



UN Volunteers interview community members to assess basic health services in the rural areas of Rwanda. Copyright UNV, 2023

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## Researchers selected to work with United Nations on flagship report

Northumbria University has been selected as the lead research partner to work with United Nations Volunteers (UNV) on producing the next State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR). The flagship United Nations (UN) publication is designed to strengthen global understanding of volunteering, while demonstrating its universality, scope, and reach in the twenty-first century.

The forthcoming edition of the [State of the World's Volunteerism Report](#),

SWVR 2026, will be led by researchers from Northumbria's [Centre for Global Development](#) (CGD). The Centre is a world-leading research group connecting expert academics, practitioners, policy makers and students who work together to create knowledge, insights and awareness of key issues around volunteering, humanitarian crises and development.

The report will focus on volunteer measurement, showcasing and analysing the latest thinking and evidence from across the world on the contributions of volunteers and volunteerism to peace and development. It will also include contributions from the [University of Pretoria](#) in South Africa and UNV's longstanding partner, the [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#).

[Matt Baillie Smith, Professor of Global Development and Dean of Research Culture](#) at Northumbria University, said: "How we measure volunteering and its impacts is critically important for many stakeholders. But because volunteering means different things to different people and organisations globally, understanding ways to measure it can present significant challenges. If we do not find ways to measure volunteering in ways that reflect this diversity, we can undervalue important work that is making a contribution to meeting global development challenges.

"By working with and bringing together researchers, practitioners and policy makers from across the world, the report will capture the multiple ways volunteering and its impacts can be measured. It will explore differences in definitions, in what is measured, and in the many approaches and methodologies used, including through practical case studies.

"We can't wait to work with UNV and the other partners to help drive evidence-based approaches and meaningful change for volunteers, and the communities they work with."

Among the questions [the latest SWVR](#) will seek to answer are: Is there a link between volunteering and the wellbeing of an individual? What is the value of volunteers to communities? How can we measure the value of volunteers to economic and social development in societies?



Dr Bianca Fadel and Professor Matt Baillie Smith

[Dr Bianca Fadel](#), a researcher from Northumbria's Centre for Global Development, said: "The Northumbria research team will work on the main research chapters focusing on volunteering measurement, drawing on our networks of global partners and researchers to ensure diverse perspectives and voices are reflected in the report. The International Labour Organisation will work on a chapter focusing on global volunteer estimates, and the University of Pretoria will produce the Volunteer Index Framework, both of which also be published as part of the SWVR."

Tapiwa Kamuruko, Chief, Volunteer Advisory Services Section at UNV shared: "United Nations Volunteers is very excited to partner with academia for the next State of the World's Volunteerism Report 2026 – aimed at offering insights and approaches to measure the contributions and value of

volunteering. We look forward to the research that will help answer important questions centring on linkages between volunteering and the wellbeing of an individual, and the value of volunteers to the economic and social development of their communities and societies."

Northumbria University academics are creating a world-leading hub of research expertise, knowledge exchange and learning on [volunteering in humanitarian crises and development](#) contexts. Their work is supported through significant funding from UK research councils, leading global humanitarian agencies and NGOs in the UK and internationally.

Discover more [here](#) about Northumbria's involvement in the State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR) 2026.

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Notes to Editors

### About Northumbria University

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally. Named Modern University of the Year 2025 by *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*, Northumbria is based in Newcastle upon Tyne, with an additional campus in London.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at [www.northumbria.ac.uk](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk)



### About United Nations Volunteers

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. We work with partners to integrate qualified, highly motivated and well supported UN Volunteers into development programming and promote the value and global recognition of volunteerism.

UNV is active in around 130 countries every year. With Field Presences in over 80 countries, UNV is represented worldwide. UNV is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and reports to the UNDP Executive Board.



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UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

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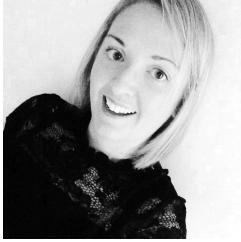


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