuatu** - a non-profit organisation run by and for ni-Vanuatu people to support local community and youth, including via volunteering
Mongolia	**Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organizations** - a non-profit NGO with the aim to cultivate the spirit of volunteerism and empower the volunteering in Mongolia
Nepal	**Volunteer Society Nepal** - seeks to address the issues of literacy, poverty and gender imbalance by partnering with institutions and organizations in Nepali communities
	Hami Nepal - operates in over eight districts in Nepal and provides aids to many others, connecting volunteers to local communities, particularly in emergency response
	Volunteer Corps Nepal - an NGO that provides emergency relief and sustainable solutions for populations affected by natural disasters, epidemics and post-conflict situations
	Volunteers Initiative Nepal - an NGO focused on community-based projects involving local and international volunteers
Sri Lanka	**National Volunteering Secretariat** - ensures national level engagement in promoting, coordinating, mobilising and establishing organised volunteering in the country
Cambodia	**Youth Volunteer Office** - mandated to promote volunteerism in Cambodia
	Cambodian Volunteers for Community Development - builds viable and sustainable communities through volunteer, education, economic empowerment and agricultural programs
	Cambodia Volunteering Network - a network of international and local volunteer service agencies and volunteer involving organisations
Vietnam	**Vietnamese Youth Unions** - makes use of youth volunteers for a wide range of projects from distributing medicines to repairing roads and houses
Philippines	**Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency** - the government agency mandated to promote and coordinate volunteer programs and services
	Philippine Coalition on Volunteerism, Inc. - advocates for better coordination in the volunteer sector and provides a resource hub where best practices among private and government groups can be shared.
	iVolunteer Philippines - provides volunteers with an easy way to find volunteering opportunities and helps organisations find volunteers that match their needs
	The Jesuit Volunteers Philippines Foundation Inc. (JVPFI) - recruits, trains and sends volunteers to serve for a year to marginalized communities and areas with the greatest need
	Angat Buhay - responds to the needs of marginalized communities by mobilising a volunteer network to implement Bayanihan programs
Timor-Leste	UNE-TL - Uniaun Escuteiro Timor Leste - Scout Timor Leste (little detail found)

Volunteering Trends

Commonalities and differences between regions, relational impact of HDI rank

There appears to be no relationship between data on volunteering trends and HDI ranking, nor region aside from the Pacific generally lacking data – a finding that is not unsurprising and is common among many data sets, such as health, when compared to other regions.

Key trends

There is little trend data, i.e. – data recording trends in who is volunteering, where volunteering is taking place and on the implementation of volunteering. Overall, we had at least one data point for volunteering trends in 15 of the 25 countries, and more than one data point in 7 of those 15 countries. See *Figure 5: Volunteering trends*.

Where we found trend data, they were not consistently reported and had varying levels of authority. For example, of the 25 countries examined, the ILO only reported data on 4 of those countries (Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, South Africa).

Otherwise, data generally came from for example (for the other three countries with >1 data point): Papua New Guinea – news articles and Papua New Guinea Job Seek; Laos – The World Giving Index 2022 and a journal article; Cambodia – ILO report on Cambodia labour force, World Giving Index and Cambodia's Voluntary National Review etc.

The data available does start to create more fulsome pictures in countries, as illustrated in the vignettes at *Figure 6: Volunteering trend vignettes*.

Figure 5: Volunteering trends

Region	Country	HDI Rank	Total Trends	Who	Where	Implementation
Africa	South Africa	109	3 **	1	1	1
	eSwatini	144	-	-	-	-
	Tanzania	160	1	1	-	-
	Lesotho	168	-	-	-	-
Asia Archipelago	Indonesia	114	3 **	1	1	-
	Philippines	116	3	1	1	1
	Timor-Leste	140	1	1	-	-
East and South Asia	Sri Lanka	73	1	1	-	-
	Mongolia	96	2 **	1	1	-
	Bhutan	127	1	1	-	-
	Nepal	143	2 **	1	-	1
Melanesia	Fiji	99	-	-	-	-
	Vanuatu	140	-	-	-	-
	Solomon Islands	155	-	-	-	-
	PNG	156	2	-	1	1
Micronesia	Palau	80	-	-	-	-
	RMI	131	1	-	1	-
	FSM	134	-	-	-	-
	Kiribati	136	2	1	1	-
Polynesia	Tonga	91	-	-	-	-
	Samoa	111	-	-	-	-
	Tuvalu	130	1	1	-	-
South East Asia	Vietnam	115	1	1	-	-
	Laos	140	2	1	1	-
	Cambodia	146	2	1	1	-
Grand Total			24	13	7	4

HDI ranking < 100		No data points
≥ 100 ≥ 129		1 data point
≥ 130 ≥ 159		2-3 data points
≥ 160		

** ILOSTAT data

Figure 6: Volunteering trend vignettes

South Africa
- 6.7% of people volunteer (ILOSTAT)
- Volunteering numbers are increasing in most provinces

The Philippines
- A National Community Driven Development Project has mobilized around 1.89m volunteers
- Volunteering occurs in priority provinces and cities

Mongolia
- 4.5% of people volunteer (ILOSTAT)
- 2020 saw a 30% decline in volunteer participation programs organised by the Network of Mongolian Volunteers

Nepal
- 1.8% of people volunteer (ILOSTAT)
- Case studies suggest federalism offers space for local government to strengthen volunteering from embedded Guthi and Barghar practices

Papua New Guinea
- Since 1990, the National Volunteer Service has recruited, trained and placed 500 volunteers in key service areas (e.g., yam planting and organising the South Pacific Games)

Laos
- Youth make up >1/2 of the Laos population and the majority of volunteers
- Village health volunteers play an important role in providing health services

Cambodia
- 24% donate money, 23% help strangers, 10% volunteer time (World Giving Index)
- Lawyers and doctors are increasingly volunteering services to disadvantaged people

Indonesia
- 14.4% volunteer (ILOSTAT), however a 2018 poll found 53% volunteered time in the last month
- Community assistance has its own nomenclature – gotong royong (mutual assistance)

Sri Lanka
- 8.6m or 40% volunteer at least once a year
- 4.7% of people participate in unpaid volunteer, trainee and other unpaid work and more are women

Summary of interview findings

While the data and reporting from outreach and interviews did not necessarily assist in addressing the objectives of this review, they did inform macro insights, introductions to volunteering researchers, and influential volunteering organisations and people. Many stakeholders noted that they encounter:

- major gaps with available data in Pacific countries
- limited capacity in the global south for in-country volunteering data collection
- minimal data sharing between agencies
- inconsistent definitions and understanding of volunteering
- government reluctance and lack of interest in measuring volunteering
- incomparable data between initiatives and countries
- difficulties in sourcing data unless one commissions specific efforts to do so.

However, forward looking insights include Voluntary National Reviews should have an increasing focus on volunteering in the future, and the new State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR) may explore volunteering measurement, data collection, how to measure the economic value of volunteering, the impact on the individual, and the public good.