



İpek Naz Çınar, national UN Volunteer, participating in an interactive exhibition and UN Women Turkey PechaKucha event on 7 March 2020.

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## National UN Volunteers upholding women's rights in Turkey

National specialists volunteering with UN Women in Turkey have been active in designing and implementing campaigns, programmes and projects at the country and regional levels since 2019. The role of UN Volunteers in supporting women's rights has become critical during the Coronavirus pandemic.

As frontline responders, health professionals and beyond, women are contributing to addressing the COVID-19 outbreak daily. Women are mainly responsible for household care and are at increased risk of infection and loss of livelihood. During the pandemic, they are often the victims of domestic violence, with limited access to sexual and reproductive health.

In response to the crisis, UN Women in Turkey is using the latest information to understand and address gender challenges during COVID-19. National UN Volunteers support UN

women in diverse ways.

“ Personnel of the UN Women office in Turkey have been working remotely for the past two months. Our national UN Volunteers assiduously support our work in driving gender-sensitive responses to the COVID-19 crisis. --Asya Varbanova, Country Director of UN Women in Turkey

*Communications.* The need to reduce gender inequalities in the division of domestic labour and rising unpaid care for chores performed by women has spiraled during the COVID-19 pandemic. The HeForShe movement in Turkey works closely with such influential partners as Koç Holding and Fenerbahçe Sports Club to tackle the situation.

HeForShe Turkey recently launched the #EvdeHeForShe social media campaign, which calls on men to share in household work to advance equality. National UN Volunteer Ipek Naz Çınar, serving as Communications Assistant, is contributing to the development and implementation of this campaign.

“ To increase campaign visibility, we invited celebrities to join in and reached approximately 500 thousand people on three different HeForShe Turkey (@heforsheturkiye) social media channels. Participants included famous actors Boran Kuzum and Anıl Altan and Fenerbahçe Sports Club athletes Ahmet Düverioğlu, İzzet Ünver and Caner Dengin. --Ipek Naz Çınar, national UN Volunteer

Another national volunteer in a communications role, Erman Fermancı is using social media to generate localized information on the gender implications of COVID-19. From the onset of the pandemic, UN Women has increased its social media reach, providing vital information to thousands of social media users.

In the past three months, UN Women in Turkey has launched an official Twitter account. The agency increased its Instagram and Facebook followers by 146 per cent and 7.8 per cent respectively, reaching over half a million users.

“ We raise awareness by sharing content on violence against women,

“ support mechanisms, and the role of women and their importance in COVID-19 response via Instagram live sessions. --Erman Fermanci, national UN Volunteer

*Programme Adaptation.* Continuous coordination is vital as agencies adapt current activities and programmes to the COVID-19 context. Ekin Su Yilmaz, programme assistant at UN Women, generates advocacy and information materials, while communicating with civil society organizations.

“ We continued supporting civil society organizations services during COVID-19 and referred them to additional emergency funds. --Ekin Su Yilmaz, national UN Youth Volunteer

Fellow national volunteer Melinda Demirel is currently contributing to the project Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey. She supports partner selection processes in response to COVID-19 and violence against women. She oversees logistics for rearranging field activities due to the pandemic and disseminates COVID-19 information to stakeholders.

“ We inform women leaders and members of parliament about the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls, encouraging them to take action as decision-makers. --Melinda Demirel, national UN Volunteer

*Technical support.* Irem Polat serves as a UN Volunteer Administrative Assistant at the UN Women Europe and Central Asia Office and is now engaged with COVID-19-related procurement. She develops processes for data collection and analysis for gender-inclusive COVID-19 response in Serbia. Irem procures protective items for local communities and UN offices and also manages processes for the rapid gender assessment of COVID-19 in Tajikistan and Macedonia.

“ Another inspiring procurement activity is the contracting process with civil society organizations providing SOS helplines for women who are victims of violence in Serbia, in order to keep these functioning and accessible during the state of emergency. --Irem Polat, national

“ UN Volunteer

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This article was prepared with the kind assistance of [Online Volunteer](#) Anderson Ezie.

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Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 3: Good health and well-being](#) [SDG 5: Gender equality](#)  
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