

# Volunteering for the Future



The International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) is a non-governmental organization representing the interests of all surveyors worldwide. Over the last 30 years, our profession has gone through a series of significant changes and innovations. The main technical advancements have been the introduction of GNSS, laser scanning and digital photogrammetry in conjunction with the use of unmanned aerial vehicles

(UAVs or 'drones'). Thanks to new communication technology combined with GNSS technology, global localization of the place where we 'are' has become child's play.

Sociologists say that we are living today in one global world. In other words, there are more similarities between how we are all acting in our daily lives than ever before. We wear similar clothes and listen to the same music. But although our societies are becoming more and more aligned with each other, we can also observe a trend towards greater individualism. Over the past decades, it has become increasingly difficult to convince people to do volunteer work, whether for their local football club, a choir or a professional association.

The FIG Council's motto for the 2019 to 2022 term is 'Volunteering for the future'. Despite being very short and catchy, this slogan can – and should – be interpreted in several ways. This also prompts two main questions:

- Why is volunteering so important nowadays?
- Volunteering for what?

In answer to the first question, the topic of volunteering requires increased attention nowadays because the willingness to volunteer has declined significantly across a very broad base over the past decades. It is becoming more and more difficult to find volunteers for any kind of activity, and professional organizations such as FIG are no exception, whether at a local, regional, national or even international level. This is a mass phenomenon, which is observable on all continents of our planet. Many people identify the increasing individualism of our globalized society as the reason for the reduced interest in volunteering.



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## Volunteering for the future of our federation

The second question, 'Volunteering for what?', can be answered on two levels which are to some extent interlinked. The most important object (first level) of interest is our federation itself. Today, FIG is a truly global association representing and promoting the interests of our profession and of all surveyors worldwide. The FIG brand is well known, but this cannot be taken for granted. If we want to maintain our leading position as a professional organization, we need volunteers and ongoing support on all levels. Such commitment and personal involvement can be realized in many different ways.

Nowadays, surveying is seen as providing necessary and beneficial infrastructure for the well-being and further development of our society. When we are active on behalf of FIG, it means that we are at the same time (on the second level) also benefiting our profession, society and planet Earth. So hopefully this will convince you to become a volunteer very soon.

*Rudolf Staiger is president of the FIG for the term 2019-2022. In a recent interview with GIM International, he stated: "We are the biggest international society representing the geospatial and surveying profession on a very broad base. Nevertheless, except for our FIG office in Copenhagen, we are all volunteers. We have to strengthen our organization and prepare it for the near future. One of the major tasks will be to activate people who are willing to contribute to all FIG's commissions, networks and taskforces in the future."*