



## Welcome to *Share the Story*

The Millennium Declaration set 2015 as the target for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. As the date approaches, our world faces economic crisis and the effects of climate change. Even so, we can meet the Goals, but now more than ever, the world needs the ingenuity, solidarity and creativity of many millions of ordinary people through voluntary action.

In the lead-up to International Volunteer Day (5 December), join us as we cross the globe, stopping in 12 time zones to see how voluntary action is challenging the world's big issues related to environment, hunger, education, maternal health, gender equality, and HIV/AIDS. These stories don't make the news, but they are changing the world. During the 24 hours that our journey will take we invite you to be inspired, share your story, and connect with others interested in ending poverty.

### **First stop (GMT +12 to +10): *Fiji and Vanuatu.***

Hello Pacific! This vast mass of ocean, dotted with coral atolls and volcanic islands, is the first place in the world to see the sun and the last. So, our journey begins and ends here.

World-wide the proportion of women members in parliamentary chambers continues to rise slowly, but nine chambers – mainly in Pacific Islands and Gulf states – have no women members at all. As Fiji prepares for elections in 2014, join the volunteer civic educators who are traveling far and wide across the country to inform people about democracy, their rights, and to encourage more women to get involved with decision-making.

Globally, the number of people newly infected with HIV fell from 3.5 million in 1996, to 2.7 million in 2005. Experts say a major factor behind this success has been concerted efforts to raise awareness and provide access to condoms. The prevalence of HIV is low in many Pacific island countries, but HIV risk and vulnerability factors are on the rise. And, because the virus strikes people at their prime, HIV has the potential to ravage the already fragile economies of this region. Join volunteer Peer Educators, fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS in Vanuatu, 'the happiest country in the world'. *12 minutes.*

**Second stop (GMT +10 to +8): *The Philippines.***

This archipelago is made up of 7,107 islands. This geography makes it challenging for the government to extend basic services to some rural areas. It also cuts people off from opportunities more readily available in urban areas, so the gap between the rich and poor is widening. In far-flung communities, UNV volunteers are complimenting government services by helping new mothers to give birth safely. While in the cities, volunteers are raising awareness among those who may not be aware about the Millennium Development Goals and what they can do. *6 minutes.*

**Third stop (GMT +8 to +6): *Mongolia and Lao PDR.***

Commitment from volunteers needs to be matched by political commitment. VSO Mongolia is using international and national volunteers to create an environment for local volunteering projects to flourish. A successful primary health care pilot is now being taken up by health departments around the country. *7 minutes.*

Progress on hunger has reversed says the UN – 1.02 billion people are undernourished worldwide. But, rapid poverty and hunger reduction results from high per capita growth, driven by agricultural productivity, employment creation and equity. Four UNV volunteers working in Lao PDR invite you to lunch as their edible insect initiative starts helping to improve nutrition and incomes there. *7 minutes.*

**Fourth stop (GMT +6 to +4): *Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan***

Poverty has a woman's face. Investing in girls' education and empowering women have strong multiplier effects across all the Millennium Development Goals. Join a Sri Lankan drama group and community volunteers as they encourage people in the central province, as well as the conflict-affected North and East to educate girls and to act against domestic violence. *6 minutes.*

Meanwhile, achieving the Goals will require the engagement of millions of people through voluntary action. In many cities and towns across Uzbekistan, volunteers not only help communities but are simultaneously changing the notion of what it means to volunteer in this part of the world. *7 minutes.*

**Fifth stop (GMT +4 to +2): *Kenya and Cyprus.***

The world is still on track to halve poverty rates by 2015, but the global economic crisis has slowed progress. In *Welcome to Kibera* a group of young Kenyan volunteers, who live in a slum of almost one million people, seek to shed light on the conditions where they live. *8 minutes.*

Meanwhile, in Cyprus, volunteers from both sides of the conflict are working together, for the first time, to meet common environmental concerns — the most pressing of these being water resource management. This island faces increasing water shortages due to population growth and climate change. *8 minutes.*

**Sixth stop (GMT +2 to GMT): *Zambia and Albania.***

Almost one in five people in Zambia are HIV positive and many of the ill are cared for voluntarily by female relatives or neighbors, VK Home Based Care supports these careers. British Member of Parliament, Jenny Willott spent two weeks with this project in Zambia. *8 minutes.*

Reducing inequalities leads to faster poverty reduction and volunteers often play an important role. In Albania, *volunteer exchange workers* are critical to a UN effort aimed at supporting the social integration of the most marginalized members of the Roma and Egyptian communities. *8 minutes.*

**Seventh stop (GMT to -2):** *Spain, Guinea Bissau and Morocco.*

Spain is a strong supporter of efforts towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The country's support to the [MDG Achievement Fund](#) is one example of this. Globally, increased overseas development assistance (ODA) has supported progress towards the Goals, but many donors have failed to meet their ODA targets. Raising awareness about the Goals is one way to keep this issue in the spotlight. In art savvy Seville, 40 well known artists and 200 volunteers bring MDG color to a drab working class area. *8 minutes.*

In the city of Gabu in Guinea-Bissau, UNV volunteers are working together with the local community to improve the infrastructure of daily life. These projects, which are striving to meet the Millennium Development Goals, include providing access to clean water for health and agricultural services, rebuilding the local government's offices, and equipping schools. While great progress has been made in all areas, the most powerful effect has been empowering the locals to lead, plan, and participate in the projects at every stage. *6 minutes.*

In Morocco, the people of Iquiwaz Oasis are feeling the effects of climate change. Community volunteers are working with the UNV-supported project, *Community-based Adaptation to Climate Change*, contributing their experience towards water-sharing systems and tree-planting initiatives, and sharing their knowledge with local youth. *6 minutes.*

**Eighth stop (GMT-2 to -4):** *Liberia and Ghana.*

After years of conflict, the Liberian health infrastructure has completely disintegrated and most Liberians have had little or no access to health services for at least a decade. UNV volunteers get together with other volunteers to provide health consultations to women, children and disabled people. *8 minutes.*

The northern region of Ghana suffers from an acute shortage of teachers. VSO has developed a partnership with Ghana's National Service Scheme to send Ghanaian graduates into classrooms. The results have been dramatic, with volunteer placements being filled on a scale previously thought unachievable. *8 minutes.*

**Ninth stop (GMT -4 to -6):** *Haiti and Jamaica.*

In a crisis, volunteers are often among the first responders. Their actions save lives and protect development gains. Join Red Cross volunteer, Ruth Lombard Nerlande, as she informs people displaced by the 2010 earthquake in Haiti about how to protect themselves against the latest outbreak of cholera. *5 minutes.*

Poor waste management puts people at risk every day in Haiti. Rubbish scattered in highly populated areas fosters diseases like Cholera. Volunteers are working with entrepreneurs to turn discarded plastic into marketable handicrafts, thereby getting some of the rubbish off the streets, raising awareness, and creating income opportunities. Often in the context of an emergency, volunteers help bridge the gap between crisis and long-term development. *6 minutes.*

Climate change is threatening the livelihoods of highland farming communities in Jamaica. UNV volunteers are working with local volunteers and the Government to introduce techniques for conserving the soil as a measure to adapt to climate change. *5 minutes.*

**Tenth stop (GMT -6 to -8): Ecuador and Colombia.**

High in the Andean Region a volunteer helps improve literacy, giving people more opportunities. Investing in human capital is one way that countries are making progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. But, in isolated rural regions, when government resources are often stretched, volunteers step in to compliment efforts to build human capital. *5 minutes.*

The UN World Tourism Organization presents witnesses from the field on how tourism and volunteering contribute to the UN Millennium Development Goals. *3 minutes.*

**Eleventh stop (GMT -8 to -10): Online Volunteers.**

Addressing global challenges calls for the involvement of large numbers of people through volunteerism. By volunteering online, anybody can make a difference for peace and development. *Changing the World Online* tells the story of an online volunteer from Malaysia who helps a peasant association in Guatemala to improve nutrition. While another online volunteer from the U.K. coordinates and teaches post-secondary correspondence courses to refugees and internally displaced persons in Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda. *5 minutes.*

**Twelfth stop (GMT -10 to -12): Samoa.**

Natural disasters threaten progress towards the Goals in small island developing countries. Strengthening risk-reduction capabilities in countries exposed to natural disasters is vital to avoid reversals in MDG achievements. In September last year, people living in Samoa experienced the worst natural disaster in living memory. Civil society leader, *Ms. Taimalieutu Tamasese* recalls the disaster and the incredible surge of volunteer action that helped communities to recover and to ensure that they put measures in place to protect themselves against future calamities. *4 minutes.*