



Volunteers participating in a clean-up by the Dubale River in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which served as a launch event to a two-month environmental campaign, 'Clean Up the World - Clean Up Addis'. (UNV, 2013)

Encouraging communities to think globally and act locally

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: As a UN Youth Volunteer, I have been assigned to the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) liaison office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and my assignment here is slowly coming to an end. My role as an Environmental Outreach Specialist includes increasing UNEP's visibility, environmental awareness and communication, as well as acting as a liaison with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Forestry. In addition, I was also responsible for involving local government and Ethiopian civil society organizations that work closely with communities, youth and volunteers. One of the major tasks that I have undertaken during this past year was organizing environmental outreach events and running UNEP's environmental campaigns. The recently finished campaign *Clean Up the World, Clean Up Addis!* showed that with a minimal budget, high levels of motivation and a strong commitment to environment and volunteering, a lot can be achieved.

The UNEP office in Addis Ababa has been organizing *Clean Up the World (CUW)* events with local partners for several years. This year the theme emerged from a local youth association that approached UNEP to organize CUW2013 together and to link the global campaign with a local one called *Hidar Sitaten*, an Ethiopian annual clean-up event first initiated by the Emperor Menelik II in the 19th century. The aim was to build on this local clean-up tradition which is rooted in the Ethiopian culture and adjust it to modern environmental practices. For example, the *Hidar Sitaten* day is usually accompanied by an open massive trash burning, which does not take into account the pollution caused by the increased use of synthetic materials.

The two-month environmental campaign, from 21 September to 21 November 2013 *Clean Up the World, Clean Up Addis!* was launched with the aim of raising environmental awareness and pinpointing the significance of proper waste management. The event was kicked off by the clean-up of the Dubale River, near the African Union headquarters. This area was identified by the city administration, one of the main partners. A community living

near the river also actively participated in the clean-up, declaring that they were happy to clean their surroundings. Unfortunately, the issue of river pollution is wider and a one-day clean-up activity will not prevent the pollution. Therefore, there needs to be a holistic and comprehensive approach in the future. Among the other events conducted were a workshop on composting, documentary screenings at the Brazilian Embassy and at the Goethe-Institut, other clean-ups, a competition and various presentations.

The initial strategy of UNEP for running the campaign was to create a two-month programme full of various environmental events for the public and to involve different partners in the event organization.

Since the campaign has been launched, many new partners got involved and showed their interest and support. The partners that provided support for this campaign came from various backgrounds and with different resources. However, the mutual objective was identical; to promote environmental protection in Addis Ababa and to follow the motto "Think globally, act locally".

BIO: Dana Siedemova from the Czech Republic is a UN Youth Volunteer assigned to the UNEP Liaison Office to the African Union, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and Ethiopia as a UNV Environmental Outreach Specialist.



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