

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME

www.unv.org

1. Describe your country's/agency's overall strategy or approach in using ICT for Development

a) Overall strategy

1. To make volunteers effective capacity-building agents on the uses and opportunities of ICT for human development, in particular towards the attainment of the MDGs.
2. To integrate ICTs into operational activities and processes so as to better manage volunteers, as well as promoting Volunteering in the context of human development

b) Guiding principles for use of ICT for development

ICTs are effective and efficient tools for access to information, for generation of knowledge and for communications among development stakeholders around the world. In turn, information and knowledge are more important than ever for advancing human development, and indeed, to achieve the freedoms from "Want" and "Fear" that the UN Secretary General described in his landmark "Millennium Report". Therefore, in an increasingly networked world, ICTs constitute essential tools for human development. At the same time, ICT should be viewed as means to an end (and not as ends by themselves).

c) Objectives

1. Provide the proper support and enabling environment for volunteers so they can help better integrate ICT in the development processes to which they contribute.
2. Work in partnership with other development organizations so that volunteers can respond to some of the needs of those organizations to effectively mainstream ICT into their activities and strategies
3. Utilize ICT as a new channel for volunteering (as in online volunteering)
4. Promote and support the use of electronic communications to facilitate volunteer networking in relation to human development issues.
5. Apply ICT intensively in operational processes related to recruitment, rostering, placement and monitoring of volunteer and volunteer assignments, as well in management support functions (reporting, statistics, staff communications).

d) Areas of application

The United Nations Volunteers is the UN organization that supports human development globally through the promotion of volunteerism, including the mobilization of volunteers. This holistic development approach, which also covers humanitarian assistance and conflict (special situations), is also reflected in our ICT for Development strategies.

ICT volunteers supported by UNV apply their skills and commitment to any area of development, and in particular to those covered by the UN Millennium Development Goals. The volunteers work with Government organizations, UN agencies, Volunteer sending Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, Academia, Development Agencies and other Volunteer-Involving Organizations.

e) References and web-links to any relevant strategy documents or guidelines

<http://www.unites.org/html/unites/unites.htm> (A comprehensive description of the UNITEs initiative)

<http://www.unites.org/html/unites/faq.htm> (Some frequently asked questions about UNITEs)

<http://www.netaid.org/ov/index.html> (Home page of the Online Volunteering module at NetAid)

2. Identify the main modalities for ICT integration in your overall development strategy

a) Modalities for ICT integration and programme delivery

UNV manages two major ICT volunteering initiatives, UNITEs and NetAid Online Volunteering, which themselves help UNV to better integrate ICT into its overall development strategy. In addition, it has a special unit which is helping to mainstream ICT into the agency's field activities.

UNITEs, the United Nations Information Technology Service (www.unites.org), is a global volunteering initiative aimed at supporting institutions worldwide to bridge the digital divide. Announced by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in his recent *Millenium Report*, UNITEs is unique in scope and breadth. Volunteers under the UNITEs umbrella build human/institutional capacity on the uses and opportunities of ICT to advance human development processes. The programme fosters the participation of volunteers from the South, and also makes it possible for developing country nationals to serve in their own countries as UNVs. Over 60% of the approximately 220 on-site volunteers placed thus far (since August 2000) come from the South. More than 100 Online Volunteers (see NetAid Online Volunteering) also participate, supporting their peers on the ground, and helping to research content for the UNITEs Knowledge Base (<http://www.unites.org/Html/Resource/knowledge/index.htm>).

Very importantly, UNITEs devotes particular attention to the promotion of ICT Volunteering among other development agencies and stakeholders.

The UNV Online Volunteering service, currently hosted at NetAid (www.netaid.org/ov), connects online volunteers with organizations working in or for developing countries. They volunteer on weekends, in the evenings, on their lunch break, or whenever their schedules permit. They volunteer from home computers, work computers, or computers in public access centers. Since early 2000, this service has brought together online volunteers and development organizations (from both South and North) through the largest database of online volunteering opportunities for development anywhere in the world. Nearly 5,000 online volunteers have given their time and expertise, contributing with development organizations around the world. The potential of online volunteers supporting volunteers on the ground (on-site) is only beginning to be explored (UNITEs constitutes one early succesful experience in onsite-online volunteer collaboration).

b) Partnership, including the private sector

All of UNV's work on ICT for Development is done with and through partners, as UNV provides services in the form of volunteer action and promotion for other organizations. At the field level, these partnerships often involve a Government agency and UNDP, as shown in the list of current volunteer assignment in the UNITEs web page (<http://www.unites.org/html/projects/ongoing.htm>). There is also involvement with agencies

like UNIFEM, the Soros Foundation, World Links for Development, and a variety of Civil Society organizations (eg. SangoNet in South Africa, Acorvol in Ecuador, Enterprise Namibia, etc.).

At the corporate level, the Government of Japan is the main donor partner, and there is a growing number of universities (like the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Kwansai Gakuin University of Japan, Universidad de Colima in Mexico etc...*) becoming involved in the University Volunteer Network under UNITEs. In terms of private sector, the main partners is Cisco Systems, through the large-scale "LDC Initiative" (together with UNDP) to bring high-level ICT technical skills to larger numbers of people in more than 30 countries. Cisco was also one of the main partners during the initial stages of NetAid (which includes the Online Volunteering service managed by UNV).

c) Participation, if any, in joint or multi-donor ICT for development programmes

The most important is the UN ICT Task Force, where UNV is the Joint Chair of the Human Capacity Committee. This committee is integrated under Working Group 3 (Human Resource Development and Capacity Building). Some key outputs of the Committee are oriented towards the WSIS, to ensure that the capacity dimension of the digital divide is properly addressed in the context of that important UN Summit.

d) Estimate of a global amount of funding with indications on the timeframe it covers

Core funding for the two main ICT initiatives managed by UNV (UNITEs and Online Volunteering at NetAid) is approximately US\$ 2.4M for the period 2000-2003. Additional funding mobilized from donors (mainly the Government of Japan) and in relation to projects (mainly with Cisco and UNDP) until the end of 2003 amounts to some \$1.8M (this figure is subject to change depending on confirmations during the first half of 2003). Individual volunteer assignments financed by projects are not included in these figures, and neither are in-kind contributions provided by various partners.

e) Lessons learned from your country's/agency's experience

UNV has made a determined and conscious effort to integrate ICT into its overall development strategy. There is still, however, a considerable way to go before ICT is fully integrated into the concrete UNV activities at the country level. Key lessons so far can be summarized as:

- even a single yet committed/skillful person with an enabling environment can make significant contributions on ICT applications in the context of a project, even if it's a major project. ICT4D capacity is often the main constraint, not equipment.
- it's essential to build sufficient institutional capacity among our staff, particularly those involved in project formulation and management, so they are able to at least identify possibilities for ICT applications in a given project. It's difficult for a small team at a HQ to intervene directly to integrate ICT in every project initiative on the ground.
- senior management commitment is essential for significant ICT integration, and this means they have to understand the possibilities that ICT offer in human development (thus, often one needs to raise awareness first with senior management).

f) Cases that are particularly illustrative/examples of best practices

- in Egypt, UNV participated with UNDP in setting up the first three community telecenters. We were successful in demonstrating that volunteers can make a

significant difference in turning “technology access community centers” into “local development community centers with access to ICT”.

- In the state of Orissa in India, one of the early projects that received UNITEs support to establish information kiosks to communicate information about rehabilitation efforts after a major cyclone evolved to cover many other community needs for information. Local government officials received training on ICT, community users learned to access information valuable to them, and the network was subsequently used to coordinate in the following occurrence of a natural disaster. Eventually, the UNITEs initiative continued even after financial support ended from UNV.
- The University Volunteer Network under UNITEs is extending possibilities for students and professors to be assigned to projects around the world in which they build local capacity on ICT applications. While still in its early phases (since 2001), it has already received an important award, the 2002 Rome Junior Global Challenge (see press release at <http://www.unites.org/html/news/n121202.htm>).
- People With Disabilities Uganda, a small NGO in that central African country, has managed the involvement of nearly 200 online volunteers in all aspects of its work, including some that PWD Uganda could never do before (like establishing and managing its own website). Laurie Moy, a housewife from Texas, an OV herself, became the OV manager of the NGO’s “virtual department” (http://www.netaid.org/ov/stories/stories_ovoftheyear.pt?article_id=564&group_id=118). Eventually, Laurie went on to create a new NGO in the US, Pearls of Africa, (<http://www.pearlsof africa.org>) dedicated to supporting people that live with disabilities in Uganda.

3. Describe the institutional arrangements made by your country/agency for mainstreaming ICT within its development strategy

a) Main agencies involved in ICT for development (e.g. development co-operation agency, ministries, research institutes)

UNV set up in February 2001 a special unit, the “e-Volunteering” unit, to implement its strategy on ICT for Development. This unit manages two initiatives, UNITEs and NetAid Online Volunteering (described above), which themselves help UNV to better integrate ICT into its overall development strategy. In addition, the unit helps UNV to widely promote ICT Volunteering, for example through the UN ICT Task Force or through the WSIS process. And it builds up capacity of UNV staff to understand the role of ICT in development (eg. Related to the Millennium Development Goals), and about the possibilities for ICT volunteers in the projects and initiatives supported by the organization.

b) The agencies’ roles in the various stages (e.g. strategy, operations)

UNV is starting to consciously consider the inclusion of ICT into all projects for which it is an executing agency. This means that at the approval process, every project is screened for opportunities to have ICT applications included to better reach their goals and objectives. Most often this will take place by having one or more ICT volunteers (whether on/site or online) forming part of the project team and building capacity with the project stakeholders on possible use of the technologies for their specific context.

UNV has few ICT4D-focused projects, as UNV believes it is best to integrate ICT into various development areas (health, education, sustainable livelihoods, environment, etc.) instead than concentrating on projects centered on ICT applications. Exceptions are made when a wide developmental appropriation of ICT is concerned, for example in initiatives to establish community telecenters, or those building institutional capacity at a Government-wide scale, or as recently, when UNDP HQ came up with the strategy of ICT & HIV/AIDS to be developed in South Africa.

c) Contact details of your country's/agency's ICT for development focal point

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4. Country/regional focus of the ICT-enhanced development strategy

a) General description of regional and country focus

UNV's ICT for Development strategy is global in nature, following UNV's general developmental approach. Like UNDP, which administers UNV, the agency works in practically all developing countries. Over 60% of the volunteers under UNITeS come from the South, making UNITeS a clear example of South-South cooperation.

b) More detailed information on main recipients of your ICT-enhanced development strategy

The countries with the largest number of on-site volunteers under UNITeS are India, Benin, Bhutan, Mongolia, Ecuador, Botswana, Honduras, and Jordan. The countries with the host institutions that have received the most online volunteers are Uganda, Tanzania, USA and Peru.

As per types of recipients, ordered in terms of most recipients of volunteers under UNITeS, it is:

- UNDP/Governments (through projects carried out by UNDP country offices)
- Civil Society organizations
- Other UN agencies

More detailed information can be obtained at the UNITeS web site (www.unites.org) and the NetAid Online Volunteering web site (www.netaid.org/OV)