



# SECURING ACCESS TO BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES

*Securing access to basic social services is the necessary bedrock for any path to achieving the 17 SDGs agreed to by UN Member States at United Nations Headquarters. UNV is uniquely situated to advance improvements to social services given its widespread network of volunteers at the national and community levels. UN Volunteers can be mobilized quickly on the ground and with the trust of local citizens whose priorities they share. To date, UNV's interventions in basic social services have positively impacted areas such as primary health care, prevention of violence against women, education and food security*

UN Volunteers not only help to address immediate needs, they lay the groundwork for long-term change. In **India**, UN Volunteers provided rehabilitation and disability support services to children with special needs (see *Malsawm Initiative*, UNV Annual Report 2014). One year later, UNV supported the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities within the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, which launched a nationwide campaign called *Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan (Accessible India)*. Two national UN Volunteers support policy development and coordination for implementing the campaign's drive towards universal accessibility.

Throughout 2015, the world continued to grapple with a mounting refugee crisis as millions fled their countries seeking a life safe from persecution and danger, including from intense crisis regions like Syria. Palestinian refugees legally residing in **Lebanon** and serving as national UN Volunteers helped to shatter public misconceptions about refugees by themselves taking on key roles in camps throughout the country. The fact file showcases **UN Volunteers ensuring access to education for Syrian and Palestinian refugee children in Lebanon**.

## **BOLSTERING PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

In response to a shortage of available general practitioners in regional health centres in **Trinidad and Tobago**, UNV, in long-standing partnership with UNDP and the Ministry of Health since 2003, supported the

country's *Primary Health Care Initiative*. The objective has been to improve both the quality and reach of health care services throughout the country. Specifically, the initiative has led to extending health centre hours to 19.00 on weekdays and keeping the centres open on weekends, as well as ensuring wide access of primary health care coverage to all citizens.

In 2015, 21 UN Volunteer Medical Doctors saw an average of 36 patients per day. Within a year, roughly 190,000 citizens received medical care and treatment from a UN Volunteer Medical Doctor. The typical beneficiaries of this care have been individuals from low- to middle-income backgrounds. A total of three health care centres in the country were staffed solely by UN Volunteer Medical Doctors. Without them, these communities might have gone completely unserved, or residents could have been forced to travel for care.

In the long-run, Trinidad and Tobago's Primary Health Care Initiative will help boost the government's ability to offer adequate health care to all citizens. By working alongside local doctors, UN Volunteer Medical Doctors have shared updated medical techniques, as well as the latest skills in health centre management skills, such as improved bedside care, allotting appropriate time for patient visits and so much more. They do this formally within the health centres and within their communities by volunteering to conduct outreach sessions to ensure that their community members are knowledgeable on preventative care and managing symptoms.

## PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

*Partners for Prevention (P4P)* works to end violence against women and girls. The programme is jointly administered by UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV. It covers six countries in the Asia-Pacific region: **Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Viet Nam**. The added value that international and national UN Volunteers have provided to this initiative has leveraged interagency coordination to hasten preventative efforts protecting women and girls from violence.

In Cambodia, P4P engaged adolescents aged 12 to 14 and their caregivers in youth-centred mediation in Kampong Cham. The intervention targets one district in each province, and five communes per district, with the participation of 150 adolescents and 150 caregivers. UN Volunteer P4P National Coordination Officer with UN Women Kayo Takahashi (Japan) encouraged young people to engage in their communities to prevent violence and distributed the manual *Ending Violence against Women: A Guide to Working with Volunteers*.

In Viet Nam, P4P used the *Transforming Masculinities towards Gender Justice* curricula to develop a violence prevention programme entailing the active participation of four male advocacy clubs, with a total of 16 male advocates, in the city of Da Nang. National UN Volunteer Phan Thanh An, based at Da Nang Women's Union, helped set up the clubs and coordinate this community-based volunteer component across two districts of the city. Another national UN Volunteer, was trained as facilitator for the male advocates' meetings and developed her skills in leading discussions and encouraging participants to examine their own stereotypes and take action to prevent violence against women in their communities.

In Indonesia, P4P designed a *Violence-Free Village Initiative* that engaged adolescent girls and boys, parents, religious leaders and other influential community members in participatory group sessions to break down social norms that condone violence against women and girls.

In Bangladesh, *Generation Breakthrough* provided sexual and reproductive health education in school to boys and girls aged 10 to 19 years, and propagated ways to prevent violence against women and girls. P4P and Action Aid also supported a four-day capacity building workshop for six UN Volunteers with UNFPA and 18 UN Volunteers with other UN agencies on preventing violence against women and girls through the promotion of volunteerism. In turn, international and national UN Volunteers have been paired to enhance mentoring and bilateral capacity building.



UN Volunteer Medical Doctor Chakra Rai (Nepal) serves as a Paediatrician at the Arima Health Facility in Trinidad & Tobago as part of the country's Primary Health Care Initiative. (UNV, 2015)



Thiago Resende Xavier

## UN VOLUNTEER INSPIRATION

### PUSHING FOR ZERO HUNGER IN PAKISTAN

Thiago Resende Xavier (Brazil) is a fully-funded UN Youth Volunteer Programme Policy Officer for Food Security Policy and Coordination in Islamabad. He is supporting the Government of **Pakistan** in the development and implementation of its food security programmes, such as the *National Zero Hunger Programme*. This is implemented with the support of the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other development partners. It is based on the Brazilian *Fome Zero* initiative. Thiago was awarded one of Brazil's first fully-funded international UN Volunteer assignments through a grant by the Sergio Vieira de Mello Scholarship under the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Thiago supported the development and implementation of a National Zero Hunger Programme in Pakistan by drafting project documents and promoting coordination among different stakeholders. He served in the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping team of the WFP office in Islamabad and coordinated input from colleagues across different sectors and UN entities.

As Thiago was also based in the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, he supported federal government officials in coordinating with other governmental organizations and development partners. Occasionally, he travelled to Pakistani provinces to create awareness and ownership of the Zero Hunger Programme with regional stakeholders.

*"By living in a cultural environment so distant from my own, I'm able to put in perspective my values and improve my ability to empathize with colleagues from different backgrounds. This gives me the chance to reflect about volunteerism, its universal acknowledgement and the impact it can have on peace and development".* UN Youth Volunteer Programme Policy Officer Thiago Resende Xavier (Brazil)