



NATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH VOLUNTEER SCHEMES

UNV and its network of volunteers have created a robust global infrastructure for volunteer efforts, and boosted local capacity to support these initiatives. As a result, several hundreds of thousands of volunteers have engaged meaningfully with communities, whether at home or abroad, and brought about real development progress. In 2015, UN Member States requested that UNV support the establishment of national volunteer schemes. UNV's goal is to support the development of new national and subnational volunteer schemes, and to enhance the capacity of local partners to deploy and manage volunteers more effectively.

UNV deepened its South-South collaboration in 2015 by co-hosting the *International Volunteer Service Exchange Conference* with the Beijing Volunteer Service Federation in **China**, with over 18 middle-income Member States participating. The conference resulted in an agreement to explore South-South collaboration, possibly through deploying joint humanitarian response teams of volunteers from the South, in the South or through sharing expertise on the implementation of large-scale youth volunteering programmes.

Similarly, UNV facilitated triangular South-South cooperation from China and Hong Kong through the *UNV-Hong Kong Universities Volunteer Programme*. In 2015, this translated into the deployment of ten fully-funded UN Youth Volunteers in Southeast Asia.

Volunteer infrastructure is necessary to leverage the power of volunteerism in achieving development goals and also to ensure that appropriate support is provided to those participating in volunteer schemes, and their rights affirmed. The fact file for this thematic area features the

// **The government will provide all support in adopting the policy on volunteerism. I endorse the vision of UN Volunteers. Volunteering is the best investment which bears never ending interests.**

Minister for Human Rights and Minority Affairs Khalil Tahir Sindhu (Pakistan)

launch of the Volunteer Department in Peru, which will significantly improve the impact of local volunteerism.

PROMOTING VOLUNTEERISM AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO TAKING UP ARMS IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Since the beginning of the conflict between the ex-Seleka and anti-Balaka armed groups in the **Central African Republic**, many young people have joined armed factions because they lack employment or income-generating activities and experience high levels of dissatisfaction and frustration.

At a national reconciliation meeting during the 2015 Bangui National Forum, UNV's field presence realized that the voices of young people were not being included. Together with the local network of young volunteers for peace, UNV approached the government with this concern. In response, the Ministry of Reconciliation supported UNV's initiative to include young voices in a separate reconciliation dialogue, which led UNV to mobilize resources, participants, national speakers and partners for a three-day *National Youth Forum (Colloque de la Jeunesse Centrafricaine)*. More than 300 members of youth associations from all over the country met at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to debate themes such as the electoral process, disarmament, pan-Africanism, non-violence, transitional justice and national reconciliation.

The *Réseau des Volontaires de la Paix* is the result of a strong collaboration between the participants of a series of training sessions on peace and social cohesion for youth

UN Youth Volunteers assigned to UNDP Madagascar attend training in preparation for manning Youth Centres across the southern part of the country. (UNV, 2015)



and the UNV programme in the country. Building on their personal motivation and engagement, UNV supported their registration as a formal network, provided funds for additional capacity development and coached them to absorb and deliver several projects and activities related to Goal 16 of the SDGs, which advocates for peace, justice and strong institutions. With UNV backing, the network has grown from 250 to 600 members who not only develop their own projects, but are now regular partners with UN agencies.

LAUNCHING PAKISTAN'S FIRST POLICY CONSULTATION ON VOLUNTEERISM AND DEVELOPMENT

In 2015, UNV successfully organized a consultation on *Volunteerism & Development: Needs of strengthening Volunteer Network and Provincial Volunteer Policy in Punjab* in Lahore, **Pakistan**. The Minister for Human Rights and Minority Affairs, UN Resident Coordinator, Secretaries of State, Members of Parliament, non-governmental, civil society and volunteer-involving organizations, corporate sector representatives, youth organizations and other stakeholders unanimously endorsed the needs of the volunteer policy and the need to form a volunteer network in Punjab. About 65 high-level officials attended the consultation, which had the overriding objective to establish a sustainable volunteer network among the development community for the purposes of establishing a strong working group to promote sustainable peace and development.

Participating lawmakers, senior government officials, civil society, academia, corporate sectors, media and youth organizations, as well as UN agencies subsequently endorsed the need for a volunteer policy and formed the *Punjab Volunteer Working Group*. This working group will be responsible for forming the Punjab Volunteer Network and drafting Policy on Volunteerism under the leadership of the Punjab Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal Department.



Esraa Mohammed

UN VOLUNTEER INSPIRATION

ADVANCING EDUCATION FOR REFUGEES IN EGYPT

Esraa Mohammed first volunteered as a member of the Model United Nations UNDP committee at her university in **Egypt**. She later became an Education Assistant for UNHCR, where she provided support to Syrian refugees as part of a UNHCR project implemented by Catholic Relief Services. Through her daily interactions, she learned of the harrowing journeys of refugees from Syria to Egypt.

In April 2015, Esraa began her assignment as a national UN Volunteer Education Assistant with UNHCR in Egypt. She was involved in determining if refugees could be eligible for educational grants while simultaneously advocating with the government to make education accessible to them. Besides researching educational grants for refugees, she managed the administrative aspects of UNHCR's Albert Einstein German Refugee Initiative Fund (Deutsche Akademische Flüchtlingsinitiative Albert Einstein, DAFI) Scholarship set up by the Government of Germany to help refugee teens complete their education.

"Among all the people I met, I will never forget one. He was a school drop-out, who had been suffering from cancer for three years. After his recovery, he went back to school. Around the same time, I published a grant by the German Government for Syrian refugees living in Egypt to join Egyptian universities, and was involved in screening applicants and selecting the final candidate. I still hear him jumping with joy when he received the good news. He joined the Faculty of Engineering at Alexandria University. I would never have been able to be part of such an inspiring opportunity if I hadn't been a national UN Volunteer". National UN Volunteer Education Assistant Esraa Mohammed (Egypt)