

NEWS RELEASE

Breaking new ground - United Nations Volunteers and University of Pretoria set to launch first-ever Global Volunteer Index



Prof Barend Erasmus (Dean of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences) welcomes guests at the launch of the GVI

EKURHULENI, GAUTENG – In a bold step to elevate the value of volunteerism, [United Nations Volunteers \(UNV\)](#) and the University of Pretoria (UP) launched the [Global Volunteer Index](#) at an event in the east of Johannesburg .

This [first-of-its-kind tool](#) is designed to systematically measure and spotlight the contributions of volunteers to sustainable development worldwide.

The Global Volunteer Index is set to become a game-changer, giving governments and development partners insights to tap into the full potential of volunteerism in achieving the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

[Professor Samuel Manda](#), who leads the GVI at UP, emphasised the importance of data in shaping policy: “With this Index, we aim to build a compelling, data-driven case for increased investment in volunteerism as a force for achieving sustainable development.”

Dr Tapiwa Kamuruko, Chief of Volunteer Advisory Services at UNV, said, “This is a major milestone for the global volunteering and development community. Until now, there has been no universally accepted framework to measure the vital, and often invisible, contributions of volunteers. The Global Volunteer Index changes that – it’s not just about data, but about recognition.”

The day-long event united a dynamic mix of stakeholders – from government representatives and academics to volunteer organisations and global volunteer networks. A high-level panel takes centre stage at the event, focusing on how the new Index will help countries measure volunteer contributions.

Still in its early phase, the framework introduces a globally relevant methodology for collecting and analysing volunteer data. A comprehensive Framework for the Global Volunteer Index will be published later this year in UNV’s flagship publication, the [State of the World’s Volunteerism Report \(SWVR\)](#).

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ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa, with its administration offices located on its Hatfield Campus in Pretoria. This 115-year-old institution is also one of the largest producers of research in South Africa.

Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the [Gordon Institute of Business Science](#) (GIBS). It is the only university in the country with a [Faculty of Veterinary Science](#), which is ranked the best in Africa. UP has 120 academic departments and 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 56 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes. It has the most academic staff with PhDs (70%), NRF-rated researchers (613).

The 2025 Times Higher Education subject rankings placed UP first in South Africa in the fields of [Accounting](#) and [Finance](#); [Architecture](#); [Electrical and Electronic Engineering](#); Law; Sport Science; and Veterinary Science. UP’s Faculty of Law has been ranked as the top law school in Africa for a remarkable eighth consecutive year.

Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranked the University among the top five in Africa, as part of their [2024 World University Rankings \(WUR\)](#). UP was the only South African university featured in the [2023 World University Rankings for Innovation \(WURI\)](#), falling within in the 101-200 range of innovative universities.

For more information, please go to www.up.ac.za