



In FACT: International Volunteer Day, 5 December

The International Volunteer Day (IVD) provides an opportunity for volunteer-involving organizations and individual volunteers to work together on projects and campaigns promoting their contributions to economic and social development at local, national and international levels. By merging UN support with a grassroots mandate, IVD is a unique opportunity for government agencies, non-profit organizations, community groups, the private sector and volunteer-involving organizations to work together to attain common goals.

IVD was established by the United Nations General Assembly through Resolution 40/212 on 17 December 1985. Since then, governments, the UN system and civil society organizations have successfully joined volunteers around the world to celebrate the Day on 5 December.

IVD and the International Year of Volunteers 2001: Building momentum

Following a proposal of the Government of Japan to the United Nations Secretary General, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2001 the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) in its 52nd session on 20 November 1997. Resolution 52/17 was co-sponsored by 123 countries. The UN Volunteers (UNV) programmeⁱ was designated as focal point for the Year within the UN system.

The idea for an International Year of Volunteersⁱⁱ at the beginning of the 21st Century

was to stimulate national and international policy debate around, and to advocate for, the recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of voluntary action. The year led to a much better appreciation of the power of volunteerism in its many forms and the ways to support it.

Through the years, IVD has been used strategically: most countries have focused volunteers' contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) during recent celebrations. MDGs is a set of time-bound targets to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women.

The organization of IVD is generally the result of a partnership between the UN system, governments, volunteer involving organizations, and committed individuals. Representatives from the media or academia, foundations, the private sector, faith groups, and sports and recreational organizations are also often involved.



How to get involved in IVD

The World Volunteer Web – which is the global focal point for the IVD campaign – hosts a wide range of IVD-related tools and resources that can be downloaded.

Plan your event: Learn from best practices and lessons from the past IVDs. Starting with advice on forming or joining IVD planning committees, find steps to develop a national theme, plan activities, network internationally, produce promotional materials, develop a media strategy and, finally, document outcomes.

Ideas on what to do for the Day: Advice on how to integrate the MDGs, information on promotional tools and how they can be obtained, and guidance on downloading and modifying the IVD emblem and poster.

Network: Directory of national focal points connecting individual volunteers to a country's IVD committee. You can initiate a committee in your country if none exists now.

Send your IVD plans, news and event details months ahead of 5 December.

Report back: Your reports enable organizers, volunteers and World Volunteer Web readers to capture the wealth of activities undertaken around IVD. This information exchange helps furthering the value of volunteering for development.

Based in Bonn, Germany, UNV is the UN organization that supports sustainable human development globally through the promotion of volunteerism, including the mobilization of volunteers. As a part of its activities, each year, UNV provides the opportunity for over 5,500 skilled and experienced professionals, 70 percent coming from developing countries, to support peace, relief and development initiatives in some 140 countries. In addition, it engages thousands of other individuals in the work of the United Nations through www.onlinevolunteering.org, and manages the WorldVolunteerWeb, global volunteering portal that serves as a knowledge resource base for campaigning, advocacy, information dissemination and networking.

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ⁱ www.unvolunteers.org

ⁱⁱ www.worldvolunteerweb.org/events/iyv/index.htm

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UN Volunteers is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)