CICA

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER YEAR 2026

Review of Best Practices in Volunteerism in CICA Member States

2026

The e-book was published in July 2026

Disclaimer

The country chapters contained in this publication are based on materials provided by the respective Member States, publicly available sources, and relevant national reports prepared within the framework of cooperation with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV). While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy, relevance and reliability of the information contained in this publication, the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) assumes no responsibility for its content, use or interpretation. The content is provided for informational purposes only and should not be considered exhaustive, definitive, or authoritative. This publication may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes, provided that appropriate acknowledgement is given to the CICA as the source.

Acknowledgments

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan; Youth Affairs Department, Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Azerbaijan; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of India; Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of the Republic of India; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China; All-China Youth Federation; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Ministry of Culture, Information, and Youth Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic; Multilateral and Development Cooperation Division, Asian and Pacific Cooperation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; Royal Thai Embassy in Astana; Volunteer Promotion and Network Coordination Group, Office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion of Thailand; Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye in Astana, Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Türkiye; Youth Affairs Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Volunteer Advisory Services Section, United Nations Volunteers; Centre for Studies of Civil Society and the Nonprofit Sector, National Research University Higher School of Economics.

Email: s-cica@s-cica.org

Phone: +7 7172 576510

Address: Bld 3/1, E669 Str, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan

Web: s-cica.org

Copyright © Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, CICA Secretariat. Permission is required to reproduce any part of this publication.

FOREWORD

Volunteerism has always reflected the finest human qualities — solidarity, mutual assistance, civic responsibility and, above all, selfless commitment to serving society. In today's world, volunteerism has acquired particular significance as an important tool for strengthening social resilience, developing human capital, and promoting a culture of trust and mutual understanding among peoples and nations.

This e-publication, prepared under the auspices of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), showcases the best practices of its Member States in the field of volunteerism. It reflects the diversity of national experiences, innovative initiatives, and community-driven approaches undertaken across the region. It clearly demonstrates that, despite differences in cultures, languages, and traditions, the nations of the region are united by a common aspiration to strengthen mutual understanding, social responsibility and sustainable development through volunteerism.

Within CICA, promoting volunteerism and strengthening cooperation in this area have received increasing attention in recent years. Recognizing the transformative power of volunteerism, particularly among young people, as a driver of social cohesion, resilience and sustainable development, the CICA Ministerial Council adopted the Statement on Promoting Volunteerism for Sustainable Development in 2023. Building on this momentum, volunteerism was subsequently included in the CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures, reflecting its growing recognition as an important instrument of confidence building and civic engagement. The Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders initiative, implemented under the auspices of the CICA Youth Council through two successful gatherings in Astana in 2024 and Baku in 2025, has further advanced this agenda by fostering dialogue, the exchange of experience and cooperation among young volunteers across the region.

This publication comes at a particularly significant time, as the international community commemorates the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development 2026, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly at the initiative of the Republic of Kazakhstan and co-sponsored by 54 Member States, including CICA Member States — Iraq, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Thailand, Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan. This important achievement reflects the growing international recognition of volunteerism as a powerful force for sustainable development, social cohesion, human solidarity and community resilience.

I would like to thank all the CICA Member States, partner organizations and contributors who shared their valuable experiences and best practices for this publication. Special thanks go to the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) for their cooperation and continued partnership in advancing volunteerism in the CICA region.

I am confident that this Review will contribute to a broader exchange of experience, the development of partnerships and the promotion of new joint initiatives in the field of volunteerism, with a view to empowering people — especially youth — and strengthening trust, dialogue, and cooperation across the CICA region

Ambassador Kairat Sarybay
Secretary General
Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA)

PREFACE

Across Asia, a quiet force is taking shape.

In communities preserving tradition while adapting to change, people are stepping forward to support one another. They care, organize, and act — making a difference. Yet much of their contribution remains under-documented and under-recognized.

Review of Best Volunteerism Practices in CICA Member States brings these efforts into focus. It highlights practical examples — from social inclusion to disaster response — showing how volunteerism strengthens communities. In doing so, it helps close an important evidence gap.

Published during the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development 2026, this publication is a milestone and a call to action: to recognize, measure, and invest in volunteerism across the region.

Because lasting change begins when people choose to act, connect, and care—one community at a time.

Toily Kurbanov
Executive Coordinator
United Nations Volunteers (UNV)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 6
CICA and Volunteerism 7
- Azerbaijan 9
- Bahrain 23
- Bangladesh 25
- Cambodia 32
- China 36
- Egypt 47
- India 55
- Israel 63
- Kazakhstan 65
- Kyrgyzstan 72
- Mongolia 79
- Pakistan 83
- Russia 85
- Thailand 91
- Türkiye 102
- United Arab Emirates 112
- Uzbekistan 115

References 127
Abbreviations and acronyms 128

INTRODUCTION

Volunteerism is a universal expression of solidarity, civic engagement and mutual support. Across different societies and cultures, volunteers contribute to addressing social, humanitarian, environmental and community challenges, while strengthening social cohesion and promoting inclusive development. In the CICA region, volunteerism reflects a wide range of traditions, experiences and approaches. At the same time, it demonstrates common values of cooperation, collective responsibility and service to society. Through the efforts of volunteers, communities are able to respond more effectively to emerging needs, provide support to people in vulnerable situations and contribute to sustainable development. Volunteerism in CICA region thus embodies the spirit of shared humanity.

Recognizing the growing importance of volunteerism, CICA Member States have increasingly highlighted their contribution to sustainable development and people-to-people cooperation. On 21 September 2023, the CICA Ministerial Council adopted the Statement on Promoting Volunteerism for Sustainable Development, encouraging Member States to integrate volunteerism for sustainable development into the CICA agenda and to share information on their policies, strategies, research and best practices with the CICA Secretariat. In March 2024, the Senior Officials Committee agreed on a mechanism for the publication of national documents on volunteerism on the CICA website, thereby establishing a practical framework for the growing significance of this area of cooperation.

Subsequently volunteerism was incorporated into the updated CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures by the Ministerial Council in December 2024.

Against this background, the Republic of Kazakhstan, with the support of the CICA Secretariat and in cooperation with UN Volunteers, initiated the preparation of the present electronic publication, Review of Best Practices in Volunteerism in CICA Member States.

The publication has been prepared in the context of the United Nations International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development 2026 and aims to highlight diverse volunteerism experiences across the CICA region.

The Review serves as a platform for sharing information on volunteerism policies, institutions, programmes and initiatives implemented by CICA Member States. It seeks to facilitate knowledge exchange, promote mutual learning and encourage further cooperation among Member States.

This Review represents an initial effort to compile and present volunteerism practices across the region. It is intended to serve as a practical reference resource for Member States, volunteers, researchers and interested stakeholders, while providing a foundation for future exchanges, updates and cooperation in the field of volunteerism.

As the publication is intended to serve as a living electronic resource, Member States will have the opportunity to continue enriching it by sharing further experiences, best practices, and new initiatives in the field of volunteerism

CICA AND VOLUNTEERISM

Brief Introduction of CICA: History, Goals and Objective of CICA

In a world of deeply interconnected global challenges, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) serves as a vital platform for a unified regional response. Covering 90% of Asia's territory and half the world's population, CICA advances peace, security, and stability through sustained cooperation. By operating on consensus, the organization ensures every Member State has an equal voice, providing a trusted space to find common ground on regional security.

The initiative for a new Asian dialogue platform was first introduced at the 47th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1992 by First President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. Over the past three decades, CICA has steadily expanded its scope of activities, reaching its important milestone at the Sixth CICA Summit in Astana, on 12-13 October 2022, where Member States launched a comprehensive transformation of CICA into a full-fledged intergovernmental organization.

The 20th Anniversary of the CICA Secretariat was commemorated on 17 June 2026.

Beyond its dialogue-based origins, CICA places strong emphasis on practical cooperation. It aims to translate shared goals into tangible, collaborative actions across the continent.

Central to this approach is the Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), an evolving framework that turns political commitments into concrete steps in five areas:

- Military-Political Dimension
- New Challenges and Threats Dimension
- Economic Dimension
- Environmental Dimension
- Human Dimension

Through these measures, Member States cooperate step by step in specific fields, gradually turning dialogue into trust and trust into deeper regional cooperation.

CBMs in the Human Dimension, Youth and Volunteerism

CICA's experience proves that confidence building extends beyond traditional military concerns. Stability begins with political and economic cooperation, yet enduring peace grows from resilient human connections. This approach mirrors a vital shift in global diplomacy: moving past a strict focus on state security to prioritize human well-being, human development, and collective resilience. The CICA Human Dimension provides a framework for this endeavor, spanning a wide spectrum of issues from human rights to education and cultural development. To bridge high-level diplomacy and local communities, CICA facilitates direct interaction in science, education, sports and civil society. Through tangible initiatives like youth engagement and intercultural dialogue, the organization turns these commitments into concrete benefits for people across the region.

March 2014 – The CICA Youth Council established by the decision of the Senior Officials Committee.

Youth empowerment stands as a vital pillar of this framework. CICA actively drives youth inclusion through the CICA Youth Council established to empower young leaders from Member States to share perspectives, launch joint initiatives, and directly shape the region's sustainable development.

This commitment finds its most dynamic expression in volunteerism - a practical bridge between shared values and grassroots action. The spirit of community service and collective responsibility runs deep in Asia's cultural traditions. By encouraging young people to move beyond discussion and engage in direct community service, volunteerism transforms the CICA Youth Council's initiatives into a powerful engine for confidence-building, social cohesion, and sustainable development.

The integration of volunteerism into CICA's practical activities has seen substantial progress over the past few years:

October 2022 – The Sixth CICA Summit underscored the importance of utilizing the CICA platform to advance this objective.

September 2023 – The CICA Ministerial Council adopted a Statement on Promoting Volunteerism for Sustainable Development.

October 2024 – Kazakhstan hosted the First Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders.

December 2024 – Senior Officials Committee recommended and Ministerial Council approved integrating volunteerism into the CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures.

November 2025 – The Azerbaijani Chairmanship continued these efforts in by organizing the Second Rally of Volunteers, which further strengthened youth networks and deepened professional ties across the region.

By drawing on its strategic partnership with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and aligning with the UN International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development in 2026, CICA demonstrates how regional efforts to empower youth and foster solidarity contribute to global goals. This participation marks a vital step in bringing CICA's vision of practical cooperation to the broader international community.

The Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) continues to promote cooperation among its Member States by advancing volunteerism as an important tool for confidence building, youth engagement, and sustainable development.

Today, volunteerism as integrated in the CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) reaches a new height through an e-publication in July 2026: “Review of Best Practices in Volunteerism in CICA Member States”, an initiative undertaken by the Republic of Kazakhstan with the support of the CICA Secretariat.

AZERBAIJAN

Republic of Azerbaijan
Population: 10.4 million No. of Volunteers: 40,463
Capital City: Baku

Human Development Index	0.789 (high)
World Giving Index	30, including 63% of adults helped a stranger, 16% donated money and 9% volunteered
Law on Volunteerism	Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Voluntary Activities", 2009
Lead Non-Profit Organization	Union of Volunteer Organizations of Azerbaijan

Address by Mr. Farid Gayibov, Minister of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Esteemed members of the CICA community, it is a great honour to address the readers of this publication issued with the support of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), an organization that plays an important role in promoting dialogue, mutual trust, and sustainable peace across our region. By the Presidential Order of H.E. President Ilham Aliyev, 2020 was declared the "Year of Volunteers," reflecting the government's recognition of the importance of volunteer engagement and the vital role of young people in public life. Today, these values continue to shape modern societies, where volunteerism serves as an important driver of active citizenship, social responsibility, and solidarity. In Azerbaijan, volunteering has become an integral component of youth policy, contributing both to the personal development of young people and to the sustainable progress of society. Azerbaijan is an active organizer of numerous international events, exhibitions, youth forums, and sports events. None of these events would be possible without the dedication and support of volunteers. Every year, Azerbaijan takes pride in hosting one of the world's premier sporting events — the Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix. The event is supported by a large and highly organized volunteer movement of Baku City Circuit, which has become one of the country's most prominent volunteer platforms. Moreover, many organizations across Azerbaijan have established their own volunteer initiatives, making volunteer activities an essential and dynamic part of institutional work. Groups such as ASAN Volunteers, Regional Development Public Union volunteers, "Bir" Student Volunteers, and numerous other volunteer

movements operate actively within state bodies and civil society, demonstrating the broad engagement and commitment to volunteerism. Azerbaijan stands as a society where traditions of tolerance and intercultural dialogue are actively cultivated. Youth and sport, together with volunteerism, represent powerful instruments for strengthening social cohesion and mutual understanding. Through education, cultural exchange, sporting initiatives and community engagement, young people become ambassadors of cooperation, trust and peace. Sport transcends borders and languages, bringing people together and reinforcing confidence among societies. The Republic of Azerbaijan attaches special importance to youth empowerment, sports development, and volunteer engagement as strategic priorities of national policy. Significant investments in youth education, leadership programs, international exchanges, and major sporting events reflect our strong belief in this direction. We firmly believe that an active, responsible, and socially engaged young generation is the foundation of a peaceful and prosperous future. Within Azerbaijan's chairmanship of CICA for 2024–2026, cooperation in the fields of youth, sport and volunteerism provides a valuable platform for enhancing people-to-people contacts and deepening mutual understanding among Member States. Volunteer initiatives and youth cooperation, including the work of the CICA Youth Council, demonstrate how young people contribute to addressing contemporary challenges through innovation, civic engagement and dialogue, serving as an important confidence-building force across the region. Volunteerism is open to people of all ages and backgrounds. It is not merely formal participation, but a reflection of genuine commitment, responsibility and service to society. We hope that through volunteerism our young people will further contribute to increasing the welfare of our nations, first and foremost by developing the skills, values and experience that form strong human capital. By supporting volunteer initiatives, we invest in human capital, strengthen social solidarity and contribute to building a sustainable future based on trust, cooperation and shared values. I would like to express my appreciation to the CICA Secretariat and all contributors to this review. I am confident that the ideas and experiences shared here will further inspire cooperation and strengthen interaction among our nations.

Legal Basis

National law on the regulation of volunteering is the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Voluntary Activities", dated June 9, 2009. The Law defines the legal basis of volunteering, regulating relations arising from unpaid and socially beneficial activities carried out by both individuals and legal entities. It establishes the legal status of volunteers and organizers of volunteer activity, outlines their rights and obligations. It also clearly reflects the main directions of volunteering.

In addition, the following legal and normative acts do not regulate volunteering as a separate policy area, but a number of their specific goals and objectives are and were related to the promotion of volunteer activities.

— Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Non-Governmental Organizations (Public Unions and Funds)”, date of adoption June 13, 2000. The Law provides the legal frameworks for the establishment and governance of public unions to enable involvement of social groups, including youth in civic and volunteer activities. In accordance with this Law, NGOs function as legal entities to carry out the institutional organization and implementation of volunteer activities and thereby support volunteer participation in civil society.

— Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Public Participation", date of adoption November 22, 2013. The Law implies the engagement of citizens and civil society institutions in the process of preparation and implementation of state policy in various areas of state and public life, as well as in decision-making processes at both national and local levels through forms determined by this Law, including consultations between state bodies and society with due consideration of public opinion. According to Article 4 of the Law, one of the main principles of public participation is voluntariness, which implies the free involvement of citizens, in the process of development and implementation of public policy on a volunteer basis.

— Strategy for the Development of Azerbaijani Youth for 2015-2025, date of adoption January 26, 2015. The document reflects key aspects related to volunteerism promoting the active involvement of young people in public and civic life. The Strategy encourages youth participation in social initiatives, public activities, international exchange and volunteer services, as well as cooperation with state bodies and civil society institutions. Through these priorities, the document supports the development of volunteering as an important tool for youth engagement, skills development and social responsibility.

— "Youth of Azerbaijan" State programs. In the three State programs "Youth of Azerbaijan", approved by Orders of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and implemented during the years 2005-2009, 2011-2015 and 2017-2021 established goals aimed at stimulating volunteer activities among young people. These goals included the development and promotion of volunteering, as well as active participation in international youth programs of this area.

Incentive Initiatives for Volunteers

Incentive mechanisms for volunteers in Azerbaijan include initiatives carried out by both the state and NGOs, which increase visibility, recognition and institutional support for volunteer activities. The promotion of volunteering in Azerbaijan is supported by comprehensive state-led incentive mechanisms, which are clearly reflected in presidential initiatives and national-level practices.

One of the most significant initiatives in this regard was the Order of the President Ilham Aliyev declaring 2020 as the "Year of Volunteers" in Azerbaijan. This decision raised volunteering

to the level of a state priority and emphasized its role in strengthening social solidarity, civic responsibility and cooperation between citizens and state institutions. The Order clearly highlighted the importance of organizing Volunteer Week, thereby ensuring public recognition of volunteer contributions at the national level.

Furthermore, President Ilham Aliyev's call at the Republican Conference dedicated to the Azerbaijani Youth Day in 2019, to create favorable conditions for youth participation in volunteer activities emphasized the importance of expanding volunteer programs in state institutions and involving young people in practical activities within state bodies. This call acted as an incentive measure and demonstrated a high level of political support for youth volunteering.

The publication of books and informational materials dedicated to the volunteer movement serves as an educational incentive. Such publications contribute significantly to raising awareness among young people and youth organizations about volunteering, supporting the effective organization of volunteer initiatives and promoting knowledge about best practices in volunteering. In this context, in 2013, the Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Azerbaijan published a handbook entitled "Voluntary Volunteering", which provides practical information on the philosophy, forms and key directions of volunteer activities.

Overall, these initiatives such as presidential orders, various public awareness campaigns, recognition of volunteering and direct calls for institutional participation constitute a system of incentive mechanisms that actively promote volunteering in Azerbaijan and ensure its sustainable development within the framework of state policy.

National Volunteer Organizations, Associations, Networks and Databases related to Volunteerism

Union of Volunteer Organizations of Azerbaijan, a Public Union with date of establishment August 20, 2020 is a coordinating center for numerous volunteer groups and organizations, established to develop volunteerism and promote social responsibility, working with state bodies to organize large-scale forums, solidarity events and local initiatives, fostering a strong youth-led movement for community service and international cooperation. Main activities of the organization: institutionalization of volunteer activities and coordination of activities of volunteer organizations, promotion of volunteering nationwide and creation of broader opportunities for volunteer activities, expansion of international cooperation in the field of volunteerism, provision of organizational, legal, advisory, informational and other forms of support to volunteer organizations, representation and advocacy of the interests of volunteer organizations. Currently, within the institutional framework of the Union, more than 10 thousand volunteers are actively engaged in volunteer activities across the country through its member organizations. Since the establishment of the Union, the total number of individuals who have participated in volunteer activities within this framework has exceeded

250 thousand. Union of Volunteer Organizations of Azerbaijan is an umbrella structure bringing together 34 lead volunteer organizations:

– “ASAN Volunteers” Organization – a large volunteer network that provides services and support to citizens at ASAN Service Centers and within state projects.

– "Regional Development" Public Union (RIIB) – volunteers of RIIB are engaged in projects aimed at supporting regional development initiatives and community-based activities.

– “One Volunteer” Public Union – a program aimed at promoting volunteerism in higher and secondary educational institutions and supporting the development of students.

– “Agricultural Development Volunteers” Public Union – a volunteer program engaged in promoting innovation and sustainable development in the agricultural sector.

– Baku City Circuit Volunteers – an organization that provides volunteer support in the organization of Formula 1 and other international competitions.

– “DOST Volunteer” Program – operates with the aim of increasing social welfare, supporting vulnerable groups, and preparing young people for the labor market.

– “Migration Volunteer" Public Union – supports the activities of the State Migration Service and increases young people’s knowledge and experience in the field of migration.

– “Customs Volunteer” Squad – a program that supports the activities of the State Customs Committee and enables young people to gain practical knowledge in the customs field.

– “Young Volunteers” Public Union – a volunteer movement that ensures the effective organization of young people’s leisure time, their personal development, and participation in state projects.

– “Azerbaijan Diaspora Volunteers” Public Union – operates with the aim of strengthening relations with Azerbaijani communities living abroad.

– “Transport Volunteers” Program – a volunteer movement that supports awareness-raising activities and social projects in the transport sector.

– “Baku State University Volunteers” Group, a volunteer movement that ensures students’ active participation in the public life of the university and implements social and cultural projects.

– “Event Volunteer Service” – a platform that provides volunteer support in organizing events, projects and develops young people’s event management skills.

– “Tourism Volunteers” Public Union – a volunteer network established to support tourism development, promote the country’s cultural heritage, and assist tourists.

– Eco-Volunteers Group – a volunteer movement operating in the field of environmental protection and environmental awareness.

– “Diplomacy Volunteers” Group – a volunteer program that enhances the practical knowledge and skills of young people studying foreign policy–related fields.

– “Reform Volunteers” Public Union – operates with the aim of promoting state reforms and increasing public participation.

– “SME Volunteers” Program – a program

that supports the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and involves young people in entrepreneurship.

– "Justice Volunteers" Public Union – a public association that ensures young people's active participation in legal awareness activities and social projects.

– "Media Volunteers" Program – a program that supports media development and enables young people to gain practical experience in journalism and communication.

– "Food Safety Volunteers" Initiative Group – volunteers who support the relevant agency in food safety and awareness-raising activities.

– "Be a Volunteer" Program (Religious Institutions) – operates in the field of religious awareness and the promotion of multicultural values.

– "Innovation Volunteers" Public Union – a volunteer organization aimed at increasing young people's knowledge and skills in innovation, startups, and digital development.

– "SOCAR Volunteers" Group – a volunteer program that ensures young people's participation in the energy sector and social projects.

– "Sports Volunteers and Fans" Public Union – a public association that actively participates in local and international sports events with the aim of increasing mass participation in sports and forming volunteer and fan culture.

– "QORU" Youth Initiative Group Volunteers (a youth initiative established under the Department of the "Icherisheher" State Historical and Architectural Reserve) - a volunteer group operating in protected areas with the aim of preserving and promoting historical and architectural heritage.

– "Culture Volunteers" Public Union – volunteers engaged in organizing cultural events and promoting national cultural heritage.

– "My Family" Volunteers – a volunteer group that participates in projects aimed at preserving family values and providing social support.

– "Themis Volunteers" Organization Public Union – a volunteer organization that contributes to youth development and legal awareness in the judicial and legal field.

– "Return Volunteers" Program – a volunteer program established to support the restoration of post-conflict recovery areas and the resettlement and reconstruction efforts.

– "Emergency Situations Volunteers" Program – a program that ensures young people's participation in emergency preparedness and awareness activities.

– Volunteers of the State Examination Center – volunteers who participate in the organization of examination processes and awareness-raising activities.

– Volunteers of the Azerbaijan Trade Unions Confederation (AHIK) – volunteers of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Azerbaijan, a volunteer network established to protect the

socio-economic rights of young people and to enhance their knowledge and skills.

– Baku Zoological Park volunteer program – a program works to welcome, guide and inform foreign and local visitors of the Baku Zoological Park educating the public on proper behavior and animal care within the zoo.

The volunteer program of the Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Azerbaijan aims to enhance the active role of young people in public and cultural life, to strengthen their organizational and communication and other practical skills and develop social responsibility. The program also helps to expand international experience and create opportunities for youth international cooperation. Within the volunteer program young people are involved in local and international events organized by the Ministry - forums, conferences, sports competitions throughout the year.

National Tradition and Culture of Volunteering

In the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on declaring 2020 the "Year of Volunteers" and in the remarks delivered at the Solidarity Forum of Azerbaijani Volunteers, the President has emphasized that the Azerbaijani people have preserved traditions of kindness, selflessness and voluntary, gratuitous assistance for centuries, which are deeply rooted in the cultural heritage of the nation and are clearly reflected in the active participation of young people in volunteer activities. These statements clearly show that volunteering in Azerbaijan is based on national and spiritual values, as well as has deep cultural and historical roots. The traditions of mutual assistance, unity, solidarity and charity are an integral part of the national values of the Azerbaijani people and the social foundation of volunteering.

Speaking about the historical background of volunteer and charitable societies in Azerbaijan, it should be noted that in the 17th–18th centuries, volunteerism began to take on an informal character, taking on a social-moral rather than institutional form. Enlightenment intellectuals engaged voluntarily in promoting public education and fostering national consciousness. The emergence of the press, the formation of community-based enlightenment societies and other initiatives marked the beginnings of shaping volunteerism into a broader social movement. These traditions later evolved into organized forms of volunteerism during the late 19th and early 20th centuries through the activities of enlightenment movements, charitable societies and intellectual figures.

One of the earliest volunteer based organizations was the Baku Muslim Charitable Society, founded in 1905, which focused on supporting poor families, providing assistance to students and promoting education through volunteer donations and civic engagement. Another prominent organization, the "Nijat" Enlightenment Society, was established in 1906 in Baku. Its activities aimed at advancing public education, supporting cultural development and raising national consciousness, operating primarily through the volunteer participation of intellectuals, educators and youth. Similarly, the

"Saadat" (Səadət) Society, founded in 1906 in Ganja, played an important role in promoting education, literacy and social welfare. Its members carried out their activities on a voluntary basis, contributing to the enlightenment of society and the empowerment of youth.

These organizations marked the transition from traditional communal assistance to institutionalized volunteer activity, representing the first modern phase of volunteerism in Azerbaijan. Their work laid the foundation for the development of contemporary civil society and organized volunteer movements in the country. Volunteering has become both a continuation of the system of values that has developed over the centuries and an integral element of modern social development.

Today the preservation and advancement of these values through volunteering have become an important focus of both state and public institutions, with particular emphasis on fostering a strong volunteer culture among young people. The evolution of volunteerism from informal practices to organized societies has laid the groundwork for contemporary youth involvement. Today, youth NGOs play a vital role in reflecting these national traditions, cultivating volunteer culture among young people, and advancing the volunteer movement as a structured and sustainable civil initiative. Youth NGOs play a significant role in reflecting these national traditions by establishing a volunteer culture among young people and transforming the volunteer movement into a sustainable civil movement. Through volunteer participation, organizations promote patriotism, social unity, inclusiveness and respect for national values. As a result of these, volunteering in the Republic of Azerbaijan, especially in the student and youth sector, has undergone a gradual and structured institutionalization process over the past decade.

Volunteering in the 21st century is widely recognized as a legitimate form of participation in society. Nowadays, the volunteer movement is particularly important for the social development of society. Participation in volunteer work contributes to self-improvement of the individual, expands its horizons and helps to receive the necessary experience in communication and management. Volunteering creates favorable conditions for the social and economic development of the country and helps to solve the challenges that society faces. Globally, it is estimated that around one billion volunteers freely give their time to make a difference on the issues that affect them and their communities, often in the most difficult of circumstances. Azerbaijan is one of the countries that actively encourages support for volunteering. The number of volunteers in the country continues to grow rapidly.

National Volunteer Activities and Conferences

Volunteering activities in Azerbaijan are carried out in a systematic, well-structured and effective manner, supported by clear institutional frameworks, coordinated mechanisms and targeted programs implemented by both state and civil society organizations. The most important events are listed below:

— The 2nd Sustainable Development Forum of Volunteer Organizations, February 2, 2026, on the occasion of Azerbaijani Youth Day. The forum brought together government officials, leaders of volunteer organizations that are members of the Union of Volunteer Organizations of Azerbaijan and approximately 500 volunteers. The main goal of the forum was to discuss ways to increase the activities of member volunteer organizations, strengthen cooperation among them, ensure their sustainable development, as well as promote experience sharing and the implementation of joint projects.

— "Azerbaijan Volunteer Week" is a nationwide event. Since 2019, "Azerbaijan Volunteer Week" has been held annually on December 5 on the International Volunteer Day. It has become a traditional event that provides a platform for volunteer organizations to present their activities, facilitates experience sharing, networking and cooperation among volunteer organizations, while raising public awareness of the role of volunteerism in social development. During the week, various social projects, educational events and mass volunteer activities were carried out in multiple cities and districts, involving more than 20,000 Azerbaijani volunteers.

Other key volunteer nationwide activities represented by:

— "Green ASAN" program for Ecological awareness, Healthy lifestyle, Environmental protection and Promotion of recycling. Based on these goals, over 400 projects were implemented during the event, integrating ecology with various fields. To foster a green mindset in society, environmental education events, seminars, exhibitions, tree planting and cleanup campaigns, bike rides, yoga classes and other sporting activities were held.

— "ASAN Academy", an educational initiative designed for students and young professionals, delivered by professional experts to enhance knowledge and competencies across various fields. During the project participants are provided with specialized programs taught by experts in such areas as human resources and project management, public relations and marketing, data analytics, international relations and diplomacy, law and innovation. This project, which has been implemented 7 times, has received over 6 500 applications and 330 individuals have participated as participants.

— "Volunteers Congresses", one of the key institutional events organized by the "ASAN Volunteers" Youth Organization Public Union. Since 2023, four Congresses of the "ASAN Volunteers" Public Union have been held. These congresses serve as important platforms to review achievements, discuss strategic priorities and plan future activities of volunteers, highlighting the volunteers' role in supporting ASAN services and national initiatives in Azerbaijan.

— "VetForFuture" vocational education volunteering program, aimed at supporting vocational school students, was implemented through structured volunteer engagement by "Bir Könüllü" ("One Volunteer") Students' Cooperation in partnership with UNDP Azerbaijan. Within this framework, volunteers contributed to awareness-raising events, peer support, skills development initiatives and the promotion of vocational education as a

sustainable and competitive career path. This experience represents best practices in linking volunteerism with employment, skills development and inclusive education.

— "Azerbaijan 2030" National Student Hackathon, organized in cooperation with UN Azerbaijan and with the participation of the "Bir Könüllü" initiative, was aligned with national development priorities. Within the framework of the hackathon, volunteers supported organizational, coordination and facilitation processes, contributing to youth-led innovation, problem-solving, and engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals and national strategic frameworks. This initiative demonstrates the role of volunteerism in supporting youth innovation and fostering policy-oriented dialogue.

The First Nationwide Forum of Themis Volunteers is one of the notable events of 2025 year brought together volunteers from across the country, providing a platform to summarize achievements and define priorities for the future. It also served as an occasion to recognize and award volunteers distinguished by their effective engagement. In addition, panel discussions on "Development Opportunities for Young Lawyers in State Institutions" and "Internship Opportunities for Young Lawyers in the Private Sector" fostered open dialogue on career prospects and professional development pathways.

— "DIVAN" National Court Simulation is another key initiative implemented in 2025 was organized with the support of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and in partnership with the Supreme Court, the Judicial-Legal Council and the Bar Association. The project's distinctive value lies in its practical orientation: participants did not merely study judicial processes at a theoretical level but engaged with them through realistic scenarios and simulated court environments.

International Volunteer Engagement Chronicle

One of the first international volunteer initiative of Azerbaijan was a two-year project launched in 1998 through the cooperation of the United Nations Volunteers, UN Development Program and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Within the framework of this project 200 selected young people contributed to the implementation of more than 30 small-scale projects. This initiative became the first international project to engage youth in mass volunteer activities and gave a strong impetus to the further development of the volunteer movement in Azerbaijan. The projects focused on serving children, the elderly, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, as well as addressing ecological and environmental issues. Subsequently, on May 22, 2017, a Letter of Intent was signed between the United Nations Volunteers, the United Nations Development Program and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Azerbaijan to strengthen and institutionalize cooperation in the field of volunteerism.

— Eurovision Song Contest. An active strengthening of the volunteer movement in Azerbaijan was facilitated by the Eurovision song contest held in Baku in 2012. More than 1.000

volunteers were involved in the event. The volunteers were an integral part of the Eurovision Song Contest supporting various operational areas, including guest assistance, logistics, accreditation, media coordination and venue management and contributing significantly to the successful organization of the event.

— First European Games “Baku-2015”. In 2015, Azerbaijan hosted the first European Games “Baku-2015”, where a total 5,612 out of 17,859 student-volunteers from universities and colleges of Azerbaijan were involved in the opening and closing ceremonies and 12,247 of them took part as operative volunteers in other activities of the international event. It is noteworthy that 18 people with disabilities participated in the Games as volunteers, reflecting the inclusive nature of the program. Volunteers, announced as "Flame Keepers" by the Baku 2015 European Games Operations Committee, played a key role in the success of the event, providing support with logistics, ceremonies, and athlete services, as well as showcasing Azerbaijan's hospitality and infrastructure.

— “Formula 1” European and Azerbaijan Grand Prix. More than 3,500 student volunteers representing 42 higher education institutions and 28 colleges of Azerbaijan were involved in “Formula 1” European Grand Prix held in Baku, in 2016. Since 2017, 1,500 volunteers have engaged annually in the “Formula 1” Azerbaijan Grand Prix (formerly European Grand Prix) to date. Each year, the Baku City Circuit Operations Company launches a volunteer registration process for the “Formula 1” Azerbaijan Grand Prix, through which 1,500 volunteers are selected for the event’s organization and operations. Volunteer Academy (BCC Academy), established by the Baku City Circuit Operations Company, plays an important role in the personal and professional development of volunteers. The Academy was established to support volunteer preparation for “Formula 1”.

— IV Islamic Solidarity Games "Baku-2017”.

In 2017, Baku hosted another prestigious international event, the IV Islamic Solidarity Games "Baku-2017" with the active involvement of volunteers. In total, 12,500 candidates applied to participate as volunteers for the Games, 8,000 of them were selected and actively involved in various areas of service. During the closing ceremony of “Baku 2017”, a video demonstrated on stadium screens showcased the enormous contribution of volunteers to the overall success of the Games.

— 29th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. For organizational activities of the COP29 Conference 3,000 volunteers were engaged, including both Azerbaijani and international participants. Based on the results of the training phase, a total of 3,000 volunteers were selected across 17 departments of the COP29 Azerbaijan Operating Company.

— 3rd Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Games. 3,000 volunteers were engaged in the III CIS Games, one of the largest sport events of 2025 hosted by Azerbaijan. The Games took take place in 7 cities of Azerbaijan – Ganja, Gabala, Goygol, Mingachevir, Khankendi, Yevlakh and Shaki at 12 venues and included competitions in 23 sports. The largest number of volunteers, 1,250, were involved in Ganja city and in other cities and regions, 600 in Gabala, 350 in Sheki, 255 in Mingachevir, 190 in Yevlakh, 185 in Khankendi, and 175 in Goygol.

Mechanisms for Assessing the Social and Economic Impact of Volunteer Work

The assessment of the social and economic impact of volunteering is still at a developing stage in Azerbaijan. Although volunteering activities can be measured with a wide range of quantitative and qualitative indicators, there are currently no standardized, systematic or formally institutionalized mechanisms to comprehensively measure their actual impact. Volunteering is widely integrated into state structures and various spheres of public life with its socio-economic impact contributing significantly to the country's development. Currently, as mentioned in previous paragraphs volunteering activities are carried out in 32 state institutions in Azerbaijan and this number is planned to increase to 36 in the coming years.

The assessment of volunteering effectiveness considers social, economic and personal benefits. It includes the expansion of public services, the strengthening of social responsibility and civic engagement and the development of personal and professional skills. Such assessments combine both quantitative indicators (e.g., numbers, hours, financial value) and qualitative indicators (e.g., social cohesion, increased well-being), which requires holistic (rational) measurement mechanisms.

In the absence of official measurement mechanisms, available data is mainly obtained from non-formal studies and internal assessments conducted by volunteer organizations. According to the non-official statistical study conducted on the initiative of the

Azerbaijan Union of Voluntary Organizations, the quantitative indicators for 2025 are as follows: Total number of volunteers: 40,463, volunteer activities amounted to 161,928 volunteer hours, a total of 234 projects were implemented. 38% of volunteers were men and 62% were women. Number of volunteer organizations: 32. Statistics by age groups of volunteers: under 18 years – 10%, 18–24 years – 73%, 25–34 years – 13%, 35–44 years – 2%, 45–54 years – 2%, 55–64 years – 1%, 65 years and above – 1%. The qualitative impact of volunteering is manifested in enhanced social competencies among volunteers, increased civic engagement, and the development of teamwork and leadership skills, thereby contributing to sustainable social development and stronger social solidarity.

Volunteer Practices within Social and Political Frameworks

In social contexts, volunteer activities have made a significant contribution to increasing civic engagement, strengthening public solidarity and supporting the integration of young people into society. By participating in various social initiatives, volunteers helped address public needs and challenges. In the political context, volunteerism has played an important role in the implementation of state programs and public events, the development of civic awareness among young people and the strengthening of cooperation between public authorities and civil society. These experiences served and have contributed to the development of an active and responsible civil society.

— “Youth house" social service institutions. In Azerbaijan, volunteering practices are increasingly integrated into social policy frameworks through state-supported social service institutions that actively cooperate with non-governmental youth and volunteer organizations, engaging young people in these activities. Social service institutions known as “Youth house”, comprising 35 institutions operating across the country were established in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Youth Policy” with the aim of harmonious development of youth and organization of meaningful leisure activities, provision of social-psychological, legal and informational assistance to young people. Furthermore, according to the Rules on the establishment of the network of “Youth house” social service institutions, one of the goals of these houses is to promote volunteer activities among young people. One of the important aspects of the “Youth houses” model is its role in the identification and organization of projects for the implementation of state youth policy with the active participation of young volunteers. Non-governmental organizations and volunteers are actively involved in these projects, creating a collaborative mechanism that connects state institutions with civil society. Through this approach, volunteering is embedded within broader social and political frameworks, enabling young people to participate in social-based initiatives, while contributing to the effective implementation of national youth policy.

— Volunteer activities within state institutions. Following President Ilham Aliyev's call at the republican conference dedicated to Azerbaijani

Youth Day in 2019, volunteer activities have significantly expanded across state institutions. Currently, volunteering activities are carried out in 32 state institutions in Azerbaijan and this number is planned to increase to 36 in the coming years. President Ilham Aliyev has emphasized that the volunteer movement has gained strong momentum in Azerbaijan and holds special importance for society. He has warmly welcomed this development, noting that it promotes kindness, new rules of social behavior and it is no coincidence that young people play their part in this matter. The President has also highlighted the importance of engaging volunteers across government institutions and the private sector, as well as providing young volunteers with opportunities to gain practical experience within state bodies, ministries and other state organizations.

— Volunteers during the 2020 conflict and in the post-conflict period. Azerbaijani volunteers played a significant role within both the social and political frameworks during difficult times for the country. Through their activities during that time, volunteers contributed to conveying Azerbaijan's position to the international community, thereby supporting political communication and information dissemination.

At the same time, volunteer initiatives demonstrated a strong social dimension. Volunteers provided financial, moral and humanitarian assistance to the families of the fallen and veterans during and after the war, strengthening social solidarity and allowing affected families to feel cared for and supported by society during difficult times. This activity strengthened the joint efforts of citizens and government institutions and contributed to social cohesion in the post-conflict context.

Overall, volunteer activity during the conflict and post-conflict periods illustrates the high level of civic responsibility among Azerbaijani youth and their willingness to support the state and society during critical periods. Within the socio-political frameworks, volunteerism functioned as an effective mechanism for public mobilization, providing social support and strengthening national unity.

BAHRAIN

Kingdom of Bahrain

Population: 1.6 million No. of Volunteers: 20,000

Capital City: Manama

Human Development Index	0.899 (very high)
World Giving Index	51, including 72% of adults helped a stranger, 56% donated money and 26% volunteered
Law on Volunteerism	Law on Public Voluntary Service, 2019
National Volunteer Platform	volunteer.gov.bh
Lead Non-Profit Organization	Bahrain Voluntary Work Society
Volunteer Counter Office	Volunteering Development Center
Government Supervisor	Ministry of Labour and Social Development

Brief Summary

Volunteering is closely linked to the religious traditions of the Arab world, particularly Islamic beliefs. Islamic practices are based on social responsibility and the desire to benefit society. Consequently, volunteering is a natural phenomenon in the region. Much volunteer activity is informal and primarily linked to religious and cultural traditions of mutual aid and community support. The Arab states are actively encouraging the idea of volunteering and developing policies to support public participation in volunteering and philanthropy.

Within the framework of Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, Bahrain's approach closely aligns with the Human Dimension Confidence Building Measures by strengthening people-to-people contacts, youth engagement, women's participation, and community-based cooperation, positioning volunteerism as an effective tool for trust-building and long-term

social stability.

As for Bahrain, the National Volunteering Platform volunteer.gov.bh is an online resource that provides details of diverse volunteering opportunities available within the Kingdom of Bahrain. Launched in 2020, it was one of the winners of the Fikra government innovation competition, initiated by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister. Fikra aims to advance innovation and excellence across public sector workstreams. The platform aimed to strengthen national unity by promoting a sense of belonging, responsibility, and tolerance; creating an

environment conducive to volunteering and connecting volunteers with opportunities to participate.

In cooperation with UNDP and UNV, Bahrain also integrates volunteerism into broader development planning, recognizing it as a cross-cutting mechanism for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through stronger civic participation, social inclusion, and partnerships between government, civil society, and volunteer groups.

A recent national volunteer campaign "Bahrain is Well… Because You Are Its People", is a prominent national initiative in the Kingdom of Bahrain that emphasizes community solidarity and resilience. It has rapidly mobilized thousands of residents across the Kingdom. The initiative was launched to organize volunteers in Bahrain willing to support national response efforts in times of conflict. The response has been an encouraging sign of unity. Both citizens and residents have stepped forward to contribute their skills and time in support of the Kingdom's stability and public safety. The campaign highlights Bahrain's tradition of community cooperation in challenging times, bringing citizens and expatriates together to support government agencies and emergency services.

The above campaign serves as a reminder of the role that when everyone comes together, it strengthens the entire island's resilient spirit, with volunteers forming an important pillar of support alongside government agencies and emergency services.

BANGLADESH

People's Republic of Bangladesh

Population: 175.7 million

Capital City: Dhaka

No. of Volunteers 13,73 million

Human Development Index	0.685 (medium)
World Giving Index	42, including 81% of adults helped a stranger, 28% donated money and 17% volunteered

Introduction

Volunteerism in Bangladesh has evolved into a deeply rooted social practice, shaped by historical traditions of mutual aid, community solidarity, and resilience in the face of adversity. Over time, this social ethos has been transformed into a structured and institutionalized system through deliberate state facilitation, community participation, and innovative engagement by civil society organizations. Today, Bangladesh presents a comprehensive volunteerism ecosystem that is both nationally coordinated and locally grounded, offering valuable lessons for CICA Member States. The Government of Bangladesh and leading national and international non-governmental organizations have worked together to develop a holistic picture of volunteerism as a driver of social welfare, climate resilience, disaster response, environmental sustainability, youth leadership and inclusive development.

State-Facilitated Foundations of Volunteerism

Since independence, the Government of Bangladesh has played a significant role in encouraging volunteerism through policy support, national programs, and partnerships with civil society organizations. Initiatives in disaster response, public health, youth development, and community service have institutionalized volunteer engagement, creating a framework where citizen participation complements state efforts in achieving social development and resilience. The mentioned state-facilitate institutions play pivotal role in the different ways described below.

Department of Social Services under The Ministry of Social Welfare. At the core of Bangladesh's volunteerism landscape lies a strong institutional and legal foundation established by the Ministry of Social Welfare and implemented through the Department of Social Services (DSS). For more than five decades, DSS has played a central role in transforming volunteer social action from informal charity into an organized and accountable development partner of the state.

Institutionalization and Legal Framework. The enactment of the Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies (Registration and Control) Ordinance, 1961 provided a unified regulatory framework under which volunteer organizations could operate with legal recognition, transparency, and oversight. Through this framework, more than sixty-eight thousand volunteer social welfare organizations have been registered nationwide. This process has brought coherence to a previously fragmented sector, ensuring that volunteer initiatives align with national priorities while retaining their community-based character.

State Patronage in Financial Incentives and Capacity Building. Beyond regulation, the Government has adopted a facilitative approach to strengthen volunteerism. Through the National Social Welfare Council, registered organizations receive annual financial grants tailored to their scale and scope of activities. These grants, combined with regular capacity-building programs on governance, financial management, and project implementation, have enabled grassroots organizations to sustain and expand their operations. National recognition mechanisms, such as the annual National Social Service Award, further reinforce volunteerism by honoring outstanding individual and institutional contributions and inspiring broader public participation.

Community-Centric Volunteerism and Social Empowerment. A defining feature of Bangladesh's volunteerism model is its emphasis on community ownership. Under the Urban and Rural Social Services programmes, Social Welfare Councils have been established at union, municipal, and ward levels across the country. These councils consist of local volunteers who identify community needs, mobilize resources, and design and implement small-scale development initiatives. This decentralized structure has proven effective in nurturing Local Leadership, strengthening social cohesion, and ensuring that interventions are responsive to real community priorities.

Volunteerism is also embedded within the public health system through Hospital Social Services and Patient Welfare Associations. In public hospitals, volunteers provide humanitarian support to poor and vulnerable patients, assisting with access to treatment, guidance, and basic care. This integration of volunteer service within formal state institutions demonstrates how civic engagement can complement government service delivery in critical sectors.

Skills-Focused Literacy for Out-of-School Adolescent is a transformative Bangladesh government program, supported by UNICEF and Global Partnership for Education designed to provide functional literacy, numeracy, and vocational skills to out-of-school youth (ages 14-24) to prepare them for the job market, integrating life skills with high-demand trades like IT, mechanics, and construction. Launched nationwide after successful pilots, it offers a second chance at education, shifting focus from

traditional learning to practical, market-aligned skills through flexible delivery, including enterprise-based training, addressing skill gaps and empowering youth for sustainable livelihoods.

Skills for Employment Investment Program (SEIP) is a government-led, large-scale skills training initiative supported by the Asian Development Bank and other partners that offers competency-based vocational training across key economic sectors like garments, IT, construction, and healthcare. SEIP aims to enhance employment outcomes for youth and marginalized groups by providing certified training and promoting industry linkage.

National Multimedia Campaign on Prevention of Violence against Children and Child Marriage. This campaign uses public service announcements and community engagement to promote behavioral change and build a social movement against child marriage and violence at the grassroots.

Non-Government Organizations of Volunteerism

Private and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) of volunteerism play a vital role in shaping and sustaining volunteerism in Bangladesh by mobilizing citizens beyond state-led initiatives. These organizations operate independently or in partnership with communities to address social, environmental, health, and development challenges. Through structured programs, capacity-building, and grassroots engagement, NGOs create inclusive platforms for volunteer action, foster civic responsibility, and strengthen community resilience by empowering individuals - especially youth and marginalized groups - to contribute meaningfully to social change.

Society Development Committee (SDC) is a non-governmental organization established in 1988, committed to improving the socio-economic conditions of disadvantaged communities in Bangladesh. For over three decades, SDC has been working to uplift the poor, marginalized, and vulnerable groups, including women, children, people with disabilities, and sanitation workers through different volunteer initiatives like environmental volunteerism and the circular economy.

Environmental sustainability has emerged as a major arena for volunteerism in Bangladesh, particularly in response to the growing challenge of waste management. Practical action's work in Faridpur illustrates how volunteerism, when combined with technical innovation and municipal collaboration, can transform environmental problems into economic opportunities.

Bangladesh generates more than eight hundred thousand tons of plastic waste annually, much of it single-use plastic that clogs drains, pollutes rivers, and threatens ecosystems. In Faridpur, where urban expansion has outpaced waste management capacity, Practical Action has supported waste workers and community volunteers to collect plastic waste from households, markets, streets, dumping sites, and riverbanks. Floating plastic traps installed in drainage channels prevent plastic from entering river systems.

Collected plastic is cleaned, sorted, and processed through pyrolysis plants, converting waste into fuel oil, plastic boards for furniture, and black carbon for industrial use. Volunteers and waste workers are organized into cooperatives, equipped with protective gear, and trained to ensure safe and dignified working conditions. This circular economy model reduces pollution, creates green jobs, particularly for women and youth, and contributes to local economic resilience.

Emergency Medical Camp 2024 for Flood-Affected People in Lakshmipu, Bangladesh

In parallel, organic waste is processed into compost, producing high-quality organic fertilizer that benefits surrounding farming communities. Through this closed-loop system, kitchen waste, human waste, and plastic are all transformed into valuable resources, demonstrating an integrated approach to environmental volunteerism aligned with multiple Sustainable Development Goals.

Good Neighbors Bangladesh. This NGO is a member organization of Good Neighbors International. It has been operating in Bangladesh since 1996 as an international non-government organization for helping deprived children, their mothers and families through education, health 4 services, economic security, protection, community development, sanitation, and disaster relief projects. Its main focus is: Youth Volunteerism and Leadership Development.

Volunteerism in Bangladesh also plays a transformative role in youth empowerment. Good Neighbors Bangladesh exemplifies a model where volunteerism emerges as a natural progression from social support to leadership. Children supported through sponsorship programs grow into youth volunteers who participate in campaigns, training programs, and community initiatives.

Volunteer Serving Nutritious iftar to Underprivileged people During Ramadan in Dhaka

This approach not only builds individual confidence and skills but also creates a pipeline of socially conscious leaders. The journey from beneficiary to volunteer to national and international youth representation illustrates how sustained volunteer engagement can break cycles of vulnerability and foster long-term social mobility.

Friendship, a Social Purpose Organization began its operations in 2002 pioneering a hospital ship for the most unaddressed and deprived communities in the world living on sandbar islands, called chars, of the mighty Jamuna river (Brahmaputra) in Bangladesh. This NGO's main focus is volunteerism in health, disaster response and climate adaptation.

Friendship's work in remote and climate-affected

regions of Bangladesh demonstrates the power of structured volunteerism in addressing complex, multi-dimensional challenges. In geographically isolated riverine islands and coastal areas, Friendship has established a tiered healthcare system supported by community volunteers. Floating hospitals, satellite clinics, and trained Community, Medic-Aides, primarily local women-bring essential health services directly to households. These volunteers provide health education, maternal and childcare, and digital health record management, bridging gaps between communities and formal healthcare systems.

Disaster volunteerism is another cornerstone of Friendship's approach. Through Community Flood Volunteers, thousands of trained volunteers operate in flood-prone districts, disseminating early warnings, conducting search and rescue operations, repairing roads and embankments, and supporting post-disaster rehabilitation. Participatory Disaster Risk Assessments ensure that preparedness plans reflect local knowledge and priorities, making communities proactive agents of resilience rather than passive recipients of aid.

Volunteers are wading through waist-deep water to ensure aid reaches every corner of the community. Flood 2024 - Feni

Friendship also integrates volunteerism into climate adaptation initiatives, including climate-resilient housing, solar micro-grids, climate-adaptive agriculture, and mangrove afforestation. By embedding volunteer leadership within these interventions, the organization promotes locally led adaptation and long-term sustainability.

Volunteers packing relief food for 2000 families at OBHIZATRIK HQ during the 2024 floods in Feni, Laxmipur, and Comilla.

Forum for Public Health. This NGO is a major national civil society organization in Bangladesh working since 1982 on public health, water, sanitation, hygiene, climate resilience and related sustainable development issues. One of the volunteer initiatives includes: Technology, Energy, and Environmental Stewardship: NGO Forum's Youth Energy Ambassadors. Energy Ambassadors are often community members — including youth — trained by NGO Forum's energy projects. These individuals gain skills in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and e-waste repair.

In Cox's Bazar, where refugee camps and host communities rely heavily on solar energy systems, NGO Forum has pioneered a youth-led volunteerism model addressing energy access and electronic waste. Young volunteers, trained as Energy Ambassadors, repair solar home systems and streetlights, collect and repurpose e-waste, and raise awareness on energy conservation and environmental protection.

This initiative not only extends the lifespan of renewable energy infrastructure but also reduces hazardous waste and creates pathways for youth skills development and income generation. It demonstrates how volunteerism

can support technological sustainability and humanitarian operations simultaneously.

Obhizatrik Foundation represents one of Bangladesh's most expansive youth-driven volunteer networks, operating across education, disaster response, health, nutrition, climate action, and sports-based peacebuilding. Volunteerism is embedded into the organization's schools, extracurricular programs, and community initiatives, fostering a culture of service from an early age. The following is the priority of this NGO: Nationwide Youth Mobilization.

Obhizatrik volunteers have played frontline roles during floods, cyclones, and the COVID-19 pandemic, conducting rescue operations, managing oxygen banks, distributing relief, and supporting long-term rehabilitation. Through initiatives such as community kitchens, volunteers address food insecurity with dignity and inclusion. Climate-focused activities-including tree plantation, mangrove restoration, and solar installations-further highlight the breadth of youth-led civic engagement. This nationwide model demonstrates how volunteerism, when institutionalized and youth-centered, can scale rapidly while remaining locally responsive.

Volunteers rescuing stranded families during the 2024 flash floods in Feni.

Private Philanthropic organizations

Bidyanondo Foundation operates learning and feeding programs for street children, offering basic education, educational materials, and support to keep children engaged in learning.

Pathway Bangladesh works with street children in urban areas, providing free education, educational supplies, food, and technical education through street schools, aiming to nurture long-term well-being and self-reliance.

Plan International Bangladesh has led initiatives such as the Combatting Early Marriage in Bangladesh project, which works with adolescents and parents to promote gender equality, girls' rights, community mobilization and to prevent marriages through advocacy, training and community engagement in districts like Jhalokathi and Bola.

Easy Lives focus specifically on Bangladeshi expatriates and immigrants, providing free consultation services, assistance with passports and visas, employment guidance, legal aid, safe money exchange information, support in cases of death abroad, and welfare development projects for migrants and their families.

Mojar School provides free formal education following the national curriculum (NCTB) as well as non-formal learning programs like "Under The Sky Mojar School" for children who live in remote

areas and cannot access traditional schools. It also offers free meals, nutritional support, skill development activities, and community events that nurture creativity, sports, and personal growth. In recognition of its social contributions, it has received a number of prestigious awards.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Bangladesh experience illustrates that effective volunteerism is not the product of isolated initiatives but the outcome of a well-integrated ecosystem. A clear legal framework, supportive state institutions, empowered communities, innovative NGOs, and engaged youth together form a resilient model of civic action.

Bangladesh's approach shows that volunteerism can simultaneously strengthen social welfare systems, enhance disaster preparedness, promote environmental sustainability, empower marginalized populations, and nurture future leaders. This integrated, state-facilitated and community-centric model offers a compelling best practice for CICA Member States seeking to harness volunteerism as a strategic instrument for inclusive and sustainable development

CAMBODIA

Kingdom of Cambodia
Population: 17.9 million
Capital City: Phnom Penh

Human Development Index	0.606 (medium)
World Giving Index	22, including 28% of adults helped a stranger, 31% donated money and 6% volunteered
National Volunteer Platform	National Committee for Promoting Volunteerism
Leading Non-Profit Organization	Cambodia Volunteering Network – VolCam
Government Supervisor	General Directorate of Youth – Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport

Message to Readers

Mr. Tauch Choeun, a Director General, General Directorate for Youth at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, in his foreword to UNV's Volunteerism and Youth Employment in Cambodia said that The Royal Government of Cambodia has a strong willingness to see young volunteers at the center of Cambodia's development plans. With the support from UN agencies and other relevant stakeholders, the Ministry has successfully formulated the National Youth Development Policy, which was adopted in 2011, and established the National Youth Development Council to facilitate, monitor, evaluate and assist the Government to ensure the effectiveness of youth development efforts. For many years, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has promoted and facilitated youth volunteering in Cambodia, recognizing the importance of volunteerism. Different aspects of volunteerism are well rooted in the traditions of the Cambodian people, however, most of these efforts are neither documented nor given the recognition they deserve. Volunteerism plays an important role in the development of Cambodian communities. Our youth are progressively becoming more active, and we now know that volunteering can make a significant contribution in tackling such issues as skills development, entrepreneurship and job creation. This is crucial for Cambodia's future also in the context of ASEAN economic integration and current and future regional initiatives.

Introduction

With a population of around 18 million, more than half of whom are under 22 years old, Cambodia is a young country. Thus, the current median age of the total population is 27 years. People of all ages engage in various formal and non-formal volunteering activities in their communities. A qualitative assessment shows that volunteering is deeply ingrained in Cambodian culture, where giving and community service are highly valued duties. However, many of these efforts are undocumented and not given proper recognition. Many community-based organizations have been set up to promote mutual help and community unity. The culture of volunteer service as a philanthropic tradition is deeply rooted in the core principles of Theravada Buddhism, the dominant and official state religion in Cambodia. This religion emphasizes the importance of giving through the practice of Dana. Volunteerism is also intertwined with traditional Cambodian celebrations, such as the Khmer New Year and Pchum Ben. During these events, Khmer people accumulate merit at home, in pagodas, and within the community. It is commonly believed that this will contribute to a better rebirth in the next life.

In terms of trends, people aged 16–29 are considered to be the most active group when it comes to volunteering. The majority of VIOs also prioritize engaging young people in their volunteering programmes. They mentioned that volunteering provides young people with a great opportunity to contribute to social development and social change, and to build the knowledge and skills they need for their future careers. Young people also tend to be more passionate, committed and available to engage in volunteer activities. In terms of level of engagement, there has been a significant shift from youth being engaged only as participants in traditional ways to youth-led initiatives. The number of young people engaging in volunteering has also increased significantly over the years.

Regulatory Environment

In Cambodia, most policies and frameworks that mention volunteerism are available at the national level. These include national policies, sectoral policies, frameworks and strategic plans. Some of these policies and strategic plans incorporate volunteerism as a strategy for achieving their goals.

The National Policy on Youth Development, which was endorsed in 2011, is the umbrella policy that specifically emphasizes volunteerism. The policy identifies volunteerism as one of six priorities for youth development. To implement this policy more effectively, the National Action Plan on Cambodian Youth Development (2016–2018) and the latest plan (2019–2026) were endorsed. In Cambodia, the General Directorate of Youth under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport is responsible for volunteerism.

A significant achievement in the implementation of volunteerism was the establishment of the national 'Volunteer for My Community' programme in 2019, which continues to expand to this day. Another significant development in the volunteerism landscape was the introduction of the Cambodian Volunteering Standard Framework (CVSF) in early 2023. This framework, guided by the global volunteering standard, was developed by the Department of Youth Centers, the General Directorate of Youth and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, with support from relevant CSOs, and was endorsed by the Minister of Education. The CVSF aims to increase the standard of volunteerism in Cambodia, ensuring the practicality and improvement of volunteering activities and supporting the implementation of volunteerism in the country.

Civil Society Institutes

The establishment in 2011 of the National Committee for Promoting Volunteerism (NCPV) is a significant institutional change. This platform gathers representatives of governmental and non-governmental partners as well as United Nations agencies and is chaired by the Director General of the Directorate General of Youth of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. The NCPV meets regularly and organizes public events, such as the annual National Forum on Volunteerism. This Forum brings together volunteers from the provinces and from Phnom Penh, high-ranking government officials, representatives of civil society and the private sector. The forum discusses the current state and issues of volunteerism and celebrates the importance of voluntary action and the difference it makes to the development of Cambodia.

Volunteer Involving Civil Society Organizations (VIOs) provide institutional arrangements for volunteering. They offer different models for the deployment of volunteers and their use in activities. Many of them were established by volunteers. The evolution of VIO activity has shown that, while they tend towards narrower specializations, their volunteers seem to become increasingly versatile. As well as being involved in running projects and providing administrative support, volunteers have expanded their role to include social work. They are now clearly engaged in networking, civic participation, and human rights issues, demonstrating substantial volunteer involvement in local decision-making processes and the development of civic participation. The share of female volunteers is in the majority.

Best Practice

VolCam – Cambodia Volunteering Network – is a network of international and local volunteer service agencies and volunteer involving organizations in Cambodia. The network was formed in 2012, following a proposal by Volunteer Services Overseas, UNV and other organizations to revive a volunteer agency

support group. Previously, the agency representatives were only meeting informally and on an ad-hoc basis. VolCam was formed to strengthen communication between agencies and to regularly share ideas and information, to network and coordinate actions and opportunities. VolCam believes volunteering is a crucial component of development in any country, an important tool for strengthening and mobilizing communities and capacity building and that it provides valuable opportunities for volunteers as well as services which benefit society. VolCam's mission is to promote the concept of volunteerism throughout Cambodia, encompassing both international and local volunteer programmes. The network is a knowledge-sharing forum, where members have an opportunity to learn from one another and to facilitate access to information about volunteering and volunteering opportunities in Cambodia for people of all ages and levels of skill, whether they are from Cambodia or from other countries. VolCam represents a range of different types of VIOs working in Cambodia.

The network also therefore represents all their associated volunteers, which lies somewhere over the one thousand mark. VolCam member organizations work across Cambodia, with many having high levels of activity in the provinces (Kratie, Mondulkiri, Prey Veng). The provinces are seen by many organizations as crucial volunteerism zones. With a continuing and pronounced urban-rural divide, the provinces often contain those left behind from the opportunities within the changing economy. They are therefore in great need of additional support and opportunities that volunteerism organizations are able to deliver. VolCam member organizations meet every two to three months to share updates from each organization and to plan VolCam activities.

UNV Cambodia facilitates and supports the work of the National Committee and VolCam. They jointly coordinate advocacy activities to promote volunteerism in the country through the annual celebration of the International Volunteer Day, organization of the National Forum on Volunteerism and other joint actions and public events.

Since 2016, through the Community Action Challenge (CAC) VolCam challenges active citizens to think of a local problem and encourages them to find a solution that they can implement with a group of volunteers through a small project. Vol - Cam offers support and seed funding for selected projects to realize these plans, and project teams are invited to share their experiences during International Volunteer Day. VolCam members organize fundraising events to support the CAC.

CHINA

People's Republic of China

Population: 1461 million

Capital City: Beijing

No. of Volunteers: 217 million

Human Development Index	0.797 (high)
World Giving Index	37, including 54% of adults helped a stranger, 31% donated money and 26% volunteered
National Volunteer Platform	zhiyuanyun.com
Leading Non-Profit Organization	China Volunteer Service Federation, www.cvf.org.cn
Volunteer Counter Office	National Volunteer Service Information System
Government Supervisor	Social Work Department, Central Committee of the Communist Party of China

Institutionalization of Legal and Organizational Frameworks

The year of 2008 witnessed a striking rise in volunteerism in China, with the 5.12 Sichuan Earthquake and 29th Olympics taking place in the same year providing strong impetus for organized volunteering. Since then, a slew of regulations and policies, as well as sectoral strategies and plans on volunteerism have been released, and the leadership structure for volunteering development is evolving. Development of regulatory framework on volunteering goes in two phases. During first phase in 2008-2017 China's commitment to volunteering was initially institutionalized with the passing of relevant national laws, regulations and policies.

As an initial step, in 2008, the Central Commission for Guiding Cultural and Ethical Progress issued the *Opinion on Deepening Volunteer Service Activities*, calling for greater financial inputs to support volunteering and requesting the establishment of the *China Volunteer Service Foundation* . With the approval of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Foundation was eventually established in 2009 under the General Office, Central Commission for Guiding Cultural and Ethical Progress, with the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee as the professional supervisory unit.

In 2013, the Third plenary session of the 18th CPC central Committee started a new development era in social governance, mapping the strategy of "supporting and developing volunteer involving organizations". In the same year, the *China Volunteer Service Federation* was established with the approval of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, as a national non-profit social organization administered by the General Office, Central Commission for Guiding Cultural and Ethical Progress under the supervision of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central

Committee. The Federation is now overseen by the Social Work Department of the CPC Central Committee and has become a national, collaborative, non-profit social organization voluntarily formed by volunteer service organizations, volunteers, and relevant units, organizations and individuals.

Over the next five years, China issued various policies to institutionalize volunteering. These included *Guidelines for Construction of China's Social Service Volunteer Teams for the period of 2013-2020* by the Ministry of Civil Affairs (2013) with the objective of establishing and improving regulatory frameworks and systems to create an enabling environment for volunteers to play a bigger role in meeting people's social service needs, especially among the disadvantaged groups. Other document was *Opinion on Promoting Institutionalization of Volunteering* by Central Commission for Guiding Cultural and Ethical Progress (2014), which proposed to establish and improve volunteer recruitment and registration, training and management, service recording and incentive systems, and to speed up national legislation on volunteering with stressed importance of integrating volunteering into urban and rural community governance and giving full play to the leading role of the community in voluntary service.

In 2016, the *National Philanthropy Law* was enacted, with eight clauses related to volunteerism under the "Philanthropy Services" chapter and four under the "Legal Responsibilities" chapter. These clauses stipulated definitions, training requirements, risk management, registration, time recording, privacy, and organizational and volunteer accountability, among other things. In the same year, the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, the Central Commission for Guiding Cultural and Ethical Progress, and the Ministry of Civil Affairs jointly issued the 'Opinion on Supporting and Developing Volunteer Involving Organizations', and the State Council announced the 'National Programme for Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', encouraging the private sector, civil society, and philanthropic groups to participate in national development and international cooperation.

In general, the Ministry of Civil Affairs is responsible for national volunteer service administration, while the civil affairs departments of local people's governments at or above county level are responsible for administering voluntary service within their respective administrative areas. By 2016, 31 provinces and cities in China had formulated their own volunteer service regulations. In 2017, the State Council issued the *National Regulation on Volunteering*, requesting that governments at county level and above integrate volunteer service into the local economic and social development plan, allocating resources and establishing a working mechanism. The Regulation defines volunteers as 'a natural person who provides volunteer service using their own time, knowledge, skills and physical strength', and volunteerism or volunteering as 'volunteers, volunteer-involving organizations and other organizations providing volunteer and unpaid public welfare services to society or others'. After issuing the regulation, 18 provinces and five cities with legislative power revised their local volunteer service regulations in accordance

with it.

Finally, at the 19th National Congress of the CPC in October 2017, which signaled the start of a new era in China, President Xi Jinping delivered a report titled 'Winning the Decisive Battle, Building a Well-Off Society in an All-Round Way, and Winning the Great Victory of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era'. The report referred to volunteering in the section on strengthening ideological and moral construction, requesting that "credibility and institutionalization of volunteering be advanced, and social responsibility, rule consciousness and devotion be strengthened".

Further Progress in Integration of Volunteering

In 2018-2023, volunteering was integrated into sectoral policies and plans and recognized as an important force for social governance, rural revitalization and third distribution.

Following the above achievements, in 2020, the Central Commission for Guiding Cultural and Ethical Progress established the *National Volunteering Coordination Group* to be responsible for overall planning, coordination and supervision of volunteering in China, by involving many relevant state and government departments such as All-China Federation of Trade Unions, the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, the All-China Women's Federation, the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, the China Association for Science and Technology, the China Disabled Persons' Federation, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the National Health Commission.

Subsequently, under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee and with the participation of relevant government departments and ministries, work continued on improving the volunteer system. During this time, the importance of pointing out that it is necessary to develop charities, improve the incentive policies for social forces to participate in grass-roots governance, improve the grass-roots volunteer service system, and vigorously carry out neighborhood mutual help services and interactive exchange activities to better meet the needs of the people. A large number of official documents were issued, and it would be hard to list them all in this publication.

In 2020, the CPC Central Committee issued Outline of the Implementation of the Construction of a Society Ruled by Law, which included volunteering in the objective of improving the legal and policy system that promotes socialist values, and proposed to promote and support development of volunteer involving organizations (VIOs) and carry out standardization of volunteering. It needed continuous efforts to support and develop social work service agencies and VIOs, expanding the volunteer team, build more volunteering platforms and improve volunteer service system.

The following directions of the China's volunteerism were developed in 2018-2023: youth volunteering, driven by the Communist Youth League, volunteering for the seniors, driven by the National Working Commission on

Aging, volunteering for persons with disabilities, driven by China Disabled Persons' Federation, Volunteering in Science and Technology, driven by China Association for Science and Technology, women volunteering, driven by All-China Women's Federation, Volunteering for eco-environmental protection, driven by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, volunteering for culture and tourism service, driven by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, medical volunteers, driven by National Health Commission and student volunteering.

In April 2022, the China Volunteer Service Federation and China Association for the Promotion of International Exchanges of NGOs jointly established the International Volunteering Working Committee, dedicated to building an exchange and cooperation platform for international volunteering and promoting China's volunteer service to the world.

National Information System

In 2015 the Ministry of Civil Affairs released the *Basic Specifications of Volunteer Service Information System*. According to the Specifications, National Volunteer Service Information System zhiyuanyun.com was piloted in 2016 and officially launched in 2017 by China Volunteer Service Federation. The system can be used by registered legal person organization and non-registered grassroots organization. The Ministry also developed in 2020 the Measures for Volunteering Records and Certificates Issuance integrated to the system.

Statistical and Measurement Efforts

In September 2022, with the approval of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League the Chinese Young Volunteers Association issued the Index System of Volunteer Service of Colleges and Universities (trial version), aiming at providing standards and evaluation methods of volunteering by colleges and universities led by the Communist Youth League. This Index System fully considers the characteristics of universities in different regions and of different types and sizes. It provides professional guidance for objectively evaluating and effectively improving volunteering in colleges and universities and identifies 7 first-level indicators and 32 second-level indicators, with the secondary indicators consisting 13 core indicators, 12 important indicators and 7 basic indicators. So, more than 90 percent of cities and nearly 2,000 universities in China have formed special associations for young volunteers.

As reported in the Volunteer Service Blue Book — China Volunteer Service Development Report released in 2022 by the National Institute of Social Development of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Social Science Academic Press, according to the National Volunteer Service Information System, as of October 30, 2021 the total number of volunteers in China had reached 217 million, with an average of 1,544 registered volunteers among every 10,000 people, accounting for about 15.4 percent of the total population.

Statement of Leadership

As reported China Youth Net reporter Liu Yan on January 9, 2025, the China Volunteer Service Federation issued a call to action to volunteer service organizations, workers and volunteers due to the upcoming winter holiday and Spring Festival, which is usually a peak time for volunteer service activities across the country. To fully harness the positive role of volunteer service, effectively strengthen self-regulation within the sector, and promote the high-quality development of the volunteer service cause, the Federation called on volunteer organizations, volunteers and volunteer workers to adhere to Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era as their guide, to implement the Party's theories, guidelines and policies throughout the entire process and in all aspects of volunteer service, to fully leverage the role of Party organizations as strongholds and the exemplary role of Party members, to rally the broad volunteer force firmly under the Party's banner, and to ensure correct political direction, values and work orientation.

The Federation called for a focus on central tasks and serving the broader interests of the nation, establishing more volunteer service platforms, innovating incentive and reward measures, and organizing the general public to serve others and contribute to society, ensuring that everyone participates, takes responsibility and benefits, and fully leveraging the important role of volunteer services in supporting national strategies, safeguarding and improving people's livelihoods, and strengthening social governance.

The Federation called on volunteer organizations, volunteer workers and volunteers to strictly comply with the 'Regulations on Volunteer Services' and other relevant laws and regulations, adhere to the principles of voluntariness, non-remuneration, equality, integrity and legality; they must not carry out any illegal or non-compliant activities in the name of volunteer service, nor engage in conduct during volunteer service activities that violates social ethics or harms the public interest and the legitimate rights and interests of others. Volunteers should enhance their ability to discern and their awareness of potential risks, focus on obtaining information from official channels, and choose formal volunteer service organizations and information systems to participate in volunteer service.

The Federation called on volunteer service organizations to strengthen management and exercise strict self-discipline, to establish sound internal rules and regulations, and to standardize recruitment, training, service delivery and incentive schemes. They must standardize the recording of volunteer service and the issuance of certificates and put a stop to forgery and the buying and selling of such documents. They must not engage in related-party transactions with commercial entities, nor use the name of volunteer service to attract customers or for illegal profit. They must not misuse the volunteer service logo. They must not facilitate the recruitment of so-called 'volunteers' for commercial activities or illegal organizations. Volunteer service information systems must exercise strict control, standardize management and plug loopholes.

The Federation called on volunteer service organizations to be open and transparent, and to disclose relevant information in a truthful, accurate, complete and timely manner, actively accepting supervision from relevant departments, the media and the general public to enhance public trust. The Federation said: "We must respond promptly to issues raised by all sectors of society and continuously improve the social credibility of volunteer service. The China Volunteer Service Collaboration Platform has set up a dedicated section to receive complaints and reports from the public regarding issues in the field of volunteer service".

Best Practice

China Disabled Volunteers Association is the leading NGO organized volunteering for persons with disabilities. This activity dates back to the 20th century, when in 1990, the Law on the Protection of Disabled Persons stipulated the third Sunday of May as the National Day for Helping the Disabled. In 2000, the Disabled Persons' Federation launched the thematic activity of "Volunteers for the Disabled" on the 10th National Day for Helping the Disabled, advocating the concepts of equal participation, sharing and happiness. In 2007, China signed the United Nations Convention on Disabled Persons, and began to cooperate with international organizations, such as Rehabilitation International, Humanity and Inclusion, and Lions Club International, to carry out social service and volunteering projects to benefit the disabled.

In 2010, eight departments, including the General Office, Central Commission for Guiding Cultural and Ethical Progress and the China Disabled Persons' Federation, issued the Opinions on Strengthening Volunteering for the Disabled, requesting to establish a standardized volunteer assistance mechanism, with details such as registration management and training, job docking, evaluation and incentives for volunteers engaged in disability assistance.

In 2010, the China Disabled Persons' Federation and the General Office, Central Commission for Guiding Cultural and Ethical Progress designated 6th July as the Theme Day of "Sunshine Action of Volunteering for the Disabled". In 2011, they again issued the national Implementation Plan of the Volunteering for the Disabled, which pushed the implementation of the Sunshine Action. In 2014, the Federation and the Communist Youth League Central Committee jointly issued the Circular on Implementing the Sunshine Action of Young Volunteers and launched the Sunshine Action of Young Volunteers in China. So far, the Sunshine action has engaged over 4,000 volunteers in 639,000 volunteer projects that served helped 50 million persons with disabilities.

On May 20, 2015, China Disabled Volunteers Association was established, with the mission "to carry out volunteer service for the disabled, enhance humanitarianism and volunteerism", making "volunteering for the disabled" a social public welfare brand, and promoting the normalization, specialization, and diversification of the cause of volunteering for the disabled. In July, 2021, the State Council issued the 14th Five-Year Plan for the Protection and Development of Disabled Persons, stating that it is necessary to vigorously develop charitable undertakings and service industries for the disabled, encourage mass organizations, social organizations, enterprises and public institutions to implement charitable projects to help the disabled, further promote the "Sunshine Action" of young volunteers to provide care and services, and provide Pro Bono services such as legal aid. In December 2022, China Disabled Volunteers Association officially issued the Implementation Plan of Sunshine Action of Volunteering for the Disabled (2023-2025), which listed ten Sunshine Actions, aiming to establish 500 "Sunshine Volunteer Service Bases" and 500 "Sunshine Volunteer Service Stations" within three years, improve the system of volunteering for the disabled, and strengthen research and training of volunteering for the disabled.

Green Wind Environmental Protection Association, which was founded in 1999, is a public welfare volunteer organization for environmental protection. It was established by the School of Environmental and Chemical Engineering, Xi'an Polytechnic University, in accordance with its disciplinary characteristics. Its main business covers the publicity and education of environmental protection knowledge, volunteer services, and innovative practice.

Over the past 25 years, the Association has focused on the ecological protection of the Qinling Mountains and the high-quality development of the Yellow River Basin. It has recruited a total of more than 2,000 members, and 3 guidance teachers have been selected into the Expert Database of "Young Scholars" for Qinling Ecological Environmental Protection in Shaanxi Province. All-China Youth Federation reported that this initiative becomes a success story how youth guarding lucid waters and lush mountains, providing green development services by young volunteers.

The members of the Green Wind Environmental Protection Association have rooted themselves in the land of Shaanxi. From the depths of the Qinling Mountains to the banks of the Yellow River, and from laboratories to fields, they have left their footprints in the mountains and rivers and written their research papers on the land. On the northern foot of the Qinling Mountains and by the banks of the Heihe River, a vibrant "green" force has been active for more than 20 years. Young volunteers from the Green-wind Environmental Protection Association of Xi'an Polytechnic University have applied classroom knowledge to mountains and rivers, dedicating their youthful wisdom to frontline ecological protection. They are not only disseminators of environmental protection concepts but also actors and contributors who use their expertise to safeguard the mother river, protect the ecology of the Qinling Mountains, and develop green technologies. This fascinating journey is recounted in four valuable stories.

From Laboratories to Riverbanks: Years of Monitoring Painting an Ecological Picture. In the summer of 2010, the first group of "Green-wind" volunteers stood by the Heihe River with sampling boxes for the first time. Little did they know that this would mark the beginning of 16 years of journey.

"Positioning sampling sites, stratified water sampling, on-site rapid testing..." Jianrong Ma, a junior majoring in environmental engineering, murmurs the operating protocols. This is her third year participating in the Heihe River protection project. For her, the Heihe River is no longer merely "Xi'an's drinking water source" in textbooks, but a warm and meaningful "mother river". She recalls last year in Wujiazhuang, a local resident pointed to the riverbank and said: "The water has become much clearer. Since the university students come every year, we are ashamed to dump garbage anymore." At that moment, the data curves in the laboratory suddenly connected to real change.

Over 16 years, more than 800 volunteers like Jianrong Ma have been involved more than 800 times in total. Equipped with professional instruments, they have covered 3 towns and 7 villages in the middle and lower reaches of the

Heihe River, established 5 fixed monitoring sections, and accumulated continuous data on water quality, soil heavy metals, invasive plants, etc. Their data on the invasion of *"Conyza canadensis"* has become an important basis for township ecological governance.

"We are not only here to take samples, but also to 'communicate'," said Hou Kang, the team's supervisor. These young people go into farmers' homes with questionnaires, explain the importance of water source protection in local dialect, and listen to villagers' aspirations for development. At this moment, professionalism is not only technology but also a bridge connecting people and nature. In 2024, the association won the second prize in the National University Small Grant Program of "Clean and Beautiful China Tour". In 2025, it received a small grant from the Shaanxi Youth Green Development Environmental Protection Volunteer Action. Behind the honors lie 16 years of persistent dedication and the symbiotic protection between youth and a river.

From Campus to the Depths of Qinling: Years of Scientific Expeditions Decoding Ecology. If the Heihe River is the "river nearby", the Qinling Mountains are the "mountain in the heart". In 2019, volunteer Ruoxi Li joined the Qinling scientific expedition team led by Teacher Hou Kang and ventured deep into the Qinling hinterland for the first time. Now she is about to graduate with a master's degree. "I used to think scientific research was distant. It was not until I climbed rocky slopes to collect soil samples and sorted specimens under villagers' eaves that I understood what it means to 'Write Papers on the Earth'."

The journey of scientific expedition is never easy. to track changes in ecologically fragile areas, they set up sample plots in remote places; to obtain continuous water quality data, they wade through water to collect samples even in the rainy season. Ruoxi Li remembers a sudden mountain rain: everyone protected the equipment with their bodies at once. Their notebooks got wet, but the samples and data

remained intact. The supervisor said: "What we bring back is not only samples, but also the 'health records' of the Qinling Mountains."

Such persistent efforts have yielded positive results. The team has published many papers in top international journals，such as "Science of the Total Environment" and "Ecotoxicology and Environmental Safety", revealing the spatiotemporal evolution of ecological security on the northern foot of the Qinling Mountains. In 2025, their project Research on the Impact of Habitat Quality Evolution Pattern on Human Settlements in the Northern Qinling Region won an excellent project award in Shaanxi Qinling Ecological Scientific Expedition. In the acknowledgments of her thesis, Li Ruoxi wrote: "Thank you, Qinling, for teaching me what perseverance and responsibility mean."

These young students tread through mud and bend down to care for plants, yet they hold mountains and rivers in their hearts. They measure mountains with professional instruments and measure responsibility with youthful footsteps. For them, the Qinling Mountains are not only a research object but also a spiritual coordinate, reminding them at all times: guarding the ancestral vein of China is the mission of this generation.

From Universities to Primary School Classrooms: Hundred Lectures Sowing Green Seeds.

"I see, sir. The water from washing vegetables can water flowers!" In an environmental protection class at Renhouzhuang Primary School, Ximo Wei, a fifth-grade student, rushed to answer. At the podium, Miaomiao Lei, a "Green-wind" volunteer, smiled and nodded. This was her fifth visit to the school, and the third year since the two schools jointly built the "Teenagers' Ecological Civilization Education Practice Base".

Miaomiao Lei remembers that when she first came, the children were completely confused by terms like "COD" and "ammonia nitrogen". She and her teammates brought water samples from the Heihe River and leaves from the Qinling Mountains, turning complex indicators into "river health indexes" and biodiversity into "stories of the forest family". They designed games such as "Garbage Classification Challenge" and "Water-Saving Experiments" to make environmental knowledge vivid and engaging. Today, the school has its own "Green-wind Team", and children strive to be "little environmental guardians"

Over more than 10 years, more than 300 "Green-wind" volunteers have entered many surrounding schools, holding over 100 activities including environmental classes, green plant adoption, and garbage classification. Many children have begun to supervise their families' garbage classification because of one environmental class; some even said: "In the future, I want to study environmental science like these brothers and sisters to protect nature."

"Education is not about filling, but about lighting," said Liu Jing, the association's supervisor. These young volunteers have ignited not only children's interest in nature but also a sense of inherited responsibility. Coming from the Heihe River and returning from the Qinling Mountains, they turn stories of mountains and rivers and scientific truth into seeds, sowing them in young hearts. This is another form of youthful rooting — rooting downward, growing upward, and letting the

green gene thrive in the next generation.

From Petri Dishes to Fields: Multiple Technologies Empowering Rural Revitalization. *In* the university laboratory, volunteer Nana Liu and her team are observing the growth of a group of microbial strains. Their developed "salt-tolerant slow-release microcapsule bacterial agent" has entered the pilot test stage. This technology aims to solve the problem of saline-alkali land management in northwest China, reviving barren land.

"Our inspiration came from the ecological restoration needs observed during the Qinling scientific expedition, and the technology comes from years of agricultural microbiology research by the 'Huang Danian-style Teacher Team of Resources, Environment and Green Chemical Engineering' in our college," Nana Liu introduced. In 2024, the project won the national bronze award in the "Challenge Cup" National College Students' Entrepreneurship Competition. In 2025, it received the national silver award in the China International College Students' Innovation Competition. Beyond honors, she is prouder that the team cooperated with a cooperative in Yanchang County, northern Shaanxi last year, and the field trial achieved good results.

From laboratories to fields, it is the conscious pursuit of Green-wind youth to turn knowledge into productivity. In addition, they have developed "bio-organic fertilizer from mushroom residues" using agricultural waste, which has realized small-scale production and trial use in the university's assistance sites. "Seeing villagers reduce fertilizer use and improve soil because of our technology gives me an irreplaceable sense of accomplishment," said team member Bingbing Hu.

These young volunteers have written papers on the banks of the Heihe River and in the Qinling Mountains, and spread their wisdom across the broader western region. They know that the west is marked by both ecological fragility and a desire for development. They seek technological solutions for green development in this land. Under the guidance of teachers, they have participated in more than 100 research projects, helping governments and enterprises solve environmental problems. Their actions prove that youth responsibility includes both lofty scientific exploration and down-to-Earth practical dedication.

For more than 20 years, the Green-wind has never stopped; for thousands of miles, the original aspiration remains firm. From persistent guarding by the Heihe River to scientific exploration in the depths of Qinling; from patient enlightenment in primary school classrooms to innovative breakthroughs in fields — young volunteers from Green-wind Environmental Protection Association have rooted themselves in the west with their footsteps, interpreted responsibility with professionalism, and answered the mission with youth. What they guard is not only a river and a mountain, but also a spirit and a future. They firmly believe that the Green-wind will eventually blow all over the homeland, and the flowers of youth will bloom proudly amid lucid waters and lush mountains.

EGYPT

Arab Republic of Egypt
Population: 118.4 million
Capital City: Cairo

Law on Volunteerism	Governing the Pursuit of Civil Work - No. 149 of 2019
National Volunteer Platform.	ensan.nacdw.org
Lead Non-Profit Organization.	National Alliance for Civil Development Work (NACDW)
Volunteer Counter Office	Associations and Civil Work, NACDW
Government Supervisors	Ministry of Social Solidarity

Introduction

Volunteering has always been a part of the Egyptian culture since ancient times. At present it is predominantly directed to charity work in the form of effort or professional expertise, or a donation of money as younger generations are raised that helping the needy and the poor is a social duty. With the advancement of community development in Egypt, volunteering began to take a more formal form since 1970s, to be organized and directed by development institutions in the form of social, educational, or environmental activities with the intention of contributing to community development in its broader sense.

Since 2000s, volunteering has begun to spread, especially among young people, as a mean to develop their experiences and refine their skills. Engagement in volunteering increases their self-confidence and belief in their abilities and increases their competitiveness in the labor market. In this context, many institutions have organized volunteer programs with the aim of developing the capacities of young people and creating distinguished cadres of professionals, which is reflected positively on the economy of societies.

Government of Egypt represented by the Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform emphasized on more than one occasion the importance of volunteer work and that it has become essential in addition to its role in the process of building youth expertise, which greatly contributes to achieving the sustainable development goals represented by Egypt's Vision 2030. The Egyptian government has referred to volunteering in the Egypt "Sustainable Development Strategy 2030" - launched in February 2016 - as a mean to support the strategy in general and encourage sustainable agriculture in specific through involving volunteer organizations in activities to protect the environment and biological diversity.

Facts and Figures

Although volunteerism is considered to be part of Egyptian culture, there are no reliable indicators with which to measure the extent and scope of modern volunteering in the country, or its

contribution to the national development agenda. Data on the number of volunteers varies depending on the source and method of calculation. According to the 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report by UNV, the total number of volunteers in Egypt in 2016 was 1,729,734, representing almost 2.9 per cent of the Egyptian population aged 15 or over. These estimates were made using regression analysis, regional averages, and population data for individuals aged 15 years and over. An alternative method of calculation is provided by the World Giving Index from the Charities Aid Foundation, which measures population participation in giving behaviors. In the 2017 World Giving Index, which surveyed Egypt in 2016, 7% of adults volunteered, corresponding to approximately 4 million volunteers when the 2016 retrospective data from World Population Prospects was taken into account. The latest available score, measured in the 2024 World Giving Index, showed population participation in organized volunteering at 3%, corresponding to 2 million adult individuals currently living in Egypt.

This figure is the most appropriate one. Finally, regarding ILO statistics, it should be noted that 99% of volunteering in Egypt takes place in informal settings outside the volunteer's household. In 2023 only 1% takes place in formal settings through organizations that involve volunteers, such as non-profits or businesses. This was a distinctive feature of the Egyptian volunteering sector, which is currently undergoing rapid modification and strengthening.

Volunteerism Legal Infrastructure

The ***Ministry of Social Solidarity*** (MOSS) is the main government institution responsible for organizing volunteer work through its laws and regulations. Historically MOSS has been associated with volunteerism for several reasons, most importantly is that it is the administrative authority that supervise the work of Non-Governmental Organizations which is formed based on volunteer work of the founders and general assembly. Recently, a new edition of this law 'Governing the Pursuit of Civil Work - No. 149 of 2019', was ratified.

The new law and its bylaws become the primary legal framework for civil and volunteer work in Egypt. It represents a significant development in the institutionalization of volunteerism, reflecting the government's political interest in creating a legal framework to institutionalize volunteerism at a local level, despite the aforementioned challenges. The law addresses volunteerism in four main articles. Articles 1 and 92 set out the definition and goals of volunteerism. Volunteer work is defined as follows: 'any act or activity undertaken by a volunteer of their own free will for the benefit of the public and without expectation of financial reward'. Article 77 of the Law set out an additional role for the newly established Central

Unit for NGOs (Associations and Civil Work) relating to volunteerism.

Best Practice

صندوق مكافحة وعلاج الإدمان والتعاطي

Fund for the Prevention and Treatment of Addiction and Abuse's mission is to combat the problem of drug abuse and addiction in Egypt, the Fund adopted peer-to-peer principles and approaches to implement their programs and activities through the involvement of youth and activating their role in combat smoking and drug addiction through their "Volunteering Units" program and "Volunteer Home" program at the Egyptian public universities.

These roles include developing and implementing Egypt's national strategy for volunteer work and its organizational policies; encouraging civil society organizations and government agencies to provide volunteering opportunities; facilitating matchmaking between organizations that involve volunteers and volunteers; preparing training programmes for volunteers; approving the necessary manuals to implement these programmes; drafting a sample 'voluntary work agreement' between volunteers and volunteer bodies; providing the necessary incentives to encourage community members to join volunteer work; preparing the necessary statistics and research on volunteer work; establishing a database of volunteers, volunteer bodies, and volunteer work carried out in the Arab Republic of Egypt; and examining complaints from volunteers and beneficiaries of volunteer services. Finally, Article 13 of the law gave the space for persons (who are not associated with NGOs) to start or implement community development initiative or campaign after getting the permission of the administrative authority

These new developments have resulted in a much more structured legal framework for volunteering in Egypt. This includes the development of a national volunteering strategy, a matching mechanism, training manuals, a code of conduct, and a complaints system. The law addresses gaps such as providing information and data on volunteering opportunities and the status of volunteerism and signing contractual agreements with volunteers. While this represents a significant opportunity to create an enabling environment, the obvious challenge lies in establishing a coordination mechanism to implement these changes.

Lately, in 2023, Egypt enacted Law No. 171, which can be recognized as supporting law for volunteerism. The law established the National Alliance for Civil Development Work. Its purpose is to coordinate between the government and civil society to mobilize individual and collective volunteer efforts for social and economic development. By structure the Alliance is a non-profit entity with financial and administrative independence. It can carry out development projects, launch social initiatives, and build a national database for its activities.

التحالف الوطني للعمل الأهلي التنموي

THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR CIVIL DEVELOPMENT WORK

To finalize, MOSS has been managing several programs that encourage public service and hosts volunteers, these programs can be as big

as the Fund for the Prevention and Treatment of Addiction and Abuse's which reaches around 30,000 volunteers to medium-scale programs as Beena Initiative.

Best Practice

Beena Initiative aims at improving the quality of services provided by care giving institutions, such as "orphanages, and elderly homes, and providing mental health services and technology training to orphans through the engagement of Egyptian citizens as volunteers.

Principal Stakeholders and Partners

Volunteerism in Egypt has several stakeholders who are affecting to the volunteering ecosystem directly and indirectly; government, civil society, international organizations and private sector as follows. Beyond MOSS, the ***Ministry of Youth and Sports*** (MOYS) is also considered one of the key government institutions, as it is responsible for developing young people who represents the majority of the volunteer human power in Egypt. MOYS is the administrative authority concerned and mandated with youth development, it reaches thousands of young persons across the governorates of the country. As such, volunteerism is always a methodology they adopt for youth development and a goal to increase youth contribution in development. MOYS has several departments managing programs that either work on promoting volunteerism or civic engagement or they provide volunteering opportunities, they also engage volunteers to support the Ministry's staff in their daily work and contribute to the achievement of their plans. Such as central department for cultural and volunteering programs and central department for civic education and youth parliament. The law "Organization of Youth Entities - No. 218 of 2017 specified the union of voluntary public service as a kind youth entities that operates under the supervision of MOYS. Recently, a new NGO law was ratified at MOSS and amendments to the youth entities law were made at MOYS.

Ministry of Higher Education is administrative authority supervising the higher education community including faculty members and students. The activities run by student clubs and initiative groups led by students is considered a volunteering exercise, as they are student-led for purpose of student or community development. A recent trend among youth clubs is that they either established for purpose of community development or they have an activity that aims at community development as their practice towards social responsibility. With the proven social impact created by the young students on the community level, many stakeholders have been calling towards embedding community volunteering service within the curriculum and rewarding grades against the community volunteering hours performed by students.

Civil Society Organizations, which include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), syndicates and political parties, are formed based on the voluntary work of the founders and general assembly. Non-governmental organizations are the most important key players due to their ability to host a large number of volunteers and organize their efforts to contribute to community development. Several organizations lead very strong volunteering programmes, such as the

Egyptian Red Crescent, Life Makers and Alashanek Ya Balady. These programmes address specific development issues such as health, economic empowerment and poverty reduction. Civil society organizations work on the ground, providing services directly to citizens. These organizations seek the support of volunteers and open calls for volunteers for specific development programmes within a specific timeframe.

The Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC) NGO, has a clear articulation for the definition of volunteer, volunteerism, goals of volunteering and duties of volunteers in their internal regulation. ERC work with young people through their national "Youth Clubs" program covering all Egypt. The program has 36 clubs in total at all governorates, include more than 20,000 young men and women. Youth clubs' activities include disaster response training programs.

Other organizations promote volunteerism, build the capacity of volunteers, or provide a matchmaking service between volunteers and VIOs. The diverse experiences and modalities for promoting and managing volunteers run by different civil society organizations represent a valuable resource at this critical time in Egypt for the institutionalization of formal volunteerism in Egypt, led by MOSS. Civil society organizations have identified the need to establish a mechanism to facilitate dialogue, coordination and collaboration among themselves and other stakeholders in their efforts to promote volunteerism.

The rise of social media platforms has given rise to new trends that have had a positive impact on volunteering. For example, Facebook groups provided a space for users to exchange information and opportunities. One of the most popular groups among young people in Egypt is called "Events, Scholarships and Volunteering"; it has 477,000 members who exchange information about volunteering and other opportunities for youth development. Another group with the same purpose was created to serve young people in Upper Egypt, with 17,000 members: the "Upper Egypt Opportunities Hub".

International Organizations has been a great contributor to the volunteering ecosystem in Egypt. They are bringing diverse resources that is contributed in the development of volunteerism including technical and financial resources. International organization always work in cooperation with governmental or non-governmental organizations. These organizations contributed to the promotion and institutionalization of volunteerism and youth leadership through supporting the organizational framework of volunteerism, providing training programs that promotes civic engagement and active citizenship, and providing funding to cover volunteering activities, such as United Nations Volunteers.

- UNFPA (Y-Peer Program)
- UNICEF (Civic Education Program)

- Plan International (Volunteering Manual)
- British Council (Active Citizens Program)
- Danish Egyptian Dialogue Initiative (Civic Education for Participation Program)
- Goethe Institute (MENA Civic Education Project)
- John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy (Civic Engagement and Responsible Business
- Gerhart Center/AUC (Youth Leadership Program)

The ***Private Sector***'s contribution to volunteerism has been developing during the last decade. The traditional model was the promotion of corporate volunteerism through encouraging the private sector to contribute to community and youth development through the expertise they have or through the expertise of their employees. With the rise of the concepts of social entrepreneurship, several social enterprises have been established providing their services that aims at creating social impact. These organizations started to provide volunteering and internship opportunities. Other social enterprises are providing several services that contribute to promoting volunteerism such as research and training on issues related to volunteerism, civic engagement, active citizenship, etc. They provide training services to NGOs and international organizations. With such efforts, private sector still needs guidance and support so their interventions contribute positively to volunteering ecosystem.

National Volunteer Platform

Egypt has several national web platforms to support and organize volunteer work. The primary most comprehensive and up-to-date information web portal and official mobile app is the "Ensan" (إنسان) platform. It was launched by the NACDW as a part of the state's efforts to promote civil work and establish a culture of volunteering with purpose to organize volunteer efforts, enhance youth participation in community service, and connect volunteers with organizations. This platform serves as a prominent modern tool for organizing and expanding community participation by connecting volunteers with opportunities available at various institutions and associations throughout the country.

منصة إنسان للعمل التطوعي
Ensan volunteering platform

The platform offers an advanced model for volunteer work, relying on technology to manage data and facilitate access to opportunities. This contributes to maximizing the potential of young people and directing their energies towards serving the community effectively and systematically.

It allows volunteers to register, find opportunities, and track their volunteer hours, facilitates communication between volunteers and institutions. Currently the platform includes a unified database of over 299 thousand volunteers, which indicates a sharp increase in the share of organized volunteers. The platform has provided 30,215 opportunities, reflecting

the diversity of fields and sectors covered by volunteer initiatives. Ensan also recorded the participation of 37 partners from various institutions and organizations, a clear indication of the broad scope of cooperation among different stakeholders in the civil society sector. In a related context, the total number of volunteer hours recorded through the platform has exceeded 39 million, a figure that reflects the significant effort exerted by volunteers and their contribution to supporting community development plans.

Best Practice

Alashanek Ya Balady Association for Sustainable Development (AYB-SD), has developed a franchise model to outreach volunteers, through which student groups (franchisee) contributes to community development (AYB-SD's mandate (the franchisor)) while receiving technical and organizational support from AYB-SD. AYB-SD now has franchises in 12 universities in Egypt.

Core point of the Ensan is a built-in intelligent system that matches volunteer skills with suitable opportunities, ensuring maximum benefit for both the volunteer and the beneficiary organization. It also provides an easy-to-use experience that allows for registration, viewing opportunities, and tracking activities with ease.

The platform also offers the ability to track volunteer hours, obtain electronic certificates of appreciation, and create an interactive community that facilitates the exchange of experiences and success stories among volunteers.

Leading government player, MOSS provides an online portal for those who wish to volunteer with its various initiatives. It aimed to register volunteers for programs under the ministry's umbrella, such as child protection, care for the elderly, and other social initiatives. Another key stakeholder, MOYS runs on the ministry's official website a specific program called "Junior Volunteers" to engage young people in volunteer work and prepare volunteer cadres to serve the community and support civil work.

Concerning other related platforms, Egyptian Red Crescent: offers its own electronic volunteer registration system with 65,000 registered volunteers of the organization's network and it is needed to mention an additional platform by the Ministry of Social Solidarity "Farhet Masr" (فرحة مصر) focused on specific social initiatives.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Currently Egypt has legislative framework and national institutional infrastructure to support and advocate for volunteerism at a national level.

Egypt launched National Volunteer platform Ensan aimed to promote a culture of volunteerism and encourage all segments of society, especially youth, to engage in community initiatives, thus contributing to the state's efforts to achieve sustainable development and improve the quality of life for citizens.

The launch of the platform confirms that civil society work in Egypt is witnessing a new phase of development, based on digital transformation and the integration of efforts between institutions and volunteers, which enhances the

effectiveness of initiatives and multiplies their impact on the ground.

Possible measures for further development of volunteering environment in Egypt may include capacity and social inclusion at the local level. Egypt also recognizes volunteerism as a means of empowering youth and expanding international cooperation, particularly through practical field engagement and skills development.

INDIA

Republic of India
Population: 1463.9 million
Capital City: New Delhi

Human Development Index	0.685 (medium)
World Giving Index	48, including 65% of adults helped a stranger, 38% donated money and 41% volunteered

"Doing good to others out of compassion is good, but the Seva (service) of all beings in the spirit of the Lord is better."
– Swami Vivekananda

Address by Dr.Pallavi Jain Govil, Secretary, Youth Affairs Department, Indian Administrative Service

India's tradition of volunteerism is deeply rooted in its civilizational ethos. Since antiquity, the principles of 'seva' (selfless service), community responsibility and collective welfare have shaped social life across generations, forming the foundation of social cohesion and collective progress across the country. In contemporary India, this enduring legacy finds structured expression through various undertakings of the Department of Youth Affairs, Government of India that promotes volunteerism as a key instrument for youth engagement and nation building activities. The Department has institutionalized this commitment through two major flagship initiatives: the National Service Scheme (NSS), established in 1969, and Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat), a modern digital platform launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on National Unity Day 2023 to redefine youth engagement in the 21st century.

The journey from NSS to MY Bharat represents the evolution of volunteerism from moral tradition to institutional digital framework. While NSS units continue the long-standing engagement of youth within higher education, MY Bharat, with prominent ground presence across India, provides an overarching digital architecture that enables large-scale, real time civic participation aligned with national priorities. By integrating heritage with innovation, India has positioned volunteerism as both a cultural inheritance and a modern development strategy, empowering youth as active partners in nation building and sustainable progress. India remains committed to strengthening youth-led volunteerism as a pillar of inclusive development, and offers a forward-looking model of volunteerism for the global community.

Introduction

Volunteerism has long formed the moral and social backbone of Indian society, deeply rooted in the country's multicultural heritage and diverse spiritual traditions that emphasize selfless service as a core social value. Across religions and village-based communities in India, collective support systems have continued to nurture a culture of helping, sharing and social responsibility. This pluralistic ethos has enabled volunteer action to transcend social boundaries, fostering unity, resilience and collective progress across generations.

In the contemporary era, this enduring spirit is uniquely reinforced by India's demographic strength as home to one of the largest youth populations in the world. With millions of young citizens seeking meaningful engagement, skills development, and social contribution, volunteerism has emerged as a powerful channel for transforming youthful energy into inclusive development and nation building. Recognizing this opportunity, the Department of Youth Affairs, Government of India, has institutionalized volunteerism through a comprehensive national ecosystem that blends historical legacy with modern governance innovation.

Today, India's volunteer ecosystem spans environmental sustainability, public health, disaster response, democratic participation, leadership development, and social inclusion, mobilizing youth across every district of the country. Through national campaigns, grassroots youth clubs, leadership platforms, and international collaboration, India has established a dynamic model of participatory development supported by real time digital coordination and impact assessment.

This piece of review presents India's best practices in volunteerism across institutional systems, flagship initiatives, community driven models, youth-led innovations, governance frameworks and international engagement. It demonstrates how India has transformed its cultural ethos of service and demographic strength into a structured force for social impact, offering valuable insights and replicable lessons for CICA Member States and the global community.

National Volunteer Organizations, Systems and Networks

India's volunteerism framework is anchored in a robust institutional and digital ecosystem that combines long standing higher education-based service structures with modern technology enabled national platforms to mobilize youth at scale for community development and nation building. emergency response and community service programs across India. ***MY Bharat-NSS***, earlier known as the National Service Scheme (NSS) and established in 1969, operates under the aegis of MY Bharat as one of the world's largest institutionalized youth volunteer programs within India's higher education system under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. The program functions through universities, colleges and higher education institutes across all states and union territories, enrolling millions of student volunteers annually with extensive grassroots outreach. MY Bharat-NSS institutionalizes volunteerism through regular

hours of community engagement across academic years encompassing activities including literacy campaigns, health and sanitation awareness, environmental conservation, blood donation camps, disaster response and social welfare initiatives.

Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat). MY Bharat is an autonomous body under the Department of Youth Affairs that represents India's strategic transition of youth engagement into the digital era. It is designed to align volunteerism with the realities of a rapidly urbanizing, technologically advanced, and globally interconnected society. Moving beyond traditional programmatic delivery, the platform integrates NSS, Youth Clubs, educational institutions, civil society organizations, and government agencies into a unified national volunteer ecosystem aligned with national development priorities.

With over 21 million online registrations, the digital platform enables real time youth engagement, maintains a comprehensive national volunteer database, and supports rapid, scalable mobilization for development initiatives.

Major Volunteer Initiatives, Campaigns, and Community-Service Models

Building upon its institutional and digital foundations, the Department operationalizes volunteerism through structured thematic interventions, nationwide campaigns, and youth-led community service models that translate participation into measurable social impact.

Thematic Areas of Volunteer Engagement

MY Bharat supports and facilitates volunteer engagement across multiple strategic areas:

- Cleanliness and Environmental Sustainability: Tree plantation, waste management, coastal cleanup
- Health, Nutrition, and Wellness Campaigns: Blood donation, health awareness, disease prevention
- Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response: Rapid mobilization during natural disasters
- Youth Leadership Development: Capacity building and democratic participation
- Sports Activities: Promoting fitness and community engagement through sports
- Awareness Rallies: Public campaigns on various social themes and national priorities

National Campaigns and Mass Volunteer Mobilization Activities

Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam: A nationwide citizen led plantation initiative was launched on World Environment Day 2024 by Hon'ble Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi. The initiative has achieved over 1.40 billion plantations in 2024-2025, with a target of 1 billion additional indigenous saplings in 2025–26 to enhance green cover, restore degraded lands, and promote community led environmental stewardship.

Swachhata Hi Seva Campaign: The Swachhata Hi Seva Campaign mobilized approximately 100,000 NSS volunteers across nearly 10,000 programs, resulting in the collection of over 10,0 00 kilograms of plastic waste.

Anti-Drug Awareness Programme: The 'Life is Beautiful' Anti-Drug Awareness Programme engaged 25,550 volunteers through 1,050 initiatives nationwide.

Wayanad Fund Collection drive: MY Bharat-NSS volunteers also mobilized approximately 250,000 participants during the Wayanad Fund Collection Drive, raising ₹4.5 crore (45 million) for disaster relief.

Swachh Sagar Surakshit Sagar Campaign (Coastal Cleanup Initiative): The Swachh Sagar Surakshit Sagar Campaign conducted on 17 September 2025 mobilized over 2,000 volunteers across coastal sites in Odisha, promoting marine conservation and large scale cleanliness drives.

Civic Engagement and Awareness Campaigns: MY Bharat-NSS units have organized awareness campaigns on democratic rights and civic duties, including voter awareness walkathons for municipal elections. These initiatives strengthen democratic participation among youth and encourage active citizenship.

Health and Wellness Initiatives: MY Bharat-NSS volunteers have been actively engaged in promoting public health through various initiatives including 'Seva Se Seekhe' campaign, blood donation camps, breast cancer awareness programs, and health education campaigns.

National Volunteer Events and Leadership Platforms

To nurture leadership, democratic participation, and national integration, the Department facilitates large scale youth participation through programs and leadership platforms that offer inclusive opportunities for youth across socio economic backgrounds, spanning rural and urban communities as well as schools, colleges, and higher education institutions nationwide. The programs and platforms are highlighted below:

Exchange Programs for National Integration: Exchange programs including the Tribal Youth Exchange Programme and Inter State Youth Exchange Programme foster cross-cultural youth interaction, cultural integration and national unity.

Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue (VBYLD) – Earlier National Youth Festival: Formerly known as the National Youth Festival (NYF), the event has been reimagined as the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue (VBYLD) to serve as a structured national platform for youth participation in India's development agenda. The initiative follows a multi-tier selection process

from district-level activities to state level presentations to nationwide digital challenges, culminating in direct interaction and idea sharing before the Hon'ble Prime Minister. Key recommendations emerging from the thematic presentations are systematically integrated into policy deliberations, strengthening youth led participatory governance. The Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2026 edition attracted over 5 million registrations, which is a significant milestone as youth generated recommendations were reflected in the Union Budget 2026-27, institutionalizing youth participation in policymaking.

Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament: The Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament promotes democratic engagement through simulated parliamentary proceedings, where young people learn democratic processes, policy formulation and constructive debate on issues affecting the nation.

Yuva Connect: A networking platform designed to facilitate collaboration among youth volunteers, organizations, and stakeholders, fostering synergy and knowledge exchange across India's diverse volunteer ecosystem.

Success Stories: Youth Clubs and Individual Volunteers

MY Bharat Youth Clubs. In parallel, organic waste and fecal sludge are processed into compost, producing high-quality organic fertilizer that benefits surrounding farming communities. Through this closed-loop system, kitchen waste, human waste, and plastic are all transformed into valuable resources, demonstrating an integrated approach to environmental volunteerism aligned with multiple Sustainable Development Goals.

India's volunteer ecosystem is enriched by thousands of MY Bharat Youth Clubs across the country, delivering innovative, committed and measurable responses to local challenges. The following success stories highlight the breadth and impact of youth led volunteerism in India.

Udaan Youth Club, Uttar Pradesh (Digital Innovation for Rural Development): Enabled digital governance and educational access through platforms reaching over 7.9 million users, including e governance applications supporting district administration.

Career Mahila Mandal, Rajasthan (Comprehensive Women Empowerment): Advanced women's health, skills, and environmental action by reaching 55,000 women, conducting 300+ menstrual health and hygiene awareness workshops, and training 10,000+ beneficiaries in digital literacy, tailoring, and beauty courses, alongside biodiversity initiatives.

Cycle Yatra Ek Vichar, Bihar (Sustainable Mobility for Social Change): Conducted 437 outreach journeys across 547 villages, covering

9,112 km, and planted 26,652 saplings to promote environmental sustainability.

*Disha Athletics, Kerala (*Sports Excellence and Career Development): Delivered multisport coaching and uniformed services training, producing State and National medalists, including Khelo India Youth Games achievers.

Gramin Vikas Navyuwak Mandal, Rajasthan (Entrepreneurship and Employment Generation): Built a women led enterprise ecosystem generating employment for 150+ individuals and scaling from a ₹7,000 venture to multi-crore operations.

Ahsan Foundation, Jammu & Kashmir (Drug De-addiction and Rehabilitation): Achieved a 40% reduction in new addiction cases and successfully rehabilitated 100+ individuals through community based interventions.

Ayanika Peoples Mental Health Initiative, Kerala (Breaking Mental Health Stigma): Expanded community mental health awareness through campaigns reaching 1,100+ participants and large scale public engagement festivals.

Jharkhand Foundation Kendra, Jharkhand (Sustainable Agriculture and Water Security): Implemented climate-smart agriculture, water security solutions, and rural education programs benefiting hundreds of families and 1,000+ students.

Satmile Satish Club O Pathagar, West Bengal (Climate-Smart Agriculture at Scale): Established 36 Farmer Producer Organizations involving 100,000+ farmers, advancing sustainable agriculture across 37,500 hectares.

Pranavam Club, Kerala (Community Infrastructure Development): Mobilized community financing to build a local stadium, acquiring 50 cents of land and hosting national level All India Volleyball Tournament for 3,000 spectators.

Individual Volunteer Success Story. A rural youth from Muzaffarpur, Bihar transformed indigenous Tikuli Art into a structured handicraft enterprise employing 40 community members, integrating social entrepreneurship with disaster response and volunteer leadership.

Group Volunteerism: Disaster Response Leadership. During the Himachal Pradesh floods in September 2025, youth volunteers distributed rations to over 100 families, conducted health awareness programs, and supported education continuity in relief camps.

In Punjab flood regions of Gurdaspur, Amritsar and Tarn Taran districts, 50 youth volunteers from the MY Bharat-affiliated club worked alongside authorities to strengthen river embankments, protecting approximately 50 villages, organized medical camps, and conducted systematic relief distribution.

International Volunteer Engagement

India actively engages with United Nations Volunteers (UNV), Commonwealth youth programs, BRICS youth platforms, and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

The nation shares its volunteering model and practices globally, participates in international volunteers conferences, facilitates cross border exchanges, and supports the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development 2026.

Viksit Bharat Run 2025 (Global Diaspora Engagement): Organized across 144 locations in over 90 countries in collaboration with Indian Missions abroad, this first of its kind global volunteer initiative mobilized youth, diaspora communities, and local participants through community runs, service pledges, environmental action under 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam', and digital engagement with MY Bharat, strengthening transnational civic participation and showcasing India's values of service, sustainability and inclusive nation building.

Regulatory Frameworks and Incentives

Volunteerism is governed through national NSS guidelines, MY Bharat digital protocols, standardized youth club governance structures, and continuous monitoring mechanisms integrated with local government systems.

Recognition includes MY Bharat-NSS certificates, digital volunteer portfolios, presidential level awards, access to leadership platforms, skill development programs, and structured career enhancement opportunities.

MY Bharat-NSS Awards 2022-23: On 6 October 2025, MY-Bharat NSS Awards 2022 23 were conferred by the Hon'ble President of India at Rashtrapati Bhavan, recognizing 40 awardees including 10 outstanding MY Bharat-NSS units and officers and 30 exemplary volunteers.

National Youth Awards: The National Youth Awards recognize outstanding individuals aged 15 to 29 years and youth organizations for excellence in national development and social service, with up to 20 individual and five organizational awards conferred annually during the National Youth Festival across fields such as health, innovation, culture, community service, sports, active citizenship and academic excellence. For the NYA 2022–23 cycle, 12 individual awards and one organizational award were presented in recognition of outstanding youth contributions.

Impact Assessment Mechanism

MY Bharat portal enables real time tracking of volunteer activities across all 766 districts of India through automated data analytics, GIS mapping, and youth engagement dashboards. Qualitative assessments include community feedback, case study documentation, leadership development measurement, social cohesion evaluation, and long-term civic engagement tracking.

Volunteerism Within Democratic and Social Frameworks

India's volunteer frameworks represent democratic youth participation in governance through institutionalized channels for youth

voices in policymaking and decentralized grassroots empowerment models. The Youth Club framework strengthens democratic participation aligned with Panchayati Raj Institutions and constitutional decentralization. Programs prioritize geographic inclusion, gender equity, tribal integration, socio economic diversity, and inter-community harmony. Technology-enabled civic engagement under MY Bharat provides access to volunteering opportunities, while maintaining community ownership and grassroots relevance. Volunteerism is positioned as a nation building instrument aligned with India's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, transforming youth into active agents of sustainable development.

Conclusion

India's volunteerism architecture stands as a globally scalable and future ready model that seamlessly integrates institutional legacy, digital public infrastructure, grassroots democratic engagement, and youth-led development. With MY Bharat serving as the modern national digital platform and MY Bharat-NSS functioning as its programmatic and institutional backbone within the volunteer framework, India has successfully unified traditional volunteer structures with contemporary governance innovation.

This unified framework successfully connects civic engagement with education systems, community empowerment, real time digital mobilization, and national development priorities, ensuring both continuity and innovation in youth participation. By embedding volunteerism within governance structures while leveraging modern technology for scale, transparency, and impact, India has positioned itself as a leading example of structured, inclusive, and outcome driven volunteerism, offering a replicable blueprint for sustainable nation building in the 21st century.

Corporate volunteering in India has similarly matured into a structured and strategic pillar within Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) frameworks, with a growing emphasis on skill-based engagement, measurable outcomes and sustained community partnerships. In alignment with national priorities such as education, digital inclusion, environmental sustainability and community health, corporate engagement is increasingly moving beyond one day activities toward long term impact-oriented models. Industry associations such as Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), NASSCOM, FICCI and PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry have further strengthened this ecosystem by convening industry, government and civil society platforms, promoting structured and skill-based volunteering, and advancing knowledge exchange and dissemination of best practices. Together, these developments reinforce India's position as a scalable, technology enabled and collaborative national model of volunteerism that integrates public systems with private sector participation for sustainable nation building.

ISRAEL

State of Israel

Population: 9.5 million No. of Volunteers: 0.9 million

Capital City: Jerusalem

Human Development Index	0.919 (very high)
World Giving Index	49, including 63% of adults helped a stranger, 54% donated money and 28% volunteered
National Volunteer Platform	www.good-deeds-day.org
Lead Non-Profit Organization	Ruach Tova
Volunteer on Local Language	מתנדב [mitnadev] – *Hebrew*

Brief Summary

Ruach Tova, which means "Good Spirit" in Hebrew, is the leading organization in the field of volunteering in Israel, specializing in matching volunteers with organizations. In 2008, Ruach Tova joined the Arison Group, a global business and philanthropic conglomerate, and is supported by the Ted Arison Family Foundation. The Foundation was established in 1993 by Ted Arison and his daughter, Shari Arison, with activities based on three values: kindness, generosity, and repairing the world, to inspire significant change, encourage excellence, social responsibility and create a better society.

At Ruach Tova, they believe that everyone has the power to do good. That is why they specialize in connecting individuals and groups to the causes and organizations they are passionate about. They help them make a difference in the world. Ruach Tova connects people who are interested in volunteering in Israel to non-profit organizations across the country who offer volunteering opportunities. Placements are according to the volunteer's preferences and needs. Ruach Tova acts as an intermediary between volunteers and the organizations they are involved with.

The largest project of Ruach Tova is Good Deeds Day, an annual tradition of good deeds. All over the world, hundreds of thousands choose to volunteer and help others, putting into practice the simple idea that every single person can do something good, be it large or small, to improve the lives of others and positively change the world. 108 countries worldwide have taken part in Good Deeds Day.

DOING GOOD

KAZAKHSTAN

Republic of Kazakhstan

Population: 20.8 million

Capital City: Astana

No. of Volunteers: 300,980 (2025)

Human Development Index	0.837 (very high)
World Giving Index	33, including 45% of adults helped a stranger, 41% donated money and 13% volunteered
Law on Volunteerism	Law “On Volunteer Activitiy” dated 30 December 2016 No. 42-VI ZRK
National Volunteer Platform	qazvolunteer.kz
Leading Non-Profit Organization	National Volunteer Network, the Association of Legal Entities
Volunteer Counter Office	National Volunteer Network, the Association of Legal Entities
Government Supervisor	Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Address by Mr. Yevgeniy Kochetov,Vice Minister of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Dear colleagues,

The development of volunteerism is one of the key priorities of Kazakhstan's public policy.

Kazakhstan is proud to be the first country in the world to enshrine the promotion of volunteerism in its Constitution. This landmark step reflects our firm belief that volunteerism is an essential force for building a resilient, compassionate and forward-looking society.

Today, volunteers are indispensable partners in advancing national priorities and responding to the needs of communities across the country. Their contributions span virtually every area of public life — from environmental protection, social services, healthcare, education and culture to emergency response, the search for missing persons, blood donation, public safety and many other fields where their commitment makes a meaningful difference.

Volunteers also make a significant contribution to Kazakhstan's nationwide Taza Kazakhstan and Law and Order initiatives, while helping advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

At the initiative of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2026 the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development. This historic decision recognizes Kazakhstan's contribution to advancing volunteerism and strengthening its role in achieving sustainable development around the world.

Strengthening cooperation among the countries of Asia is of particular importance. In this

context, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) plays an important role in fostering humanitarian cooperation and promoting the shared values that unite our nations.

I am confident that this publication will serve as a valuable platform for sharing best practices, inspiring new partnerships and encouraging closer collaboration. I also hope it will contribute to the continued growth of volunteerism across the CICA Member States.

I wish all readers and contributors every success in their work, the successful implementation of joint initiatives and the continued strengthening of international cooperation

Legislative Development

Volunteer activity in Kazakhstan began to develop in the mid-1990s alongside the growth of non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs/NPOs). The development of volunteering in the country was undoubtedly facilitated by the 2001 adoption of the Law on Non-Profit Organizations. While the term 'volunteering' itself was not included in the law, the list of objectives for which non-profit organizations could be established included social and charitable goals closely related to the use of volunteer labor.

In 2015, amendments were made to the Law on Youth Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Article 4 of the law was amended in particular, with the development of youth volunteering being mentioned for the first time as one of the main areas of state youth policy (clause 11). That same year, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan began to support the development of volunteering.

In order to attract a large number of volunteers for the major international events EXPO-2017 and the Universiade-2017, the Ministry initiated the creation of a Volunteer School. Furthermore, the National Volunteer Network (NVN), commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, held the national competition 'Best Volunteer-2015', which has since become an annual event. Among the target indicators for the socio-economic integration of young people receiving technical and vocational education in the State Programme for the Development of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2016–2019, the school set the goal of increasing the proportion of students involved in socially useful activities, including volunteering, to 60% by 2019.

In 2021, this figure was 30%. The development of children's public associations was also intended to foster the social and civic engagement of schoolchildren and encourage them to participate in volunteering.

Specialized Law No. 42-VI ZRK on Volunteer Activity was adopted in 2016. This law is the primary regulatory act governing volunteering in Kazakhstan. In 2022, amendments were made to the law to increase its effectiveness and strengthen state support for volunteering. The adoption of the law enabled the development of a unified conceptual framework, definitions, boundaries and areas of volunteer activity, thereby creating the legal preconditions for uniting and activating society's efforts in its development.

Evolution of Volunteer Sector

A notable feature of volunteerism in Kazakhstan is that local volunteer organizations, initiative groups and individual volunteers play a key role in driving social improvements by addressing specific regional issues and challenges. This is due to marked regional differences and social needs, meaning there is no need for large organizations or representation in all regions of the country. However, standard tasks do exist, such as providing assistance to elderly people living alone, carrying out search and rescue operations, responding to emergencies, promoting animal welfare and preventing unwanted situations. These tasks are carried out throughout the country in a similar manner by different representatives of the volunteer movement.

The development of volunteerism is connected with the emergence of the UN Volunteers programme in Kazakhstan in 1993. In the 2000s, the country experienced rapid growth in the number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), with environmental, children's and youth organizations predominating. The first volunteer organizations also emerged. In 2002, the Kazakhstan Youth Congress was formed, uniting over 250 youth organizations nationwide with the aim of coordinating existing youth organization activities and supporting the development of new ones. The Almaty Youth Congress, their regional office, was established as a volunteer organization. In October 2003, the first NGO Civil Forum was held in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

In 2005, the practice of student work during vacation periods was resumed at the suggestion of the head of state. The 'Zhasyl El' (Green Country) programme to green the country was launched, and a national headquarters for the 'Zhasyl El' youth labour brigades was established, complete with developed infrastructure in the regions.

In 2008, the Volunteer Coordination Center Komanda SOS was established through the initiative of the non-profit charitable foundation Seimar Social Fund and the UN Volunteers Programme. The center's activities aimed to solve socially significant problems through the efforts of volunteers, and its main goal was to build a national volunteer infrastructure. From 2009 to 2018, Komanda SOS published three editions of its Volunteer Handbook.

In 2010, the Volunteer Rescue Corps was formed. Since 2014, the public foundation League of Kazakhstan Volunteers, the largest youth movement in Almaty, has been operating.

By the time of the 5th Civil Forum in 2011, the number of public organizations in Kazakhstan had increased from 57,000 to 30,000, including

18,000 NGOs. Approximately 1 million people were employed in the NGO sector, and their services were used by over 5 million citizens.

The Ministry of Culture and Information of Kazakhstan is a government agency responsible for leadership in the areas of information, the interaction between the state and civil society, religious activities, state youth and family policy, the modernization of public consciousness, charity, volunteering, mediation, ensuring domestic political stability and interfaith and interethnic harmony. The ministry is also responsible for intersectoral coordination and government regulation within the limits provided by law.

National Volunteer Network

Among organizations dedicated to promoting volunteerism, the National Volunteer Network (NVN) is particularly noteworthy. Founded in 2012, the NVN is an association of legal entities. The NVN's mission is to promote volunteering in Kazakhstan, and its strategic goals reflect this. The NVN coordinates national projects and implements its own local initiatives, involving up to 4,000 people. The maximum number of volunteers participating in national projects coordinated by the NVN simultaneously is 30,000. The NVN plays a key role in promoting the value of volunteering in Kazakhstan and sharing innovative volunteering practices. In 2021, NVN experts developed a State Standard for Supporting Volunteering and a Unified Programme for Training Volunteers in Risk Zones.

Notably, NVN experts and analysts prepare an annual Analytical Report using monthly reports from regional front offices and materials provided by network members. This report analyses the development of the volunteer community, assesses its contribution to the country's socio-economic development, identifies key problem areas and needs, and considers the regional specifics of volunteer activity. Recommendations and proposals are prepared for central and local government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and others. The NVN has developed recommendations for creating a unified volunteer registry, for considering volunteer experience when applying to educational institutions, and for enabling volunteers to participate in various events abroad. The goal is to create a mechanism for rewarding their activities for the benefit of society.

Year of Volunteer

Decree No. 135 of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan declared 2020 the Year of the Volunteer. The Action Plan for the Year of the Volunteer was approved by Resolution No. 3 of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on 16 January 2020. The plan included the organization of around 50 events designed to develop a favorable environment for volunteering and its infrastructure, promote volunteerism and increase citizen participation, as well as develop corporate volunteering. In order to achieve the Sustainable Development

Goals, seven nationwide projects were launched under the single brand 'Birgemiz' in seven priority thematic (sectoral) areas of volunteering. Guidelines for the Development of Sectoral Volunteering were developed for each of these areas, as well as Guidelines for the Development of Volunteering and the Year of the Volunteer.

An important achievement in 2020 was the opening of the Birgemiz Republican Front Office, a center providing consulting, methodological, training and information services. Work also began on establishing a permanent network of 17 regional volunteer support centers and 85 regional coordinators. Since establishment, a regional volunteer front office has operated in each region of Kazakhstan through the Youth Resource Centers. Their mission is to support volunteer initiatives and promote the development of volunteerism in the regions. Offices were created to develop and promote unified approaches to the development of volunteerism across the country, to attract citizens from various target audiences and age groups to volunteering, and to provide state support for the development of volunteering. They play a key role in dialogue between the volunteer movement and the government. In its first year, the Republican Front Office trained 650 volunteers, 38 volunteer trainers and 51 regional coordinators.

Since 2021, an annual Summer School for leaders of front offices and volunteer organizations has been held. The school aims to develop the professional and personal potential of participants in the volunteer movement, as well as creating a unified field of interaction between representatives of the volunteer community from all regions of Kazakhstan.

Follow Up Activity

Between 2020 and 2023, the number of volunteers in the country increased from 50,000 to 240,000. In April 2021, the Roadmap for the Development of Volunteering for 2021–2023 was approved by Order No. 84-r of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, A. Mamin. This strategic document proposes systemic measures to provide state support for the implementation and development of volunteering in the country. That same year, the Ministry of Information and Social Development requested that the NVN develop a Standard for State Support of Volunteering Activities in the form of methodological recommendations. In 2023, a call for proposals was organized and the development of a Roadmap for the Development of Volunteering for 2024–2026 was initiated.

It was approved and sent to the regions in January 2024. The main focus of the new three-year period is the development of industry-specific volunteering, achieved through direct interaction between government industry-specific departments and institutions, and volunteer initiatives.

In addition, Kazakhstan has introduced a State Standard for Supporting Volunteer Activities. Methodological recommendations have been

developed for central and local government authorities, covering the operation of regional volunteer front offices, mechanisms for cooperation between public authorities and volunteer organizations, and procedures for engaging volunteers in large-scale national and international events.

According to the national front office Birgemiz, over 500,000 Kazakhstan citizens volunteered during the pandemic. Eighteen regional centers were set up across the country and more than 8,000 volunteers were trained in various areas, including search and rescue, emergency response, mentoring and healthcare. The front office opened a hotline to receive requests from the public and social institutions, sought sponsors and organized the delivery of groceries to those in need and pensioners. Volunteers also sewed and distributed masks on the streets, monitored medication availability in pharmacies and delivered hot meals to doctors. Over the course of a month, more than 1,000 food baskets, over 27,000 masks and 580 protective shields were distributed and over 400 hand sanitizer stations were installed in schools. During the state of emergency, more than 36,000 volunteers in the regions provided assistance to 869,000 Kazakhstan people, distributing 4,500 masks and 29 tons of fruit and vegetables. The total economic contribution of the country's volunteers during the state of emergency was over 21 million tenge, and the contribution of engaged partners was almost 185 million tenge. During the year, the number of volunteer organizations tripled to 600, and the number of permanent volunteers doubled to 100,000.

The positive growth trend has continued in subsequent years. As of 2025, more than 810 volunteer organizations are actively operating in Kazakhstan, compared to more than 755 organizations in 2024 and more than 700 organizations in 2023. The number of active volunteers has increased to 300,980 people in 2025, compared to 275,000 in 2024 and more than 240,000 in 2023.

Among Kazakhstan's international initiatives, the large-scale First Central Asian Volunteer Forum, held in Kazakhstan in August 2022, is notable. The forum brought together around 200 delegates from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Participants observed that the number of volunteer organizations in Kazakhstan has tripled in recent years, surpassing 600. The forum included training events and volunteer activities.

On 18 December 2023, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development, following an initiative put forward by the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The following year, in June 2023, the International Volunteer Forum took place in Astana, attracting around 400 participants from over 30 countries.

The forum covered various areas of volunteering. In particular, session platforms were organized on Social Volunteering and Inclusion, Volunteer Initiatives in Education and Digitalization, Measuring the Value and Significance of Volunteering's Contribution to the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, Green Footprint: Volunteers' Contribution to Solving Environmental Issues', and others. Masterclasses, pitching sessions and other events were also held. More than 40 speakers participated in the Forum, including President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

In 2024, United Nations Volunteers prepared and published the State of Volunteering in Central Asia Review. This first regional report of its kind showcases the evolution of volunteering practices and the impact of volunteer efforts, emphasizes the value of volunteers' contributions, and identifies best practices in Central Asia's volunteer movement (https://surl.li/syuwnk).

The initiative was first proposed during the International Volunteer Forum held in Astana in 2023. During the presentation of the Review at the United Nations Headquarters in 2024, Kazakhstan was recognized as one of the regional leaders in the development and promotion of volunteerism in Central Asia.

Best Practice

LIDER.KZ volunteer movement

The organization's activities focus on searching for and rescuing missing person, as well as providing assistance in emergency situations. With head office in Almaty this NGO has many regional offices across the country

Best Practice

Republican Front Office of Volunteers

Network of consulting, methodological, training, and information centers. Its mission is to support volunteer initiatives and promote the development of volunteerism in the regions. Activities are being carried out within the framework of the implementation of the Volunteer Development Roadmaps for 2024–2026.

KYRGYZSTAN

Kyrgyz Republic

Population: 7.3 million No. of Volunteers 0,3 million

Capital City: Bishkek

Law on Volunteerism	Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On Volunteer Activities” dated March 31, 2023 No. 77
National Volunteer Platform	volunteer.kg
Leading Non-Profit Organizations	Volunteer Union of Kyrgyzstan, Youth Movement of Kyrgyzstan
Volunteer Counter Office	Ministry of Culture, Information, and Youth Policy
Government Supervisor	Ministry of Culture, Information, and Youth Policy

State of Volunteerism

The concept of volunteer activity was first defined in the 2009 Law of the Kyrgyz Republic 'On the Fundamentals of State Youth Policy' as the performance by individuals and legal entities of socially useful work aimed at satisfying public or state interests, carried out voluntarily in various forms and without monetary compensation, through which individuals can gain knowledge, experience and skills, and demonstrate their abilities.

Currently the legal basis for volunteerism, its goals and objectives, and the procedures for carrying out volunteer activities in the Kyrgyz Republic are set out in the Law on Volunteer Activities, which was adopted on 31 March 2023. This law uses the same definition of 'volunteer activity' as the previously adopted Law on Youth, and defines a 'volunteer organization' as 'a non-profit organization registered in the manner established by the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic, carrying out volunteer activities, acting as an organizer of volunteer activities, implementing volunteer programmes or conducting volunteer events, and attracting volunteers to its activities, acting on its behalf and at its direction'. The law lists 25 main types of volunteer activity. These cannot include supporting political parties, religious organizations, or the commercial promotion of goods, works, or services, nor commercial intermediation. The creation of volunteer organizations that resemble paramilitary formations is also prohibited.

Volunteer activities can be carried out with or without a volunteer agreement, provided the volunteer has a direct agreement with the recipient of the assistance. A volunteer organization may enter into an agreement with a volunteer who has reached the age of 18 if they are carrying out more than 20 hours of volunteer work per month. Such an agreement must define the type of activity, the nature and scope of the services, the duration of the work, the rights and responsibilities of the volunteer and the organization, work organization issues, safety regulations and other matters. To keep track of

their activities, volunteers may obtain a personal record book. Information about the volunteer's activities and incentives is entered into the book by volunteer organizations, organizers or recipients of assistance, and duly certified.

Government Support and Regulations

The development of the volunteer movement in the country has reached a qualitatively new, systematic level thanks to the above-mentioned law and another fundamental document, the Concept for the Development of Volunteer Activities for 2025–2030 (approved by Resolution No. 771 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic dated December 19, 2024). It aimed at creating an inclusive, sustainable, and scalable volunteer ecosystem.

In accordance with the current structure of governance, the Ministry of Culture, Information, and Youth Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic is the official body responsible for regulating and promoting volunteer activities in the country. Previously, this function was the responsibility of the State Agency for Youth Affairs, Physical Culture, and Sports, but that agency was reorganized.

As part of the implementation of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Concept for the Development of Volunteer Activities in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2025–2030, the Ministry is carrying out comprehensive work in key areas.

The Ministry representatives are members of the working group on developing the youth volunteer movement under the CIS countries' Youth Council. There is growing interest in cooperation between government agencies and volunteer

groups and organizations. One specific area in which government agencies use volunteers is to assist probation agencies — authorized government bodies that enforce criminal penalties not involving isolation from society. The involvement of the public, particularly volunteers, in the probation process is set out in Chapter 5 of the 2017 Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On Probation" and a separate document entitled "Procedure for the Selection of Volunteers for Probation Agencies and Their Activities".

Although state and municipal authorities increasingly recognize the importance of volunteerism for national development, government support measures remain underdeveloped. These measures include organizational and legal support, information and methodology, infrastructure, incentives for volunteers, and financial support. Volunteerism is largely developed through the efforts of

volunteer organizations themselves, including informal ones.

Funding Opportunities

The main mechanism for state funding of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including volunteer organizations, is state social procurement. Social procurement enables non-governmental organizations to obtain funding on a competitive basis for projects that provide assistance to adults and children with disabilities, senior citizens, low-income families, women and children who have suffered violence, unemployed youth and others. The republican budget annually allocates up to 48.7 million som to support crisis centers, create jobs, develop social entrepreneurship, train personal assistants, support traditional crafts, and so on. Thanks to state support, around 18,000 people have received social services over the past two years. NGOs may be provided with subsidies and other forms of state assistance.

There is no official data published on the number of volunteers in Kyrgyzstan. However, based on the results of a survey conducted by the Social Practices Laboratory of the Educational, Scientific and Production Complex "International University of Kyrgyzstan" as part of the dialogue programme "Administrative Reforms in Central Asia", which found that 30% of young people participated in volunteer activities, and government statistics which counted 1.2 million people aged 14–28 as of 2021, it is estimated that over 300,000 young people have volunteered. According to the same survey, the majority of organizations engaging volunteers (80.8%) are located in the capital and large cities. Only a fifth of volunteers live in rural areas.

National Digital Platform

The leading role in digital transformation belongs to OJSC Tündük, the state digital infrastructure of the Kyrgyz Republic. This the National Digital Platform with 3.1 million registered users connects government agencies, citizens and businesses within a single digital environment providing 195 online state services. The Ministry of Culture, Information, and Youth Policy in collaboration with Tündük is developing the volunteer.kg mobile app, which will address three key objectives at once:

-- Electronic “Personal Volunteer Book”: accurate and official digital tracking of hours worked, projects, and each participant’s personal contribution.

-- Data security via the Unified Identification System: Authorization through the Unified Identification System prevents the creation of

fake accounts and ensures user verification.

– Government online monitoring, collection of up-to-date national statistics on the number of activists and their areas of activity (environment, culture, social assistance, etc.).

Recognition, Rewards, and Motivation

The hard-paper and electronic versions of the Personal Volunteer Book have become the official means of recognizing citizens' contributions. In addition, special "Regulations on the Implementation, Promotion, and Encouragement of Youth Volunteer Activities" have been approved, creating legal incentives to engage young people.

To systematically recognize outstanding achievements, the Ministry is developing Regulations on a ministry-level Award for exceptional contributions to the development of volunteer activities.

The award consists of a certificate and an exclusive statuette, the designs of which are approved by the Ministry of Culture, Information, and Youth Policy.

The purpose of the award is to strengthen civic engagement and the values of unity, and to recognize opinion leaders in the volunteer sector.

Nominations for the award are based on areas of activity such as the environment, education, healthcare, culture, sports, emergency response, and others. The "Best Volunteer" award is presented to individual activists for their initiative, responsibility, and effectiveness. The "Best Volunteer Organization" award is presented to associations and foundations for their systematic contributions and best practices in recruiting volunteers.

The entire process from selection and verification of achievements to the awards ceremony is under the direct supervision of the Ministry.

Coordination Efforts

Ministry Order No. 718 of October 31, 2025, approved the composition of the Interagency Coordination Council consisting of 47 individual members. It includes representatives from key ministries, the offices of the President's plenipotentiary representatives in the regions, and representatives of volunteer organizations. The council's goal is to unite the efforts of government agencies and civil society to create a unified ecosystem for supporting volunteerism, coordinate joint projects, promptly resolve emerging issues at the national level, and monitor the implementation of the 2025–2030 Concept.

World Nomad Games

Preparations for the upcoming VI World Nomad Games will serve as a large-scale testing ground for the implementation of new national standards of volunteerism. The Games will take place from August 31 to September 6, 2026, in Kyrgyzstan. This international cultural and sporting event is dedicated to the traditional sports, culture, and heritage of nomadic peoples.

To ensure the event's success, 700 of the best volunteers were selected through a competitive process. As part of their training, specialized

training camps are being organized for the young people, where the guidelines from the new training manual and safety rules are put to the test in a practical setting.

Public organization ***Youth Movement of Kyrgyzstan*** is coordinating activities at the Games. Volunteers' responsibilities will include welcoming high-level official delegations, accompanying foreign guests and athletes, and facilitating cross-cultural communication. Participating in a project of this scale is a powerful practical learning experience for young people, providing them with access to global project management and direct contacts with international organizations, while bringing Kyrgyzstan's volunteer potential to the international stage.

Best Practice Projects

The ***Volunteer Union of Kyrgyzstan*** was established on 24 September 2024 to aggregate the experience, resources and needs of the non-profit sector in the Kyrgyz Republic. Operating as a public association, the Union comprises 24 organizations working in various fields and carrying out volunteer activities, with a total membership of around 3,000. Each year, on the eve of International Volunteer Day, the Ministry of Culture, Information, Sports and Youth Policy, in partnership with the National Red Crescent Society, presents "Volunteer of the Year" certificates to outstanding volunteers. Kyrgyzstan hosts the annual international ***Clean Mountains*** campaign, which aims to raise awareness of littering in mountainous areas and encourage a caring attitude towards nature. Since 2020, the campaign has been organized by the Katunsky Nature Reserve (Altai Republic), East Kazakhstan and the Naryn Region of the Kyrgyz Republic. The Kyrgyz Republic's Khan Tengri Nature Park is a regular participant in the 'Clean Mountains' campaign.

Environmentalists and volunteers have conducted eco-landings in the vicinity of the village of Enilchek and the Turgen Gorge. They held lessons and discussions on eco-friendly lifestyles and responsible attitudes towards nature for students at the Enilchek School. Around one hundred activists took part in the events. As part of the 'We Are for Clean Mountains!' campaign, students from the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University took part in Cleanup Day in the picturesque Kegety Gorge in the Chui Region. Despite the inclement weather, the students collected dozens of bags of rubbish around the Kegety Waterfall. More than 3,000 people took part in the campaign in 2023. By 2024, volunteers had organized 43 environmental missions, collecting and transporting 109 cubic metres of waste to landfills.

The ***Eco Demi Public Foundation*** is the official ambassador for the World Clean-Up Day campaign in Kyrgyzstan. For the past six years, its most important initiative has been to organize World Clean-Up Day events each year. The Foundation believes that

collective clean-up efforts are an important way of fostering a culture of environmental responsibility. On 14 and 21 September 2024, clean-up days were held throughout Kyrgyzstan to mark World Clean-Up Day, which has become a significant environmental event. For seven years, the Eco Demi Public Foundation has coordinated volunteer efforts throughout the country and actively promoted environmental responsibility. On this day, residents gather to clean parks, streets and natural areas of rubbish and take part in educational events aimed at promoting environmental responsibility. The campaign brought together almost 1 million citizens, who collected approximately 9,000 tons of rubbish through their joint efforts. The organization employs 50 volunteers on a permanent basis and has recruited approximately 5,000 volunteers over the course of its history. The foundation has also trained over 30,000 schoolchildren in waste separation principles. Eco-Demi collaborates with the Clean Games ecology project of the Russian Federation.

Volunteers helped create artificial islands for birds on the shore of Lake Issyk-Kul. The ***CAMP Alatoo Public Foundation*** implemented an environmental project to improve nesting conditions for birds, with the participation of volunteers from Secondary School No. 31, the Keiji Ornithological Society, and the Kushtar NGO. The campaign aimed to engage local schoolchildren in nature conservation and enhance their environmental education.

In April 2024, a group of environmentalists and volunteers, including students from the local school, built around two dozen artificial islands for birds in the coastal zone of Lake Issyk-Kul, within a planned wetland reserve in the Tyup District near the village of Yntymak. These silt structures, ranging in diameter from 0.5 to 3 meters, are intended to attract migratory waterfowl and birds that live near water for nesting. During periods of high water, they will protect the birds from predators such as jackals and foxes. Members of the Ornithological Society of Kyrgyzstan have identified nine bird species listed in the Red Data Book of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Graduate students and faculty members from the Urban Studies programme at the ***American University of Central Asia*** developed and implemented a project to transform a vacant lot into a recreational area. The project aimed to make targeted changes to the urban environment to achieve a broader positive impact, by transforming a small area of unused urban land into a public space.

A 'pocket park' has been built on the site of a former parking lot at the intersection of three important routes: the Southern Highway, the Ala-Archa River embankment and the road to the 10th city district. This location was chosen based on local resident surveys. The design of the recreation area was presented to the city's chief architect and the Bishkek Glavarhitektura State Institution, and the mayor's office also supported the initiative. Volunteers from the

Public Organisation 'Zherdin Baldary' (ОО «Студенты Кыргызстана за зеленую экономику «Жердин балдары» -- *Russian* and *Kazakh*), who joined the project, created a terrace with a mini-amphitheater and benches, ramps, stairs, paving and mosaics, as well as a ramp providing access to a bike path and pavement. The structures were developed by volunteers from "Zherdin Baldary", and all the décor and furniture were manufactured in university workshops. More than 60 volunteers worked on the construction for two months, devoting over 1,800 hours of their time to the project. Thanks to the project, residents of Bishkek's 10th city district now have a convenient and comfortable place to relax and socialise where the air temperature is significantly lower on hot days due to the special microclimate created by the proximity of the river and trees.

MONGOLIA

Mongolia
Population: 3.5 million
Capital City: Ulaanbaatar

No. of Volunteers: 99, 243 thousand

Human Development Index	0.747 (high)
World Giving Index	47, including 51% of adults helped a stranger, 53% donated money and 38% volunteered
Law on Volunteerism or Related	Law on Non-Government Organizations, 1997
National Volunteer Platform	*volunteers.mn*
Leading Organization	Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organizations

Core Information

In Mongolia, the origins of organized volunteering can be traced back to significant historical movements, such as the Red Cross, which was established in 1939 and became a symbol of international, volunteer-driven humanitarian aid. Since then, volunteerism has evolved continuously to meet societal needs. Following the democratic transition in 1990, Mongolia underwent a transformative period of democratization and transition to a market economy. This transition marked a new era in the recognition of the importance of volunteering. Domestic and international NGOs began emphasizing volunteering as a key component in collaborative decision-making and in forming partnerships with state entities.

The development of the volunteer movement in Mongolia reflects international trends, yet it also has its own unique national characteristics. Since 1990s, civil society movements, including volunteer initiatives, have become significantly more active in the society. It led to the emergence of various terms and concepts related to volunteer activity in Mongolia. Against the backdrop of diverse views and positions among participants there is growing recognition of the need for supportive policies and the granting of national status to volunteers. In 2024, it was reported by Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organizations that 28,404 volunteers had worked 3.4 million hours, bringing Mongolia an economic benefit estimated at 14.1 billion tugrik highlighting the impact and value of volunteering in the country.

Legislation and Policy

Regarding current state regulation of volunteerism in Mongolia, the authorities has progressively recognized the critical role of volunteerism in promoting social welfare and community development. In this vein, the government has established some regulations to govern and encourage volunteer activities.

First, Government of Mongolia has developed legislations and regulations related to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs/NGOs). Core document is the “Law on Non-Government

Organizations", 1997. This law and the modifications made in Business Entity/Corporate Income Tax Law in 2000 provided a favorable environment to CSOs by exempting their income and donations made to CSOs from taxation until the amendments were made in June 2006.

It is worth to address that the terminology "volunteerism" or "volunteering activity" has not been mentioned in laws, legislations and policy documents except the "The Law on Support of Youth Development", "Law on Disaster Protection" and "Law on Fire Safety". However, the volunteerism in above laws and policy documents falls under terminology "civil society organizations or non-governmental organizations". Indeed, the only one law directly uses the terminology "volunteer work" in legislation of Mongolia. The "Law on Support of Youth Development" was approved in 2017 and serves to support the development and participation of young people aged 15-34 who are citizens of Mongolia. The law defined the volunteer work as not-for-profit activity carried out by the initiative of young people. Further, it states that when young people participate in social and economic development of the country, they take leadership in volunteer work that is beneficial to the community.

The government of Mongolia supports the participation of youth in humanitarian and volunteer work. State administrative organization in charge of youth affairs, youth civil society organizations, community-based activities and movements need to organize community-based activities to support the socialization and development of target group youth with the participation of volunteers and support the cooperation of volunteers, enterprises and organizations in the socialization of unaccompanied children, elderly and disabled citizens, childcare and welfare activities. The procedure for recording and verifying the hours of participation in volunteer work specified in this Law shall be approved and implemented by the government organization in charge of labor and the government organization in charge of youth affairs. The government organization in charge of youth affairs has the duty to register volunteer work of young people, increase the value of volunteer work and to count the volunteer work experience as working experience in the field.

The National Program on Youth Development was approved in 2019 to implement the Law on Support of Youth Development. However, youth of Mongolia not well received this national program and it was cancelled in 2019. Currently, the government organization in charge of youth affairs, youth civil society organizations and relevant organizations work on drafting of national program or regulation to implement the law on Support of Youth Development.

In addition to above mentioned there are policy documents to assess the recognition of CSOs and volunteerism in Mongolia. These are Vision 2050: Long-Term Development Policy of Mongolia, Five-Year Development Guidelines for 2021-2025, and Government Action Program for 2026-2030.

Despite these developments, Mongolia still lacks comprehensive state regulations that cover volunteerism across all age groups.

Best Practice

The volunteer landscape is significantly influenced by the ***Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organizations*** (NMVO), established in 2004. The NMVO has been instrumental in promoting volunteerism and enhancing coordination among various volunteer organizations. The Network is a non-profit, non-governmental organization with the aim to cultivate the spirit of volunteerism and empower the volunteering in Mongolia. The following objectives were set by the Network in terms of its activity: raise public awareness on volunteering and promote volunteerism; strengthen the volunteer management of member organizations and capacity of volunteers; ensure that the volunteering is an important mechanism for the development in Mongolia; create a strong and unified voice of volunteers by sharing volunteer experiences.

Since 2008, the NMVO has been announcing the best volunteers of the year every year. Due to the Network efforts, Mongolian youth and volunteers attended the global movement of the Good Deeds Day. On the occasion of the Good Deeds Day in each April, "I am a Volunteer" conference is organized by the Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organizations and partner organizations. This conference is attended by the representatives of teenagers, youth, seniors and other volunteers. By effort of NMVO the society officially celebrates the International Volunteer Day since 2008. On this day, volunteers and organizations that work with volunteers present their work throughout the year to the public, and launch a campaign to mobilize and support the power of volunteers to solve the problems facing society.

The NMVO's efforts towards broader legislation, such as the draft for a Volunteer Activity Support Bill in 2013, aimed at providing legislative support for volunteers of all ages, have yet to materialize into law.

The role of the ***Mongolian Youth Council*** in recent years also deserves mention. In May 2017, the Law on Youth Development was approved and followed by issuing the Volunteer Registration Verification Procedure in 2019. However, the regulation does not correspond to the reality of youth volunteering and included provision that exceeded the law. Therefore, youth and civil society organizations are working together to draft the new regulation, aiming to include flexible provisions that are suitable for youth volunteering.

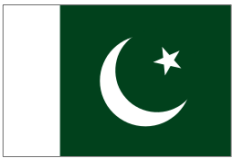
Between 2022 and 2023, the Council organized stakeholder discussions on the regulation and proposed recommendations to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. These recommendations called for essential improvements and amendments to the current regulations, although these suggestions have not yet been implemented. The efforts of NMVO and the push for a more comprehensive regulatory framework are crucial for advancing volunteerism in Mongolia. These initiatives are essential for driving societal improvement and community growth through volunteerism.

Volunteer Development Center at the Mongolian National University of Education (MNUE) initiated at the beginning of the academic year 2018-2019, the inclusion of "Volunteering-S.VH199" program as credit lessons in the compulsory study program of the general basis of undergraduate education. After studying an 8-hour course on "Volunteering, features, principles, duties and ethics of volunteering", students are eligible for volunteering and perform 40 hours of field-volunteering. From 2018 to 2022, more than 3,000 students studied volunteering courses and in accordance with the regulations for organizing volunteer work of the MNUE, the students work perform on volunteering work on training, assistance, support, services, participation, advocacy and campaigns covering the areas such as health, education, social welfare, protection, environment, and public events.

For example, about 600 students participated and joined flash-mobs in the campaigns in the field of protection of children's rights Against Beating and Physical Punishment, in the field of protection of the rights of girls and women - Break The Chains, in the field of protection of the rights of people with disabilities - We Are Changers.

More than 30 student-volunteers cooperated with international volunteers in the reconstruction of a Day care center for disabled children; +999 corporate work; Publish the newspaper "We are volunteers" and promote volunteer work; "Let's help others" - made a puzzle for kindergarten and elementary school children, and organized training and advocacy work for children.

PAKISTAN



Islamic Republic of Pakistan
Population: 255.2 million
Capital City: Islamabad

Human Development Index	0.544 (low)
World Giving Index	33, including 49% of adults helped a stranger, 34% donated money and 18% volunteered
Leading Non-Profit Organization	Volunteer Force Pakistan

Brief Summary

With a current population of over 255 million, Pakistan is the fifth most populous country in the world. There are numerous organizations working in the country, some in partnership with the government and others independently. Most NGOs and volunteer organizations recruit international volunteers to improve education and community development, and to train local residents in new skills and provide assistance to refugees.

Despite the population's potential to contribute to volunteerism, the infrastructure for volunteering is still relatively small and underdeveloped in terms of its size and scope. Since 2010, Pakistan's position in the Volunteering Time Index of CAF has changed rapidly, rising up from an initial 8% in 2010 to the current 18%, with the maximum number of people volunteering their time to an organization reached 27% of the population measured in 2011.

According to the 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report by UN Volunteers, however, only 0.4% of Pakistan's population aged 15 or over engages in formal or informal volunteering.

Volunteering has a potential to stimulate economic growth. It can be crucial in exposing people especially youth to the economic, social and environmental challenges facing the world and preparing them for playing a positive role.

On 8 October 2005, Pakistan was hit by a devastating earthquake, prompting the national government to recognize the need to institutionalize volunteering. The result was the establishment of the National Volunteering Movement (NVM), an autonomous organization based in Islamabad responsible for providing immediate assistance in relief, recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts for citizens. The NVM was tasked with recruiting and training volunteers, particularly young people, in disaster management and other emergency response efforts. A total of 132 UN Volunteers were recruited for a project titled 'Support to

Volunteerism Initiatives', which supported the NVM as well as other UN agencies and NGOs. The project lasted from 2005 to 2008. This project also marked the beginning of a comprehensive UNV programme in Pakistan. However, the 2010 constitutional reform saw several competencies transferred from the federal to the provincial level. This resulted in the dissolution of the Ministry of Youth, which administered the NVM, and led to the NVM's discontinuation.

Despite some achievements, Pakistan lacks a comprehensive volunteering policy or legal framework at the national or provincial levels. The State of the World's Volunteerism Report (UNV, 2018) noted that Pakistan was one of 11 countries in the Asia-Pacific region to develop a draft volunteering policy in 2010. However, after constitutional amendments, responsibility for social welfare was transferred to the provinces and the policy did not apparently materialize.

It should be noted that the Federal Government launched a National Youth Development Framework in partnership with the UNDP in 2019. This framework declared 'volunteering' a national priority for the effective engagement of young people, and called for the creation of new opportunities for voluntary social engagement to promote national cohesion, integration, and inclusion (Government of Pakistan, 2019). The first provincial youth policy of Punjab also explicitly highlights volunteering as a key mode of civic engagement (Government of Punjab, 2012). However, this approach considers the concept only in relation to volunteering for disaster or emergency response. Similarly, the provincial youth policies of Balochistan (2015) and Sindh (2016) explicitly refer to engaging young people in volunteering activities at provincial, district and local levels.

In facing the challenges of low literacy, volunteers are disseminating information about free education through seminars and training sessions in rural and urban areas, with the aim of motivating people — especially parents — to send their children to school. Community organizations and the government are also establishing agreements with foreign universities to enable young people to study there.

Some non-profit organizations focused on peacebuilding and human rights are helping young people to learn how to achieve interfaith harmony and play a positive role in society.

Pakistan's youth as in many countries have suffered greatly during the pandemic. The pandemic crisis exacerbated unemployment, reducing their participation in education, sports, and other meaningful activities. In an attempt to mitigate this, young people were recruited as volunteers to deliver groceries to families in marginalized communities. Non-profit organizations in the country play a significant role in encouraging young people to participate in volunteer activities.

RUSSIA

Russian Federation

Population: 146.1 million No. of Volunteers: 21 million

Capital City: Moscow

Human Development Index	0.832 (very high)
World Giving Index	45, including 71% of adults helped a stranger, 42% donated money and 23% volunteered
Law on Volunteerism	Federal Law "On Charity and Volunteering" No. 135-FZ, dated August 11, 1995, amended by Federal Law No. 15-FZ dated February 5, 2018 No. 15-FZ
National Volunteer Platform	*dobro.ru*, local version *добро.рф*, international version *dobro.org*
Lead Non-Profit Organization	Association of Volunteer Centers, Non-Profit Organizations and Institutes for Social Development DOBRO.RF
Volunteer Counter Office	Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat)
Government Supervisor	Federal Agency for Youth Affairs (Rosmolodezh)

Core Information

The culture of volunteering in Russia has a long history, dating back to the establishment of early social welfare systems, hospitals and orphanages. In peasant communities neighborly mutual aid was a common practice. The first charitable organizations appeared in the 19th century, and by the beginning of the 20th century, volunteers were raising funds for local welfare boards to support the poor.

In more recent history, volunteering began to revive with the emergence of new NGOs, and for a long time developed in a largely spontaneous way. Building upon this spiritual heritage, modern Russian volunteering has evolved into a widespread, technologically advanced and socially significant phenomenon. Over the past decade, under the personal patronage of President Vladimir Putin, one of the world's most effective ecosystems for volunteer development has emerged.

The largest organization in the field of volunteerism in Russia is the Association of Non-Profit Organizations and Institutes for Social Development DOBRO.RF. It was originally founded in Moscow on 27 May 2014 as the Association of volunteer centers to preserve and develop the volunteer program of the Sochi 2014 Olympics. Today it is a large-scale ecosystem of various services aimed at developing a culture of mutual assistance and civil society, helping regional volunteer centers and NGOs, training volunteers, providing mentoring opportunities, donations, support for leaders of social change, volunteerism programs in schools and universities, international cooperation programs, and much more. The Association has already managed to create a

powerful volunteer movement in the country, increasing the share of Russian participants in volunteer projects from 3% to 28%, and building a culture of participation and mutual support.

The Association DOBRO.RF operates the digital information system dobro.ru for volunteer development. The web portal now has almost 10 million registered volunteers and over 70 thousand organizations, which have implemented more than 100 thousand volunteer and charity projects. It brings together 1,076 Dobro Centers – the volunteer support centers operating in all regions of Russia. The Association has also been granted the status of a base organization for CIS Member States in developing infrastructure and consolidating volunteer efforts. The flagship project for implementing large-scale social support initiatives is the all-Russia public movement #WeAreTogether, which brings together more than 3,500 local branches across all regions of Russia.

Best Practice

#WeAreTogether International Forum on Civic Participation is held annually in December. This key platform brings together representatives from over 40 countries. The #WeAreTogether International Award is presented annually in the presence of the President of the Russian Federation. The Federal Agency for Youth Affairs (Rosmolodezh), together with the DOBRO.RF Association, oversees the following volunteer programs:

Mentoring Project. Number of volunteers: 2,070. The aim of the Mentoring project is to help children in care homes or those being raised by elderly relatives find a significant adult figure to guide them into adulthood. A volunteer mentor becomes someone who helps children discover the world, teaches them new things, and spends time with them visiting exhibitions, playing sports, and learning about technology. Thanks to the project, children who have lost their parents improve their quality of life; they develop interests, desire to fulfil their potential, a sense of responsibility for their own lives, and better communication skills.

Dobrobus Project. The Dobrobus social program aims to improve the mobility and quality of life for people with disabilities in the Tomsk Region, which is home to over 6,000 wheelchair users. Since 2022, a specialized social taxi service has been operating in the cities of Tomsk and Seversk. Vehicles equipped with electric hydraulic lifts provide free transport for people with reduced mobility to social, medical, sporting and cultural facilities. The project enables users to visit clinics, social welfare and employment agencies, sports clubs, museums, exhibitions and concerts independently. 67 families are regular users of this service.

EcoSborka, Environmental Education Centre Project. EcoSborka is a multifunctional community center that combines separate household waste collection with educational and cultural activities. It houses a collection point for 65 types of recyclable materials, including those that are difficult to dispose of the Museum of Recycling and Eco-Friendly Living with a collection of one thousand exhibits, and the Eco-Techno Park for learning recycling skills. Additional services include a swap shop and a regular program of lectures and workshops. EcoSborka serves not only as an infrastructure solution, but also as a hub for building an eco-community that is successfully scaling up. In addition to the flagship Centre in Moscow, a branch has opened in St Petersburg, and there are plans to launch another in Nizhny Novgorod, in line with the strategy to develop a network of such spaces across Russia's regions.

WOOF Charity Festival. Number of volunteers: 920 persons. The WOOF charity festival for Rehoming Shelter Animals "From the Capital to the Regions", organized by the NIKA Foundation, provides a systematic solution to the problem of socializing and rehoming stray animals in Russia. The project consists of regular public events in major cities across the country and serves a dual purpose. The main objective is to find new owners for dogs and cats from municipal and private shelters. At the same time, the festival serves as an educational platform and a collection point for aid (food, medicines, supplies), while also offering guests a cultural and entertainment program. Since 2016, the festival's reach has expanded to five cities with population exceeding one million. As a result of the project, 1,775 animals have found new homes. WOOF has established itself as an effective tool for humanizing attitudes towards homeless animals and drawing public attention to the work of shelters, demonstrating high demand and potential for further scaling across Russia's regions.

Paper-Free Interregional Environmental Project. Number of volunteers: 300. This interregional environmental project, implemented by the 'Changing the World' Centre, has been running for ten years. It is a comprehensive educational program aimed at fostering environmental culture and introducing separate waste collection among young people in Russia.

The project addresses the global issue of increasing municipal solid waste. A scientific approach based on studying the actual environmental behavior of the target audience lies at its core. Research has revealed the importance of aesthetic perception of the process and the need for a sense of community in fostering sustainable habits. Based on this data, practical activities have been developed: in 2023, 45 stylized eco-bins for collecting wastepaper were installed across eight regions, and a network of 45 motivational environmental clubs was established. The annual #PaperFreeWeek campaign, held in several regions of the Russian Federation, consolidates efforts to promote conscious consumption and careful use of natural resources.

Clean City – Healthy Child Project. This initiative establishes a sustainable link between separate waste collection and support for children with disabilities. The aim is to establish an infrastructure to engage residents in waste-sorting practices by installing specialized mesh bins within walking distance and organizing competitions in educational institutions. Collected recyclable materials are delivered to collection points and the proceeds are transferred to the account of the Obychnoe Delo Charitable Foundation. In partnership with the Ruka Pomoschi organization, these funds are channeled to targeted assistance for sick children: the purchase of medicines, rehabilitation aids, hygiene products and everyday essentials. In this way, the project creates a continuous cycle in which residents' environmental responsibility is directly converted into tangible social support, contributing both to the improvement of the urban environment and to enhancing the quality of life for families in need.

Green Spring Environmental Project

The Green Spring community clean-up, organized by the V.I. Vernadsky Non-Governmental Environmental Foundation since 2014, is the largest environmental and socially significant initiative of its kind in our country. The project aims to improve the state of the environment and foster an environmental culture by encouraging mass public participation. Key activities include cleaning and improving public spaces, large-scale tree

planting, and conducting environmental education lessons in schools using specialized teaching materials. Over 11 years, the project has brought together 20 million participants. The results demonstrate a significant practical contribution: 99 thousand illegal rubbish dumps have been cleared, 440 thousand tons of waste have been collected and removed, and 33 million trees have been planted. Green Spring has established itself as a systematic tool for addressing local environmental issues and fostering a responsible attitude towards nature on a national scale.

Tylsym Project Centre. The Tylsym Inclusive Children's Centre, established by the Dobraya Kazan Autonomous Non-Profit Organization, offers an all-encompassing environment in which children with special needs and their peers can learn, develop and socialize together. The main objective is to ensure equal access to education by creating an inclusive space. To this end, the Centre runs group programs using adapted methodologies and provides support from qualified specialists. It also facilitates social adaptation, including within a special training flat. The project is not only aimed at children, but also provides support to parents, facilitating the successful integration of children with special needs into the educational process and wider society.

International Volunteer Programs

Since Russia and the United Nations Volunteers signed the agreement on the Full Funding program in July 2018, 68 young Russians have volunteered with UNV partner organizations around the world. Russia allocates $1 million annually to the UNV budget to fund one- and two-year placements for Russian nationals in the offices of UN agencies. Russian volunteers are currently involved in projects run by UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, UNFPA, the UN World Food Program, UNHCR, IOM, UNOPS, UNCTAD, UN Women and UN-Habitat. They are deployed in countries such as Belarus, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Hungary, Jordan, Kazakhstan,

Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Mexico, Moldova, Myanmar, Nepal, Palestine, Serbia, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. They also work in the offices of resident coordinators in Brazil, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, the Lao PDR, Mexico, Tajikistan and Vietnam.

Around 75% of Russian participants of the Full Funding program have secured contracts to continue their careers within the UN system. This is the highest rate among all participating countries.

Additionally, the Mission DOBRO program has been operational since 2025, carrying out 53 humanitarian missions in 17 countries. Relevant ministries are involved in developing volunteer programs within multilateral platforms such as the CIS, BRICS and CICA. Russia is ready to share its experience and engage in close cooperation with CICA Member States, as it sees volunteering as a key element of humanitarian cooperation and trust-building between nations. Russia is open to holding joint events within CICA, including in the context of implementing the program for the International Year of Volunteer.

To continue achieved success in international cooperation, the DOBRO International Association of Volunteer and Non-Profit Organizations has been established. The

founding congress was held on 5 December, the International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development, at the National Centre RUSSIA at the Fifth International Forum of Civic Participation #WEARETOGETHER. in Moscow. The initiative to establish the Association was put forward by representatives of volunteer organizations from CIS countries at 2024 Forum and received the support of President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin. Its co-founders include thirteen organizations from the CIS, BRICS, and partner countries. By 2030, the new association plans to develop its unified international ecosystem to strengthen the capacity of non-profit and volunteer organizations, exchange best practices and implement joint humanitarian and social projects. The Association would make it possible to build direct cooperation between non-profit organizations, civic initiatives and volunteer communities, respond promptly to new challenges and concentrate resources to address issues of significance to millions of people.

THAILAND

Kingdom of Thailand

Population: 71.6 million No. of Volunteers 18 million

Capital City: Bangkok

Human Development Index	0.798 (high); 76th place in world rank
World Giving Index	52, including 52% of adults helped a stranger, 64% donated money and 24% volunteered
Volunteer Counter Office	Office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion
Government Supervisor	Ministry of Social Development and Human Security

Message to Readers

Ms. Sunee Srisangatrakullert, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, in her speech at the International Volunteer Day 2025 Celebration and the Press Conference on the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development 2026 on 29 November 2025 at the Queen Sirikit Park, Bangkok, told the audience that the volunteerism can take many forms. She said: “It is not limited to the contribution of time and physical effort, but also includes sharing, compassion, and the creation of inclusive spaces where everyone can participate on an equal basis. We are passing on the power of participation as we move toward the 'International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development 2026, which will be a significant opportunity to promote volunteerism as a driving force for development that is genuinely accessible and sustainable for all. This reaffirms that Every Act of Volunteering Counts Toward a Better Society.

Introduction

Volunteerism in Thailand dates back to 1893, with the establishment of the Red Unalom Society of Siam, now known as the Thai Red Cross Society. This organization is regarded as the earliest origin of volunteerism in Thailand and was founded as a humanitarian charity. Subsequently, in 1909, the private foundation 'Poh Teck Tung Foundation' was established by Chinese merchants in Bangkok during a period of economic hardship. In 1912, the founders sought royal patronage from His Majesty King Vajiravudh (King Rama VI), who graciously granted annual financial support of 2,000 baht. The Foundation expanded its public benefit activities to include disaster relief, public health services, maternity care facilities, and later educational institutions. Since then, numerous private organizations have been established and have continuously carried out volunteer activities up to the present day. Volunteerism in Thailand has, therefore, been primarily driven by civil society as its core mechanism.

In September 1940, the Department of Public Welfare was established under the Ministry of Interior to provide assistance to people experiencing hardship and distress in all forms, as well as to promote humanitarian associations, non-governmental social welfare organizations, and volunteers. Currently, the Department of Social Development and Welfare under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security is responsible for promoting volunteerism. The Office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion is the responsible agency in accordance with the Social Welfare Promotion Act, B.E. 2546 (2003) and its Amendment No. 2, B.E. 2550 (2007).

The Social Welfare Promotion Act establishes Thailand's framework legislation for the provision of social welfare by both the public and private sectors. It aims to promote and support the participation of individuals, families, communities, local administrative organizations, and other entities in the provision of social welfare, with a view to strengthening social security in a comprehensive, appropriate, and equitable manner. Accordingly, the Office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion is mandated to carry out and support the social welfare provision performed by social welfare organizations, social workers and volunteers in accordance with the standard determined by the National Social Welfare Promotion Committee. This includes developing and improving standards for social welfare service providing in response to social changes; certifying the operational standards of social welfare organizations, social workers, and volunteers in accordance with prescribed regulations; maintaining a central registry of social welfare organizations, social workers, volunteers, and service recipients; and organizing training programs for social workers and volunteers.

Moreover, Thailand has enforced laws relevant to the operation of civil society organizations, such as the Civil and Commercial Code, which governs the registration and establishment of foundations and associations, as well as the Social Enterprise Promotion Act, B.E. 2562 (2019). However, Thailand has not yet enacted a specific law dedicated to the promotion of volunteerism.

Regulations and Incentives Policy

Below is a list of documents and legal provisions on regulations and incentives for volunteers, as well as the relevant organizations and associations that make use of volunteer efforts.

- Social Welfare Promotion Act, B.E. 2546 (2003), and its amendment (No.2), B.E. 2550 (2007)
- Subordinate legislations related to volunteerism, including announcements, regulations, and
- Directives issued by government agencies under their administrative authority for specific purposes
- Declaration on Volunteerism and the Policy for Volunteer Development, based on the policy recommendations of 2001
- Guidelines for Thai Volunteer Development, based on the policy recommendations of 2012
- Global Standard for Volunteering in Development
- Guidelines for volunteer-related organizations in Thailand

Promotion of volunteerism under the Social Welfare Promotion Act

The Social Welfare Promotion Act is the law that establishes the coordination mechanism for the work concerning social welfare to ensure the flexibility and continuity in addressing various social problems, including public health issues and cases involving crime victims requiring urgent assistance. Under this Act, *the National Social Welfare Promotion Committee* is designated as the responsible body for setting standards for social welfare provision. The Act also *establishes the Social Welfare Promotion Fund* to provide financial support for social welfare activities. This Act came into force on 29 March 2003 and was subsequently amended in 2007.

Key provisions related to volunteerism

The Act defines the term "Social welfare" (in Section 3) as a social service system relating to the prevention, resolution, development and promotion of social security to fulfil such fundamental needs of people as education, health, accommodation, occupation and earning, leisure, justice and general social service with a view to enhance their quality of life upon self-reliance basis to meet the requirements of the determined standard thoroughly, appropriately and fairy and with regard to human dignity, their deserved rights and their participation in providing of social welfare at all levels, the Social Welfare Promotion Act also designates the persons and entities responsible for and involve in the provision of social welfare (Section 3) as follows:

- *"Social welfare organization"* means a state

agency which is responsible for the provision of social welfare and a public benefit organization;

- *"Social worker"* means a person performing social welfare provision who receives not lower than Bachelor's degree in social work or who completes the social work training course;
- *"Volunteer"* means person voluntarily performing social welfare provision in a social welfare organization.

The Act also stipulates guidelines for social welfare provision by social welfare organizations and establishes the National Social Welfare Promotion Committee as a national-level body, with the Prime Minister serving as Chairperson, and representatives from ministries, relevant agencies, and qualified experts serving as members. The office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion is designated as the secretariat of the Committee and is responsible for proposing policy guidelines, formulating plans, and issuing regulations related to the systematic provision of social welfare. Its duties also include supervising, monitoring, and supporting relevant organizations and personnel, as well as administering the Social Welfare Promotion Fund in accordance with the law.

The Office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion is established under the Social Welfare Promotion Act and serves as the principal agency responsible for driving social welfare initiatives. Its duties include preparing and monitoring social welfare development plans and submitting them to the Committee, as well as collecting data and conducting studies, research, and knowledge development.

The Office functions as a central coordinating body for cooperation, dissemination, and public communication, and collaborates with government agencies, state enterprises, local administrative organizations, and other social welfare organizations to ensure that social welfare provision is carried out in accordance with the law. In addition, the Office is responsible for supervising, monitoring, inspecting, following up on, and evaluating the operations of relevant organizations; supporting and certifying operational standards of social welfare organizations, social workers, and volunteers; maintaining a central registry; organizing training for relevant personnel; performing administrative functions for the Committee and its subcommittees; and carrying out other duties as assigned by the Committee.

Implementation Mechanism for Social Welfare Promotion

Subcommittee on the Promotion of Volunteerism. In 2015, the National Social Welfare Promotion Committee issued an order appointing the Subcommittee on the Promotion of Volunteerism to oversee policies on the promotion of volunteer work in Thailand. Its

mandate included providing recommendations on the promotion and support of volunteer activities in accordance with the Social Welfare Promotion Act, submitting policy recommendations to the Cabinet, and supporting the establishment and operation of the National Volunteer Organization Coordination Center. In 2024, the Committee revoked the 2015 order and issued a new order reappointing the Subcommittee, with the Director-General of the Department of Social Development and Welfare serving as Chairperson. Members include representatives from government agencies working with volunteers — such as the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Public Health, and the Thailand International Cooperation Agency — as well as representatives from civil society organizations, including the Thai Red Cross Society, the Volunteer Service Foundation, and the National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand under Royal Patronage; international organizations, such as the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and Voluntary service overseas (VSO); educational institutions, including the Volunteer Center of Prince of Songkhla University and the College of Interdisciplinary Studies (Puey Ungphakorn School of Development Studies), Thammasat University; and volunteerism experts also serve

as members. The Director of the Office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion serves as Member and Secretary. The powers and duties of the Subcommittee on the Promotion of Volunteerism are as follows:

- Providing recommendations on the promotion and support of volunteer operations in accordance with the Social Welfare Promotion Act;
- Providing recommendations on the implementation of the Declaration on Volunteerism, volunteer development policies, relevant Cabinet resolutions, international cooperation frameworks, and applicable international standards;
- Promoting and supporting the operations of the National Volunteer Center and other activities related to volunteerism;
- Appointing working groups or officials to assist with operations as necessary;
- Performing other related duties or those assigned by the National Social Welfare Promotion Committee.
- The National Volunteer Center Working Group

The Office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion has driven the establishment of the National Volunteer Center in accordance with the Cabinet resolution dated 29 March 2012 on the Guidelines for Thai Volunteer Development, which approved the framework for volunteer development in Thailand and endorsed the establishment of the Center.

At the first meeting of the Subcommittee on the Promotion of Volunteerism held on 17 March 2016, the meeting resolved that the "National

Volunteer Center" be renamed the "National Volunteer Organization Coordination Center." This change reflected the Center's function as a coordination hub among organizations engaged in volunteer work and clarified that it does not duplicate the mandates of agencies responsible for managing volunteers within their respective jurisdictions.

Subsequently, by the resolution no. 1/1563 dated 7 January 2020, the Subcommittee approved the establishment of the National Volunteer Organization Coordination Center under the Office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion, Department of Social Development and Welfare and appointed a working group to advance the operations of the Center. The working group was tasked with formulating the vision, mission, structure and operational plan of the Center. The adopted vision positions the Center as a central platform for collaboration and empowerment in volunteerism, contributing to sustainable development through clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and activity plans.

On 17 February 2022, the Department of Social Development and Welfare announced the revisions to the internal structure of the Office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion. Under this restructuring, the Volunteer Promotion and Network Coordination Group was formally assigned to drive forward the operations of the National Volunteer Center, along with organizations and volunteer related collaboration that directly works with volunteers which aligns with the cabinet's resolution. There is also an establishment of the National Volunteer Center Working Group which includes specialists and representatives from related organizations with their roles as follows:

– Formulating the operational plan of the National Volunteer Center;

– Implementing the approved operational plan;

– Providing and preparing policy recommendations on volunteerism for submission to the Subcommittee on the Promotion of Volunteerism under the National Social Welfare Promotion Committee;

– Promoting, supporting, and coordinating the operations of the National Volunteer Center;

– Reporting on the performance of the National Volunteer Center to the Subcommittee on the Promotion of Volunteerism.

National Volunteer Center

The Office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion, in collaboration with the National Volunteer Center Working Group, coordinates and implements operational plans and projects to advance volunteer promotion across six key dimensions, as follows:

– Strengthening cooperation among volunteers from both the public and private sectors, while encouraging individual volunteers to serve as key driving forces in advancing volunteer work in Thailand. By connecting diverse skills, expertise, and areas of specialization, a strong and sustainable volunteer promotion network can be established, particularly in rural and marginalized areas where communities face multiple social challenges.

– Advancing volunteerism through policy recommendations submitted to the National

Social Welfare Promotion Committee and to the Cabinet. Volunteer-related policy recommendations have been continuously developed and submitted to support national-level implementation.

– Strengthening volunteer management systems and fostering an enabling environment at both organizational and national levels. This includes strengthening coordination mechanisms, promoting supportive legal and policy frameworks, and improving operational efficiency. These efforts enhance flexibility and efficiency in volunteer engagement, while increasing the capacity to respond promptly to emerging social situations.

– Providing technical advisory services on volunteer management systems, developing a standardized training curriculum for volunteers and volunteer managers, and delivering specialized training programs to strengthen professional volunteer management.

– Implementing communication and advocacy initiatives to highlight the value and impact of volunteerism. This includes organizing national observances and recognition events to honor volunteers, promote knowledge-sharing, and encourage broad-based participation across all age groups. These efforts also strengthen collaboration among public and private sector stakeholders at national and regional levels.

– Supporting research, knowledge dissemination, and skills development in volunteerism. This includes enhancing understanding of sustainable development, strengthening specialized competencies based on volunteer interests, and developing practical guidelines to improve the effectiveness and impact of volunteer activities.

Relevant Cabinet Resolutions

Cabinet Resolution of 19 December 2000 designated 21 October of each year as "Thai Volunteer Day" to foster public awareness and promote the important role of volunteers. The date coincides with the birthday anniversary of Her Royal Highness Princess Srinagarindra (The Princess Mother), which the Government has also designated as "National Social Welfare Day.

Cabinet Resolution of 16 October 2001. The Cabinet approved the "Declaration on Volunteerism and the Policy for Volunteer Development" to affirm the Government's commitment and mission to promote the role of volunteers. The year 2001 was also declared the "Year of Volunteer Development."

Cabinet Resolution of 30 January 2007 approved the following measures:

– Elevating "Giving and Volunteerism" to a National Agenda;

– Declaring 2007 the "Year of Giving and Volunteerism" in celebration of the auspicious occasion of the 80th Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great;

– Adopting a policy to encourage employees in both public and private organizations to engage in volunteer activities without such participation being counted as leave date.

Cabinet Resolution of 29 March 2012 approved the following:

– Upholding the principles set out in the "Declaration on Volunteerism and the Policy for Volunteer Development," as well as the National

Agenda on "Giving and Volunteerism";

– Assigning the Office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion to develop the "Guidelines for Thai Volunteer Development," based on public consultations at the provincial level and subsequently refined by the National Social Welfare Assembly. The Guidelines comprise two main components: (1) adherence to the principles of the Declaration and the Cabinet Resolution of 30 January 2007; and (2) a focus on strengthening volunteer work to assist the public through the enhancement of volunteers' and volunteer organizations' knowledge and skills, network-building, public communication, and international cooperation.

Cabinet Resolution of 17 August 2021 acknowledged the annual observance of International Volunteer Day 5 December, in accordance with the United Nations resolution designating 5 December each year for this purpose. Government agencies were encouraged to organize activities in celebration of International Volunteer Day, with the period for activities set from 21 October (Thai Volunteer Day) to 5 December each year. For the year 2021, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security was designated as the focal agency, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to organize related activities and promote nationwide participation.

As of December 2025, the office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion is in the process of presenting to the cabinet to consider the designation of the year 2026 as the "Thai Volunteer Year for Sustainable Development," in alignment with the United Nations' proclamation of 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development. The proposal also includes advancing the policy recommendations entitled "Guidelines for Thai Volunteer Development towards Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals."

Information on Activities and Volunteer-Related Meetings

1. The National Social Welfare Assembly serves as a participatory platform for all sectors to engage systematically in the development of Thailand's social welfare work. The outcomes of each Assembly are developed into policy recommendations on key issues concerning the advancement of social welfare in Thailand. The Assembly has been convened continuously since 1992. Each session determines its theme based on significant social welfare priorities and issues relevant to the social context of the time. To date, volunteer-related issues have been addressed on eight occasions, as follows:

- 1997 (6th Session): Guidelines for the Development of the Role of Volunteers in Thai Society
- 2002 (11th Session): New Dimensions in Volunteer Development
- 2006 (15th Session): Giving and Volunteerism in Thai Society
- 2007 (16th Session): Giving and Volunteering

for a Harmonious and Peaceful Society

- 2011 (20th Session): A Decade after the International Year of Volunteers: The Future of Thai Volunteerism
- 2020 (28th Session): The Role of Volunteers in Responding to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic
- 2022 (30th Session): Strengthening the Volunteer Management System within the Thai Social Context
- 2024 (32nd Session): The Future Direction of Thai Volunteer Development towards Sustainable Development

2. Workshops and academic forums on volunteer work are organized in accordance with the annual operational plan, in collaboration with partner network agencies. Themes, key issues, and activity formats are determined as appropriate to the relevant context and objectives.

3. Key projects, activities, and initiatives during 2025 -2026

Year 2025

1) Development of the National Volunteer Center's project and activity plan for 2025-2027, in collaboration with the National Volunteer Center Working Group.
2) Formulation of a policy recommendation entitled "The Future Direction of Thai Volunteer Development towards Sustainable Development" for submission to the National Social Welfare Promotion Committee and the Cabinet for consideration and approval.
3) Implementation of a training program to enhance the knowledge and capacity of organizations working with volunteers and volunteer organizations, enabling them to apply the *"Code of Practice for Volunteer Involving Organizations*." The Code is adapted from the *Global Standard for Volunteer for Development,* driven by the international volunteer community through the Forum, and aims to develop model volunteer organizations with effective and socially responsible volunteer management systems.

The initiative also seeks to further refine the Thai Code of Practice in alignment with the Thai social context, pilot its implementation, and monitor progress among selected model organizations.

4) Organization of the International Volunteer Day 2025 Celebration under the theme: "Every Contribution Counts". Key activities include:

– A press conference to launch Thailand's engagement in the "International Year of Volunteer for Sustainable Development 2025 (IYV 2026)."
– The activity "Run Together for Inclusion", which is a running activity for the disabled and volunteers.
– The activity "A Ripple of Kindness" is an activity in which volunteers jointly organize and provide essential supplies to support post-flood recovery efforts in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province, as well as other affected provinces in Southern Thailand.
– A campaign in spreading awareness of IYV 2026.

Year 2026

1) Project on Designing Thailand's Volunteer Management Structure and Model: A workshop-based initiative to gather regional information on volunteer operations that

contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The project aims to reflect lessons learned and success factors in volunteer work, and to identify practical approaches for positioning volunteerism as a supporting mechanism to address development challenges and gaps at the Local Level. - implemented by the Office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion.

2) Young Volunteer Program Designers Initiative implemented by Thai Volunteer Service (TVS)

3) Projects and activities under the members of the ASEAN University Network (AUN) implemented by the Prince of Songkla University Volunteer Center.

4) The 33rd National Social Welfare Assembly (Theme to be determined): scheduled for October 2025, the Assembly will serve as a platform to gather views and deliberate on issues to be advanced as policy recommendations on volunteer work. - Implemented by the Office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion.

5) International Volunteer Day 2026 Celebration

6) Advancing public communication on volunteerism in Thailand

10. Academic cooperation on the promotion of volunteer work

The Office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion has established academic cooperation with universities to advance the promotion of volunteer work, as follows:

1. Puey Ungphakom School of Development Studies, Thammasat University

Under the Academic Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, cooperation has been undertaken to strengthen volunteer work through the integration of academic collaboration in education management, training, and knowledge management. This includes the dissemination and exchange of information, research findings, academic outputs, innovations, methodologies, operational guidelines, operational results, and policy recommendations related to volunteer work for sustainable development.

2. Prince of Songkla University Volunteer Center

Under the Academic Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Social Development and Welfare, cooperation has been established to develop a learning system for volunteer work for sustainable development. The initiative is designed for staff, partner organizations, and university students, and covers academic collaboration, training, knowledge management, academic and social services, research, technological development and innovation, as well as the development of a volunteer system for development.

Volunteer Statistics

The Office of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion conducts nationwide surveys on a biennial basis to collect and update data on volunteer-related organizations across the public, private, and civil society sectors. Based on the most recent survey, as of 25 September 2025, the figures are as follows:

Sector / Organization	Number of Organizations	Number of Individual Volunteers
Public sector (ministries, departments, bureaus, and local administrative organizations)	100	17,960,022
Private sector and state enterprises	47	38,368
International organizations	2	4,450
Educational institutions	7	281
Public benefit organizations and community welfare organizations in 76 provinces (organizations registered under the Social Welfare Promotion Act)	244	87,186
Total	400	18,090,307

TÜRKİYE

Republic of Türkiye
Population: 87.7 million
Capital City: Ankara

Human Development Index	0.853 (very high)
World Giving Index	29, including 56% of adults helped a stranger, 22% donated money and 10% volunteered
National Volunteer Platform	gonulluyuzbiz.gov.tr
Government Supervisor	Ministry of Youth and Sports

Volunteerism Infrastructure

Although volunteerism varies across cultures and geographies and there is no universally agreed definition, it is rapidly emerging as a universal value around the world, volunteerism is defined as "the situation in which a person, entirely of their own free will, acts with the aim of solidarity and mutual aid, without considering their own interests, any material expectations, and solely with the desire to be beneficial to society, using their physical strength, time, knowledge, skills, and experience either together or separately."

In the National Youth and Sports Policy Document (2013), the traditional understanding of volunteerism in Türkiye is based on self-sacrifice, a deep-rooted moral principle derived from the historical and cultural background of the foundation culture. A strong foundation tradition, dating back to the Seljuk and Ottoman periods, is still present this day. Foundations, which are based on the Islamic approach of charity and aid, have also played an active role in the provision of social and infrastructure services. During the Ottoman Empire, foundations carried out many social services that are now undertaken by the state, from education to health, in addition to justice, security, and freedom. Inspired by the traditional roots of volunteerism, foundations and associations, as Türkiye's leading volunteer organizations, have increased their institutional capacities in number and strengthened over the past decade in an environment conducive to economic and social development.

Furthermore, after the Marmara Earthquake on August 17, 1999, the life-saving activities of volunteers reinforced the Turkish people's awareness of the importance of well - organized and specialized volunteer activities. Furthermore, the "Associations Law" adopted in 2004 and the "Foundations Law" put into practice in 2008 have been important developments that have contributed to the participation in volunteer activities at the institutional-structural level by providing a more solid legal basis for volunteer activities (www.siviltoplum.gov.tr).

As of July 2025, there are 101,245 active associations in Türkiye and according to data from the Directorate General of Foundations of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism dated July 2024, there are 6,509 active foundations in Türkiye. The number of foundations and associations per capita in the country is still quite low compared to developed countries. The low number of volunteer organizations limits the scope of volunteer activities.

Volunteerism and Legislation

Although there is no separate law defining volunteerism and outlining the responsibilities of civil society organizations in the field of volunteer management in Türkiye, volunteerism is mentioned in various laws, regulations, and other legislation documents. Selected set of laws that mentioned volunteering are as follows:

— Provincial Special Administration Law, Volunteer Participation in Provincial Special Administration Services, Article 65;

— Municipal Law, Neighborhood and Management, Article 9; Volunteer Participation in Municipal Services, Article 77;

— Environmental Law, Environmental Volunteer in Definitions;

— Law on Persons with Disabilities, General Principles, Article 4;

— National Afforestation and Erosion Control Mobilization Law, Implementation, Article 4;

— Basic Health Services Law, General Principles, Articles 3 and 4;

— National Education Basic Law, Education Everywhere, Article 17; Coordination, Article 42, Primary School Construction and Equipment Works, Article 75;

Volunteerism in Strategic Development

Following the transition to the new government system, Article 190, Paragraph 1, Item (f) of the Presidential Decree No. 1 on the Organization of the Presidency dated July 10, 2018 states: “To engage in activities that raise awareness and encourage volunteerism among young people.” This legal basis has given momentum to volunteerism-related efforts, and the Ministry of Youth and Sports has declared 2019 as the “Year of Volunteerism.”

The 11th Development Plan of the Republic (2019-2023) includes important policies related to volunteerism goals, particularly youth volunteerism. In this context the following sections of the document are to be mentioned: 2.3. Qualified People, Strong Society: 2.3.6. Children, 607.2. “Children, families, and teachers will be made aware of volunteer activities, and children will be directed toward these activities.”; 2.3.7. Youth, 620. 4. “Young people will be made aware of and directed toward volunteer activities, and their participation in volunteer activities will be encouraged.”; 2.3.11. Population and Aging,

658. 2. “Volunteer activities and projects that will increase intergenerational solidarity will be supported.”; 2.5. Rule of Law, Democratization, and Good Governance: 2.5.1.3. Civil Society, 776. 1. “An inclusive regulatory framework will be established to strengthen civil society and volunteerism.”; 2.5.1.3. Civil Society, 779. 4. “The participation of university students in volunteerism and NGO activities, as well as the facilitation of internship opportunities in NGOs, will be encouraged.”

Under the 11th Development Plan, which comprehensively addresses country's development goals, the “civil society” heading appears for the first time as an independent heading. In line with the 11th Development Plan, the Ministry of Interior was designated as the responsible institution for Measure 776.1 of the 2022 Presidential Annual Program, and a process to draft a law on volunteerism was initiated under the coordination of the Directorate General of Relations with Civil Society.

Similarly, the 12th Development Plan (2024-2028) addresses many issues related to volunteerism in different areas and outlines the following policies in the context of youth volunteerism:3.3 Qualified People, Strong Families, Healthy Society: 3.3.6. Children, 732.3. Children will be encouraged to participate in activities related to climate change and sustainability in order to contribute to the creation of a generation that builds its own future. Children, families, and teachers will be made aware of volunteering activities, and children's communication with the elderly and people with disabilities within the family and across generations will be strengthened; 3.3.7. Youth, 746.11. Efforts will be made to raise awareness and increase participation among young people in volunteer activities; 3.5. Democratic Good Governance Based on Justice: 3.5.3. Civil Society, 940.2. Civil society will carry out effective communication and visibility activities on issues such as public-NGO cooperation, volunteerism, aid, and fundraising.

In 2023, “Strengthening Civil Participation for the Development of Democratic Local Governance in Türkiye,” project the main beneficiary of which is the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye and co-beneficiary of which is the Directorate General of Relations with Civil Society of the Ministry of Interior organized a series of projects/activities within the scope of the third component of this project to develop legal regulation proposals related to volunteerism in Türkiye. The project was funded by the EU.

Within this scope, interviews, focus group discussions, meetings, and surveys were conducted with representatives from public institutions, civil society organizations, volunteers, and universities in Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, and Mersin, the pilot province of the project, to gather their opinions on the current situation and needs analysis for the development of policy options and the identification of legislative needs in the field of volunteerism. Volunteer Advisory Meetings were organized with the “Volunteer Working Group,” in which the Ministry also participated, to prepare a Green Paper on draft legal regulations to be developed regarding volunteerism in Türkiye.

Following the Green Book Consultation

Workshops completed in May 2024 in Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, and Gaziantep, one of the pilot provinces of the project, the draft Green Book was reviewed again, and the views of all stakeholders were recompiled through an online opinion form, surveys, and written feedback, creating a basis for consultation for the White Book Workshops.

The White Paper Workshops held in Istanbul, Mersin, and Ankara were conducted using group work methods supported by digital tools, and topics such as volunteer insurance, volunteer permission, and the rights and responsibilities of volunteers were discussed in detail. The White Paper regulatory impact analysis, one of the key outputs of the Civil Participation Project, has been completed and prepared as a critical policy and strategy document for strengthening volunteering and civil society in Türkiye.

Volunteer Work Landscape

Türkiye, which has a strong culture of philanthropy and foundations, is currently hosting approximately 4 million registered Syrian guests. According to the 2018 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, Türkiye was among the leading providers of humanitarian assistance worldwide. However, the level of participation in continuous volunteer activities carried out under the umbrella of an institution in Türkiye is not at the desired level. Studies show that a culture of volunteerism acquired at an early age continues throughout life. In this regard, volunteerism is an opportunity that cannot be missed for the sustainable development of our country, which has Europe's largest and most dynamic young population of approximately 20 million.

Considering that the mission and vision of the Ministry regarding youth are in line with the gains of volunteerism, it is clear that the Ministry should play a leading role in institutionalizing volunteerism. In this regard, on December 7, 2018, the Ministry of Youth and Sports declared 2019 as the “Year of volunteerism” at the UN International Volunteer Day event held in Ankara, with the aim of launching a volunteer mobilization campaign in the country.

Within this scope, the 2019 Year of Volunteerism Launch Program was held on March 22, 2019, with the participation of a total of 954 non-governmental organizations, more than 100 print, visual, and social media representatives, and university rectors. The 2019 Year of Volunteerism Strategy Document, prepared by the Ministry with the aim of maximizing cooperation between civil society, the private sector, and public institutions and organizations in relation to volunteering and ensuring the effective use of resources, was announced to the public. The Volunteerism Year Strategy Document consists of six main areas of focus:

- Strengthening the culture of volunteerism
- More effective use of technology

- More effective regulation and risk management
- Strengthening volunteer management and training
- Strengthening inter-institutional relations
- Recognition and evaluation of volunteering

The 2019 Year of Volunteerism Action Plan, prepared in relation to the ongoing and planned activities of the units affiliated with our Ministry in the field of volunteerism, has been prepared and put into effect. The Volunteerism Action Plan could not be renewed in 2020 due to the pandemic, but in 2021, its scope was expanded with the participation of 12 different institutions and organizations represented in the High Council for the Fight against Addiction, and the 2021 and 2022 Volunteerism Action Plans were prepared and implemented.

The aim was to carry out joint efforts to develop inter-institutional cooperation within the scope of volunteerism activities. To this end, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Council of Higher Education (YÖK), Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Family and Social Services, Union of Municipalities of Türkiye (TBB), 19 municipalities and 11 universities have signed "Volunteerism Cooperation Protocols." A total of 36 volunteerism cooperation protocols have been signed and implemented with various institutions, including municipalities, universities, the Red Crescent, and institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Education.

Under the protocol signed between the Presidency of the Higher Education Council (YÖK) and our Ministry, the "Volunteer Work Course" has been introduced as an elective course in our universities starting from the 2020-2021 academic year. The aim of the course is to strengthen the ties between the university and society through volunteer activities in which students participate, using the knowledge, skills, and experience they have acquired throughout their education; thus, ensuring that students take part in volunteer work in a volunteer field of their choice, within a pre-prepared plan, for a period of time and share the results. In this context, our Ministry is contributing to the necessary content and preparatory work. As of today, the Elective Volunteer Work Course has been offered at 127 universities in the first semester of the 2021-2022 academic year, with a total of 215,466 students enrolled in the course.

A workshop was held remotely with the participation of academics teaching the Elective Volunteer Work Course in order to make the course more effective and efficient, ensure consistency in its implementation, and share experiences related to the course. Within this scope, presentations were given on good practice examples related to the Elective Volunteer Work Course.

As part of capacity development efforts for institutions, "Volunteerism and Volunteer Management Training" and awareness-raising activities are being carried out for institutions and organizations that request them, including sports federations, provincial public libraries, and provincial directorates.

In order to bring the issue of volunteerism to the forefront in the country and to raise awareness on the subject among all segments of society, especially young people, December 5, World Volunteer Day, is celebrated every year with various volunteer activities and programs carried out simultaneously in 81 provinces.

Efforts are being made to increase the active participation of volunteers in international sports events. In this context, the Volunteer Directorate was established within the scope of the 5th Islamic Solidarity Games in Konya in 2021. Islamic Solidarity Games, and in cooperation with the World Ethnosport Confederation during the 4th World Nomadic Games held in Bursa between September 29 and October 2, advertisements were published through GönüllüyüzBİZ Platform to reach the required sports volunteers, and thousands of volunteers who applied through the system took an active role in the games.

International cooperation in the field of volunteerism is also given great importance. In this context, Youth Volunteer Training Program was held in Istanbul between August 1 and 5, 2022, with the participation of young volunteers from Türkiye, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Uzbekistan. Within the scope of the program, workshop activities were conducted to establish a mechanism related to the Volunteer Pool and experiences were shared. Similarly, the 2023 Organization of Islamic Cooperation Youth Day was celebrated with a series of events hosted by the Ministry between September 3-5, 2023, under the theme of "Youth Volunteering and Social Responsibility." As part of the event, following a three-day training program attended by international students from OIC member/observer countries studying at universities in the country and Turkish students, the program concluded with the 2023 OIC Youth Day Official Ceremony held in the Ministry's Conference Hall, with the participation of international organizations and mission representatives in the country.

One of the main ways to ensure cooperation between public authorities and civil society organizations is through grant programs designed to support civil initiatives in the field of volunteer work. To this end, the Ministry of Youth and Sports provides grants to numerous volunteer projects each year under the Project Support Program.

Although there is no fully developed volunteer service program in the country with the necessary financial, administrative, and legal infrastructure, GönüllüyüzBİZ "We Are Volunteers" platform has been designed as a prototype for a national volunteer service program, aiming to lay the groundwork for the institutional collaborations essential for the development of volunteering.

National Volunteer Platform

With the slogan "Heart Work!" the Volunteer Platform, which began operating under the name "Young Volunteers" within the Ministry to promote a culture of volunteering in the country and to facilitate effective inter-institutional cooperation in volunteer work, has been bringing together organizations seeking volunteers and individuals wishing to volunteer for over 10 years. The program aims to enable young people to see themselves as an active part of society by participating in volunteer activities without expecting anything in return, but simply out of a desire to benefit society, thereby experiencing the joy of giving without expecting anything in return.

Based on the principles of equality, transparency, accountability, and sustainability, and operating on a membership basis, GönüllüyüzBİZ Platform offers hundreds of volunteer opportunities across six different categories for young people. Organizations seeking volunteers can post their

announcements on the site, while those wishing to volunteer can access and apply for all announcements under the categories of sports, culture and tourism, environment, disaster and emergency, education, health, and social services at the same time. Additionally, thanks to GönüllüyüzBİZ mobile application, it is possible to view volunteer announcements instantly and apply for the desired announcement from anywhere.

The system documents the volunteer activities that young people participate in, enabling them to provide references for future job and scholarship applications. Thus, while young people develop their personal and social skills by serving the community without expecting anything in return through volunteer activities, they also obtain important references for their career plans.

As part of the annual maintenance, support, and additional development services procurement project carried out in 2020, Arabic, Russian, and German language support was added to the Platform's existing English language support. In the second half of 2021, as part of the annual update, maintenance, and support service procurement, the domain name of the system was changed to "gonulluyuzbiz.gov.tr" by a corporate decision, and the names, icons, and logo names used in the design of the mobile applications were revised accordingly.

GönüllüyüzBİZ Platform is an inclusive system designed for use by all public institutions and organizations, foundations and associations, volunteer organizations, municipalities, provincial special administrations, universities, libraries, museums, hospitals, excavation presidencies, federations, and volunteers, in addition to the Ministry's service units. In this context, all the aforementioned institutions and organizations, along with volunteers, are partners and stakeholders in this initiative.

GönüllüyüzBİZ Platform, which invites everyone who is ready to achieve great things with small sacrifices to become volunteers and aims to combine the culture of philanthropy that exists in Turkish traditions with the universal values of contemporary life under the umbrella of volunteerism, serves not only young people between the ages of 15 and 29, but all age groups throughout the country. To this date, 478,539 individuals and 3,507 institutions have joined the platform, with 41,906 announcements were made. The site offers two types of membership: institutional and individual.

Institutional Membership. Organizations and institutions that carry out volunteer activities and seek volunteers for these activities can publish their own volunteer job postings on the site after completing their institutional membership and becoming accredited. All public institutions and organizations, foundations and associations, volunteer organizations, municipalities, provincial special administrations, universities, libraries, museums, hospitals, excavation directorates, and federations can apply for institutional membership. As of July 2025, the

number of corporate members on the site has reached 3,507.

The site offers its institutional members the opportunity to use their own volunteer management systems free of charge. Accordingly, each institution creates volunteer job postings with their own terms and conditions for the volunteer activities they will carry out using the “add new posting” button and sends them to the site administrator. Postings that meet the volunteer job description criteria are immediately published on the site. This allows organizations to promote their volunteer activities to even the most remote corners of the country and more easily reach volunteers with the desired characteristics.

Individual Membership. Anyone wishing to apply for current volunteer opportunities posted on the site must become an individual member of the site. Anyone who logs into the site via the e-government system and fills out their profile page, including their contact information, can apply for all volunteer opportunities posted on the site that they are eligible for. Those wishing to volunteer can choose from options under the categories of sports, culture and tourism, environment, disasters and emergencies, education, health, and social services. Volunteers can also view volunteer postings instantly through the mobile app and apply for the postings they want from wherever they are. When their applications are accepted by the institution's authorized representative, volunteers are notified immediately via text message through the system. As of July 2025, the number of individual members on the site has reached 478,539.

The announcements that volunteers apply for through the system, the volunteer activities they participate in, and the evaluation scores given by the organization after the activity are processed on their profile pages. Volunteers can use this document, which is like a volunteer certificate, as a reference document for education, job, or scholarship applications. GönüllüyüzBİZ Platform has a mechanism that ensures that all complaints and requests are responded to as quickly as possible. Thanks to this mechanism, the expectations and complaints of volunteers and volunteer organizations are learned, and actions are taken to improve the system. Another mechanism for maintaining the quality of the program is a rating system in which volunteers and volunteer organizations evaluate each other. After each volunteer activity, volunteer organizations and volunteers rate each other. These evaluations are open to the public. In addition, the system's software infrastructure is updated annually to provide closer monitoring and more detailed statistics.

GönüllüyüzBİZ Platform was awarded the International Damir Cemerin Award, presented annually by the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR), in 2017 for its work in the “Disaster and Emergency” category, which

aims to encourage efforts to develop communities to build resilience against disasters.

The platform was awarded the Jury Incentive Award in the Central Organizations Category under the “Inspiring Public Administration Project Awards” given by the Turkish Quality Association (KALDER) in 2023. The “Inspiring Public Management Project Award Program” is implemented annually by KALDER at the local and national levels to promote innovation, creativity, and efficiency in public service delivery, with the aim of spreading a culture of excellence across all sectors and organizations in the country.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

United Arab Emirates (UAE)
Population: 11.4 million
Capital City: Abu Dhabi

Human Development Index	0.940 (very high)
World Giving Index	54, including 65% of adults helped a stranger, 59% donated money and 37% volunteered
Law on Volunteerism	Federal Law No. (13) of 2018 on the Volunteer Work
National Volunteer Platform	volunteers.ae
Government Supervisor	Federal Authority for Human Resources

Introduction

Although the philosophy of volunteerism has a long history in the Arab world, it has only recently begun to be recognized by governments as important for society. Consequently, states have started to incorporate volunteerism into their national policies. The concepts of civic engagement and volunteering have been introduced into school curricula. International and regional organizations have also started to promote volunteerism, recognizing that it can help them to fulfil their objectives. The positive role of the state in promoting volunteerism manifests itself in two distinct ways. Firstly, states create a legal and political environment that supports and encourages volunteerism. The United Arab Emirates is one such country, developing new laws and policies in support of volunteering and incorporating them into its national policies. Secondly, various countries are also changing public attitudes through policy and raising awareness of the positive impact of volunteering on society.

In the Arab region, volunteers have contributed to addressing a wide range of development challenges. In crisis situations, they are often the first to respond. The extent to which they contribute to achieving the SDGs varies. SDGs involving volunteers include gender equality, women's empowerment, healthcare, and the eradication of poverty and illiteracy. A culture of volunteerism does exist in the UAE, as participating in humanitarian aid is considered a rewarding experience by Muslim volunteers as part of Islamic culture.

Infrastructure

The UAE declared 2017 the Year of Philanthropy, with a particular focus on volunteering. Furthermore, the 2018 Volunteering Law aims to promote a culture of philanthropy and volunteering among UAE residents, providing unique protections for volunteers and beneficiaries alike. In 2017, the Federal Authority for Human Resources (FAHR), in coordination with the Ministry of Community Development, published a guide to volunteering in government agencies. This new guide defines volunteering, explains its objectives and the areas in which volunteers can work, and sets out their rights and responsibilities, as well as ways to engage them in organizational volunteer work. In 2017, the UAE government launched the National Volunteering Platform, which provides government agencies with a comprehensive database and accurate statistics on volunteering at the national level. The platform creates a personal account for each volunteer and provides opportunities to volunteer in a range of sectors, including education, humanitarian work, elderly care, healthcare, culture and the arts, sports, environmental protection, community service, inspiring hope and international volunteering.

Legislation

UAE is one of the countries with a federal law formally regulating volunteering work. Federal Law No. (13) of 2018 on the Volunteer Work Issued on 18 December 2018, does not only aim to "spread, encourage and promote the culture of Volunteer Work", but also to promote diversity and innovation within voluntarism, and provide a "unified reference for Volunteer work at the state." Notably the law includes formal obligations for VIOs to provide for the health and safety of their volunteers. In addition to the federal law, there are sub-national laws in individual Emirates regulating voluntarism, such as one in Dubai, Law No. (5) of 2018 Regulating Volunteer Work in the Emirate of Dubai, issued on 11 April 2018. In line with its federal counterpart, it sets out minimum protection standards for volunteers and recognizes voluntarism's contribution overall. Finally, Law No. 12 of 2017 Regulating NGOs in the Emirate of Dubai focused to support civil society organizations whose activities are closely linked to volunteering efforts.

Facts and Figures

According to statistics from the National Volunteering Platform as of November 2019, 442,098 volunteers were registered on the platform. The UAE healthcare system attracts volunteers and provides opportunities for them to work in hospitals. For instance, the Sheikh Khalifa Medical Centre established a volunteer programme in April 2008. The Dubai Health Authority offers volunteering opportunities aimed at improving patient satisfaction and providing volunteers with a sense of personal fulfilment. Examples include the Rashid Hospital Volunteer Service and the Thalassaemia Centre Volunteer Programme.

The Abtal Al Jalila (Al Jalila Heroes) children's volunteering programme has around 400 registered volunteers, 60 of whom are active 'superheroes' who regularly visit the hospital. This example highlights the connection between the hospital's strategic goals and the volunteer programme, demonstrating how volunteering can benefit the institution.

Charitable organizations in the United Arab Emirates play a vital role in supporting the healthcare sector by providing volunteers with opportunities to serve the community. Examples of charities in the United Arab Emirates include the Emirates Red Crescent Society, Al Maktoum Foundation, Khalifa Foundation, Dar Al Ber Society, and the Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation.

Medical associations and community organizations play an active role in supporting the healthcare system, and the UAE has many such associations, such as the Pink Caravan, a UAE-based breast cancer awareness initiative that emphasizes the importance of early detection through regular screenings. The Make-A-Wish Foundation has granted over 3 thousand wishes to children with serious illnesses. Given the aforementioned role of volunteers in the healthcare system, it is important to understand their motivations.

Corporate volunteering in Dubai is in its infancy. Companies support employee volunteering in a variety of ways. Forty-four percent (44%) of all companies encourage employees to volunteer in their free time, and a quarter (25%) provide opportunities for employee volunteering during regular working hours.

Companies support a variety of organizations and initiatives. The types of organizations and causes most likely to receive support through corporate volunteering initiatives include education (26%), healthcare (24%), overseas aid (24%), and assistance to children and youth (19%).

UZBEKISTAN

Republic of Uzbekistan

Population: 37.1 million No. of Volunteers: 1.5 mln (estimated)

Capital City: Tashkent

Law on Volunteerism	Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 2 December 2019 No. ZRU-585 “On volunteer activities”
National Volunteer Platform	volontyor.uz
Leading Non-Profit Organization	Uzbekistan Volunteer Association
Volunteer Counter Office	Youth Affairs Agency
Government Supervisor	Youth Affairs Agency

Address by Mr. Alisher Sa’dullayev, Director of Youth Affairs Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Agency for Youth Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, I welcome the participants in this initiative and express my sincere gratitude to the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), as well as the United Nations Volunteers for their consistent promotion of a culture of volunteerism and civic solidarity in our region. Today, as the world faces new social, humanitarian, and environmental challenges, volunteering is becoming one of the most effective tools for strengthening social resilience, trust, and mutual understanding among people and nations. For Uzbekistan, the development of the volunteer movement is an integral part of the state’s youth policy and an important mechanism for building an active civil society. Volunteering fosters leadership, responsibility, social cohesion, and the involvement of young people in addressing pressing development challenges. When discussing volunteering in Central Asia, it is important to note that for our people, this is not a new practice, but rather part of a centuries-old social culture. The history of volunteering in Central Asia predates the term “volunteering” itself by more than a thousand years.

Uzbekistan, located in the heart of Central Asia and historically one of the key hubs of the Great Silk Road, has for many centuries served as a space for the exchange of knowledge, experience, and humanitarian values. At the same time, every country in our region has made a unique contribution to the development of traditions of mutual aid, philanthropy, and public service. That is precisely why we view the development of volunteerism not as a national priority for individual states, but as a shared asset and the future of the entire region.

The history of volunteerism in Central Asia dates back more than a thousand years. As early as the 8th–9th centuries, practices of teaching children to read and write free of charge existed in Bukhara and Samarkand. In the 10th–13th centuries, soup kitchens, charitable foundations, hospitals, shelters for travelers, and various forms of support for the needy, all based on the principles of social solidarity and responsibility toward society, became widespread. In the 14th–15th centuries, the "ustoz—shogird" mentorship system played a significant role in the development of society; it was based on the voluntary transfer of knowledge, experience, and professional skills from master to apprentice. For centuries, it was this tradition that ensured the continuity of generations and the development of crafts, science, and public service.

It is particularly important to note that this tradition remains relevant today. Under the leadership of Shavkat Miromonovich Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the "ustoz–shogird" principle has taken on new meaning and been further developed. The older generation — scholars, educators, specialists, public figures, and community leaders — serve as mentors to young people, helping them realize their potential, acquire professional skills, and confidently embark on their professional careers. At its core, the "ustoz—shogird" institution is one of the oldest forms of volunteerism in Central Asia, based on the voluntary transfer of knowledge, experience, and life values from one generation to the next. The tradition of "hashar", collective voluntary assistance that brings people together to tackle socially significant challenges, support neighbors, and develop local communities—also holds a special place in the culture of our peoples. Many elements of this tradition continue to be successfully applied in modern volunteer practices. Later, the ideas of public service were further developed in the Jadidist enlightenment movement, whose adherents viewed education, enlightenment, and social responsibility as the most important tools for societal development.

Today New Uzbekistan with the largest population in Central Asia numbering more than 38 million people, over 60 percent of whom are young people, views volunteerism as a vital resource for social development and the realization of human potential. In recent years, the country has established a comprehensive system to support volunteer activities. A distinctive feature of the Uzbek model is its institutional nature. Uzbekistan became one of the first countries in the region to establish a modern legal framework in the field of service culture and to enshrine mechanisms for supporting volunteer activities not only in the public sector but also within government agencies and institutions.

For the first time in the region, mechanisms for recognizing volunteer experience in the context of admission to educational institutions, employment, and youth participation in social programs have been introduced at the legislative level. Today, these approaches are being successfully implemented, including within the National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as in a number of other government agencies. All 14 regions of the country have volunteer

schools, regional initiatives, and coordination mechanisms that ensure the involvement of young people in socially beneficial activities and create a sustainable infrastructure for the development of volunteerism. Today, volunteers in Uzbekistan actively participate in social, educational, environmental, cultural, and humanitarian initiatives, and carry out projects in the areas of inclusion, support for local communities, emergency response, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The development of the volunteer movement has been identified as one of the priorities of the "Youth of New Uzbekistan – 2030" Strategy. This strategy is closely linked to the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 and reflects Uzbekistan's commitment to addressing contemporary global challenges through the development of human capital, civic engagement, and a culture of mutual responsibility.

In this regard, Uzbekistan has set itself an ambitious goal: to engage more than one million young people in formal volunteer activities by 2030 in the name of peace, solidarity, sustainable development, and the well-being of society. We are convinced that investing in volunteering today is an investment in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals tomorrow. That is precisely why volunteering in New Uzbekistan is viewed not only as a form of civic engagement but also as a vital tool for shaping a generation of leaders capable of taking responsibility for the development of their communities, their country, and the entire region. We are convinced that Central Asia has enormous potential to become one of the most dynamically developing regions in Asia in the field of volunteering. Our countries are united by common historical roots, similar values of mutual assistance, and significant youth potential. Uzbekistan stands ready to continue serving as an open platform for exchanging experiences, training volunteers, implementing joint projects, and developing regional cooperation in the field of volunteering.

We would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the Republic of Uzbekistan's readiness to actively participate in the preparation of the WSAF Review of Best Practices in Volunteering and to continue constructive engagement with all interested partners.

Thank you for your attention.

National System of Volunteer Organizations

The National System of Volunteer Organizations of the Republic of Uzbekistan constitutes a unified ecosystem that brings together government institutions, public associations, nongovernmental nonprofit organizations, the corporate sector, international partners, and self-organized volunteer initiatives. This collaboration ensures the sustainable development of the volunteer movement, promotes broad citizen participation in activities that benefit society, and fosters a culture of community service.

In accordance with the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Volunteer Activities," the development of the volunteer movement is

coordinated by the Youth Affairs Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan. To strengthen interagency cooperation, the Board of Trustees for the Development of Volunteer Activities, the first of its kind in Central Asian history, has been established, bringing together representatives of government agencies, civil society institutions, and experienced volunteers. A distinctive feature of the national model is its continuous nature, which fosters a culture of volunteer service from an early age. To foster a sense of civic responsibility, mutual aid, and leadership qualities in children, the “Sardorlar” (leaders) and “Kahramonlar Davri” (time of heroes) programs are being implemented. Starting at age sixteen, citizens have the opportunity to officially engage in volunteer work by joining government, community, international, and corporate volunteer programs. Another important element of the system is the “Buvijonlar Maktaibi” (grandmothers’ school) program, which aims to develop intergenerational mentorship and impart spiritual and moral values, national traditions, and a culture of community service to young people.

O‘ZBEKISTON VOLONTYORLARI ASSOTSIATSIYASI

The key civil society organization within the national system is the Uzbekistan Volunteers Association, the country’s first non-governmental, nonprofit organization, established at the initiative of the volunteers themselves to consolidate and develop the volunteer movement. Today, the Association serves as a unified national platform that brings together volunteer initiative groups, civil society organizations, corporate, professional (pro bono), and individual volunteers, and acts as a hub for national and international volunteer initiatives and projects. The Association operates in all 14 regions of the Republic of Uzbekistan and brings together more than 100,000 active volunteers. An important component of the national system is the work of more than 250 sustainable, self-organized volunteer initiatives that carry out social, environmental, humanitarian, educational, and inclusive projects. These initiatives complement the work of government and civil society institutions, expanding opportunities for citizens to participate in volunteer activities. Particular attention is paid to the development of international cooperation. In 2025, an agreement was signed with UN Volunteers to implement the Full Funding mechanism, which opened the possibility of sending volunteers from Uzbekistan to work within UN structures. In 2026, at the Association’s initiative, the Central Asia and Azerbaijan Volunteers Academy was established, bringing together national volunteer organizations from the region to exchange experiences, train leaders of the volunteer movement, and implement joint projects. The national system of volunteer organizations in the Republic of Uzbekistan ensures the continuity of fostering a culture of volunteering throughout a person’s life by uniting the efforts of the state, civil society, the business sector, and international partners.

Achievements in Volunteerism

In recent years, the Republic of Uzbekistan has established a modern system for the development of volunteerism, based on improving legislation, expanding citizen participation in public life, and strengthening cooperation between the state and civil society institutions. Today, volunteerism encompasses virtually all key areas of social development, including social, environmental, inclusive, medical, event-based, corporate, digital, international, and professional (pro bono) volunteering. Particular attention is paid to the practical involvement of citizens in activities that benefit society. Volunteers actively participate in the work of 208 “Inson” centers, public service centers, social protection agencies, educational and healthcare organizations, as well as in projects in the fields of the environment, culture, sports, tourism, digitalization, and emergency response. At the same time, the civil society sector comprising self-organized initiatives, non-governmental nonprofit organizations, and charitable associations is actively developing.

A significant achievement has been the expansion of international cooperation. Uzbekistan is consistently developing cooperation with UN agencies, international organizations, and national volunteer platforms in other countries. The establishment in 2026 the Central Asia and Azerbaijan Volunteers Academy marked an important step in the development of regional cooperation and the creation of a unified space for sharing best practices in volunteerism. The country is steadily improving measures of state support for volunteers, implementing modern mechanisms for training and supporting volunteers, developing digital infrastructure, and expanding opportunities for citizens to participate in addressing socially significant issues.

The experience of the Republic of Uzbekistan demonstrates an effective model for the development of volunteerism, based on a combination of government support, public initiative, and international cooperation. The established national system ensures the continuous development of a culture of volunteerism, from fostering civic responsibility in childhood to the active participation of youth, adults, and older generations in implementing socially significant initiatives. This comprehensive approach contributes to the strengthening of civil society, the development of social solidarity, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, while also laying the foundation for the further development of national and regional cooperation in the field of volunteerism.

National Traditions and Culture of Volunteerism

The traditions of public service, mutual aid, and mentorship in what is now Uzbekistan and Central Asia have deep historical roots dating back more than a thousand years. As far back as

the heyday of the cities along the Great Silk Road, from the 8th to the 12th centuries, a culture of serving others through knowledge, labor, mentorship, medical care, public work, and support for the local community was taking shape in society.

Forms of socially beneficial activities played a historically significant role, including the education of children and youth, the dissemination of knowledge, caring for the sick, assisting travelers, and the construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, water sources, caravanserais, madrasas, and other facilities vital to the life of society. Such activities reflected the view of service as a person's individual and collective responsibility toward society. One of the most striking forms of traditional public service is *hashar*, a centuries-old practice of collective unpaid assistance. Hashar brought residents together to build houses, irrigation structures, and roads; improve mahallas; plant trees; clean up public areas; prepare for community events; and provide practical assistance to families facing difficult life circumstances. Based on the principles of mutual aid, labor, and collective responsibility, hashar remains an important part of public life in Uzbekistan to this day. The institution of the *mahalla* holds a special place in the culture of service, having served as the center of community self-organization for centuries. Through the mahalla, residents came together to address everyday social issues: assisting the elderly, supporting families with children, organizing community work, improving the local environment, educating youth, and strengthening good neighborly relations. In the modern system of volunteerism, the mahalla continues to play an important role as a space for trust, mutual support, and civic engagement.

The most important element of the national culture of public service is the tradition of *ustoz—shogird* (mentor—apprentice), whose history also spans many centuries. Over the centuries, knowledge, professional expertise, life experience, and moral values were passed down directly from mentor to apprentice. This system formed the basis for training artisans, doctors, scientists, educators, statesmen, and masters of folk crafts, fostering not only professional skills but also a sense of responsibility toward society. The principle of ustoz—shogird remains relevant today. As part of the reforms being implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan, the development of mentorship is receiving special attention from the government. At the initiative of Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the traditions of mentorship are being systematically integrated into the systems of education, vocational training, crafts, public service, and civic engagement as one of the most important mechanisms for transmitting experience, educating youth, and preserving national values. A new phase in the development of the culture of public service is linked to the activities of the Jadids in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Representatives of the Jadid

enlightenment movement viewed service to society as the duty of an educated person. They opened new types of schools, taught children literacy, languages, and modern sciences, established libraries, developed publishing activities, and disseminated knowledge about hygiene, medicine, and social development. Their work became an important historical example of service through education, enlightenment, and practical assistance to society.

The modern volunteer movement in Uzbekistan is a continuation of this centuries-old culture of service. The historical traditions of hashar, mahalla, ustoz—shogird mentorship system, and educational service are reflected today in the activities of volunteers, civic organizations, educational initiatives, social projects, and self-organized civil movements. Modern volunteering in Uzbekistan is based not only on helping those in need, but first and foremost on an individual's personal participation in meaningful activities, such as education, care, labor, community improvement, enlightenment, healthcare, mentorship, and support for society. It is precisely this continuity that links traditional forms of mutual aid with modern institutional mechanisms for the development of volunteerism and strengthen the culture of service to society.

Volunteer Events and Conferences

The Republic of Uzbekistan regularly hosts national, regional, and international volunteer events aimed at fostering civic engagement, supporting social initiatives, exchanging experiences, and strengthening international cooperation in the field of volunteerism. One of the largest social projects is the "Mehrli Sovg'a" (Kind Gifts) campaign, implemented by the National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan in collaboration with the Youth Affairs Agency and the Uzbekistan Volunteers Association. As part of the project in 2026, more than 15,000 children with disabilities enrolled in grades 1–4 received gifts and participated in festive and recreational events. The Voice Up project holds a special place, as it is aimed at developing leadership qualities among youth, public speaking skills, civic responsibility, and social engagement. The project includes educational programs, training sessions, community initiatives, and international youth gatherings.

Throughout the year, volunteers are also recruited for specialized programs and projects designed to develop various areas of volunteer work. Among these is the "Inson Volunteers" platform, which brings together volunteers to participate in the activities of "Inson" centers across the country. Volunteers assist citizens, participate in social projects, provide support to people in need, and are also involved in disaster relief efforts following emergencies and natural disasters.

There is also the "Milliy volontyorlik tashabbuslari" program, which offers the

opportunity to join national volunteer initiatives following an open selection process held throughout the year. An important social project is the “Mehrli Volontyor” program, under which volunteers assist high school graduates with disabilities during college entrance exams, providing organizational, navigational, and moral support at every stage of the exam process. Another initiative is the “Mehrli Piyola” project, in which participants are trained in the basics of pottery and art therapy techniques, after which they work with a team of volunteers to conduct creative workshops for children, people with disabilities, and residents of specialized institutions. The project aims to promote inclusive volunteering, social adaptation, and the use of art as a tool for psychological support and social integration.

With the active participation of volunteers, educational and youth initiatives such as “Ibrat Farzandlari,” “Mutolaa,” “Ustoz AI,” and “Yoshlar Front Ofisi,” which focus on fostering a culture of reading, foreign language learning, digital literacy, mentoring, and engaging youth in community service.

The annual charity campaign “Mo‘jizalar Vaqti” (time of miracles) brings volunteers together to organize inclusive events, creative workshops, cultural programs, and targeted support for children, the elderly, and other socially vulnerable groups. An important component of volunteer training is the “Eko Avlod” educational camp, which offers specialized training programs for volunteers in various areas of volunteer work. For schoolchildren and young people, the “Qahramonlar davri” (time of heroes), aimed at fostering civic responsibility, leadership skills, environmental awareness, and an active lifestyle. The “Clean Games” environmental project, implemented as a team competition involving cleanup efforts and waste sorting, has received widespread international recognition. The project promotes environmental volunteerism and fosters a responsible attitude toward the environment. As part of the nationwide “Yashil Makon” project, the “Youth Hashar” campaign is held annually, bringing together thousands of volunteers across the country.

International Volunteer Projects

International cooperation is one of the priority areas for the development of the Republic of Uzbekistan’s national volunteer system. This approach is based on strengthening cooperation with sister nations in Central Asia, developing regional partnerships, and creating a unified space for the exchange of experience, knowledge, and best practices in the field of volunteerism.

Over the past few years, the Uzbekistan Volunteers Association has consistently provided expert, methodological, and advisory support for the development of the volunteer movement in Central Asian countries. Through in-person meetings, joint educational programs, and online consultations, the Association maintains

ongoing cooperation with partners from the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan on issues related to the development of national volunteer organizations, the improvement of volunteer infrastructure, and the training of volunteer movement leaders.

An important milestone in the development of regional cooperation was the establishment, at the initiative of the Republic of Uzbekistan, of the Central Asia and Azerbaijan Volunteer Academy, the first regional educational platform to bring together national volunteer organizations to train leaders of the volunteer movement, exchange best practices, develop joint projects, conduct research, and hold annual international meetings of volunteers, experts, and young leaders.

Work has also begun on developing cooperation with the Asian Volunteer Association, aimed at expanding international collaboration, implementing joint projects, exchanging professional experience, and integrating the Central Asian volunteer community into the broader Asian volunteer community. Uzbekistan is also actively developing cooperation at the global level. The Uzbekistan Volunteer Association has signed memorandums of cooperation with international organizations and national volunteer platforms in various countries. The head of the Association is a member of the board of directors of the AVA Awards, and the Association is part of the Board of Trustees of the International Association of Volunteers and Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations, participating in shaping the international agenda in the field of volunteering. To date, representatives of the Uzbekistan Volunteer Association have participated in more than 200 international forums, conferences, summits, and expert forums, established strong partnerships with organizations from more than 17 countries around the world, and implemented over 30 joint international projects and initiatives aimed at developing volunteerism, youth cooperation, inclusive practices, and the exchange of best international practices. The Republic of Uzbekistan's international activities contribute to promoting national expertise on the world stage, strengthening cooperation among Central Asian states, and fostering a global culture of volunteerism based on mutual respect, knowledge sharing, mutual support, and joint service to society.

Coordinating and Promoting Volunteer Activities

The Republic of Uzbekistan is steadily developing a modern system to support and encourage volunteer activities, aimed at recognizing the socially beneficial contributions of volunteers, enhancing the prestige of volunteerism, and creating additional opportunities for their personal, professional, and social development. State policy in this area is focused on fostering sustainable motivation among citizens to participate in volunteer activities and on

recognizing volunteer experience as a significant element of professional and social development. One of the key priorities of state policy is the recognition of volunteer experience as a significant social and professional achievement. For example, when hiring for positions within the National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, experience in volunteer activities is considered an additional advantage during the candidate selection process. Specific support measures are provided for volunteers engaged in social work, as well as those participating in emergency response efforts. For the most active participants in volunteer activities, legislation and government programs provide additional support mechanisms, including specific preferences for admission to higher education institutions in the cases and according to the procedures established by the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Particular attention is being paid to the development of digital mechanisms to encourage volunteer activities. Work is currently underway to introduce the Social Activity Card, which allows for the recognition of citizens' civic engagement, including participation in volunteer activities. Based on the level of social activity, additional opportunities and support measures are provided, including participation in educational programs, social projects, exchange programs, competitions, civic initiatives, and other forms of civic engagement.

One of the first practical tools to support volunteers was the "Good Deeds Card", developed by the Uzbekistan Volunteers Association in collaboration with Garant Bank and the international ISIC (International Student Identity Card) system. The card offers a loyalty program and special offers for active volunteers, expanding their opportunities both within the Republic of Uzbekistan and through international partnership programs. At the same time, government agencies and civil society institutions continue to work on improving the system for incentivizing volunteer activities, developing mechanisms for public recognition, expanding educational opportunities, implementing digital solutions, and creating new support measures aimed at further developing the volunteer movement. The Republic of Uzbekistan is systematically developing a comprehensive system to motivate volunteerism that combines public recognition, professional benefits, educational opportunities, digital tools, and social support mechanisms for volunteers. This approach contributes to the sustainable development of volunteer organizations, raises the status of volunteerism, and strengthens a culture of service to society.

Volunteerism and Social and Economic Development

The experience of the Republic of Uzbekistan demonstrates that modern volunteerism is not only a form of public service but also an effective mechanism for developing human capital, professional competencies, and sustainable cooperation between the government, the education system, employers, civil society institutions, and the general public. One of the distinctive features of the national model is the development of specialized volunteering, which

allows young people to gain practical skills in their chosen field even before beginning their professional careers by participating in the resolution of real-world social challenges. This approach contributes to higher-quality training for future professionals, the development of professional responsibility, and the fostering of a culture of public service. Successful examples include the work of the *Legal Clinic*, where students and professionals provide free legislative assistance to the public while gaining practical professional experience. A similar approach is implemented in the healthcare sector, where volunteers participate in preventive and educational projects, including initiatives under the "*Salomatlik Marafoni*" (health marathon) program, thereby developing skills in public health and medical care for the population. An important area of focus is the training of volunteers who collaborate with departments of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Participation in preventive measures, training programs, and public campaigns enables young people to gain practical skills in emergency response, civil defense, and first aid, while simultaneously enhancing society's preparedness to act in emergency situations. A similar model is being implemented in other areas of public life. Volunteers gain practical experience in social welfare institutions, educational organizations, cultural institutions, environmental projects, sporting events, and digital initiatives. In this way, volunteer work serves as a platform for professional development, the acquisition of practical skills, and the cultivation of the country's human resources.

The analysis conducted shows that volunteering in the Republic of Uzbekistan fulfills not only a social but also an economic function. It contributes to the development of human capital, shortens the professional adaptation period for young specialists, strengthens cooperation between the government, educational institutions, employers, and civil society organizations, and fosters a sustainable culture of public service. It is precisely this approach that allows us to view volunteering as one of the effective tools for the country's sustainable socioeconomic development.

Future Prospects

The Republic of Uzbekistan continues to systematically improve its national system for the development of volunteer activities. A range of initiatives is currently being implemented to enhance the effectiveness of managing the volunteer movement, improve mechanisms for evaluating its results, develop international cooperation, and expand government and public support for volunteers. One of the priority areas is preparation for hosting the First Asian Volunteer Forum in the Republic of Uzbekistan, which is designed to bring together national

volunteer organizations, government partners, international institutions, the expert community, and leaders of the volunteer movement to exchange experiences, develop joint initiatives, and strengthen cooperation among countries in the Asian region. At the same time, work is underway to create a unified system for recording, coordinating, and evaluating volunteer hours, which will ensure transparent tracking of volunteer activities, analyze the level of citizen engagement, and establish a unified approach to assessing the contribution of volunteers to societal development. At the same time, a methodology is being developed to assess the economic and social contribution of volunteer activities, which will determine the impact of volunteer participation on the development of the social sector, the economy, and the achievement of sustainable national development goals.

To further develop the system of public recognition of volunteer activities, a badge titled "Faxriy Volontyor" (honorary volunteer) is being designed to honor citizens who have made a significant contribution to the development of the volunteer movement in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Work continues on developing additional mechanisms to support and encourage volunteers, aimed at enhancing the prestige of volunteer work, expanding opportunities for citizens' personal and professional development, and further fostering a culture of public service among the population. The Republic of Uzbekistan is consistently developing its national volunteer system, combining the introduction of modern mechanisms for evaluating and incentivizing volunteer activities with the expansion of international cooperation and the promotion of new regional initiatives.

REFERENCES

CAF, World Giving Index 2024. Global Trends in Generosity, 2025

CICA Ministerial Statement on Promotion of Volunteerism, 2023

CICA, Outcomes of the Seventh CICA Youth Council Meeting, 2024

CICA, Report on the First CICA Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders, 2024

CICA, Report on the Second CICA Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders, 2025

Ivanov V. Volunteering and philanthropy in Central Asia: Fusion of ancient local traditions and modern European values, in: ERNOP Conference Proceedings 2025. European Research Network on Philanthropy, 2026. P. 90–95.

ILOSTAT, ILO Statistics on volunteer work (2014-2023)

UNDP, Human Development Report, 2025

UNFPA, State of World Population. The Real Fertility Crisis, New York: United Nations Population Fund, 2025

UNV, Knowledge Portal on Volunteerism, knowledge.unv.org

UNV, State of the Worlds Volunteerism Report. Volunteerism and its Measurements. Bonn: United Nations Volunteers, 2026.

UNV, State of Volunteering in Central Asia Review. Bonn: United Nations Volunteers, 2024.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AHIK	Volunteers of the Azerbaijan Trade Unions Confederation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AUC	American University in Cairo, Egypt
AUN	ASEAN University Network, Thailand
AYB-SD	Alashanek Ya Balady Association for Sustainable Development, Egypt
BCC	Baku City Circuit, Azerbaijan
BRICS	Intergovernmental Organization of Major Emerging Markets and Developing Countries
CAC	Community Action Challenge, Cambodia
CII	Confederation of Indian Industry
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPC	Communist Party of China
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CVSF	Cambodian Volunteering Standard Framework
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DSS	Department of Social Services, Bangladesh
EFDRR	European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction
ERC	Egyptian Red Crescent
FAHR	Federal Authority for Human Resources, UAE
FICCI	Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry, India
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
KALDER	Turkish Quality Association
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MOSS	Ministry of Social Solidarity, Egypt
MOYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports, Egypt
MSUE	Mongolian State University of Education
MY Bharat	Mera Yuva Bharat, India
NASSCOM	National Association of Software and Service Companies, India
NCPV	National Committee for Promoting Volunteerism, Cambodia
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NMVO	Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organizations
NPOs	Non-profit Organizations
NSS	National Service Scheme, India
NVM	National Volunteering Movement, Pakistan
NVN	National Volunteer Network, Kazakhstan
NYF	National Youth Festival, India
OO	Public Organization
PHD	Chamber of Commerce and Industry, India
RIIB	Regional Development Public Union, India
Rosmolodezh	Federal Agency for Youth Affairs, Russia
Rosstat	Federal State Statistics Service, Russia
SDC Bangladesh	Society Development Committee,
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEIP	Skills for Employment Investment Program, Bangladesh
TBB	Union of Municipalities, Türkiye
TVS	Thai Volunteer Service
UAE	United Arab Emirates

UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VBYLD	Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue, India
VIOs	Volunteer Involving Organizations
VolCam	Cambodia Volunteering Network
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
YÖK	Council of Higher Education, Türkiye