Mount Kenya University to pioneer deploying UN University Volunteers in East and Southern Africa

Today, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme starts implementing the partnership with Mount Kenya University, a chartered premier university operating in East Africa. Mount Kenya University is UNV's first private sector partner in Africa for the deployment of UN University Volunteers in East and Southern Africa.

The main goal of the partnership is to enhance the capacity and engagement of youth from the region as key actors of change in global development issues. A selected number of Mount Kenya University students will be deployed for six months in various UN agencies in Kenya as UN University Volunteers to apply their knowledge and skills in several areas of UN peace and development work. The deployment is a result of the partnership agreement initially signed on 1 November 2019 between UNV and Mount Kenya University.
Volunteerism gives people strength, skills and confidence to create a market for themselves, become entrepreneurs or start their own organizations. --UNV Executive Coordinator Mr Olivier Adam, speaking during the signing ceremony at the University’s headquarters in Thika, Kenya

During his mission to Kenya in March 2019, Mr Adam had delivered a public lecture at Mount Kenya University main campus in Thika, Kenya, titled "Building partnerships between universities and volunteerism for SDG achievement in East Africa".

We will ensure that principles of meritocracy and inclusivity are observed during the selection process. Students from all schools will have an equal chance to compete for the volunteer positions. -- Dr Peter G. Kirira, Director, Mount Kenya University Foundation

With the implementation of the programme at Mount Kenya University, which will be spearheaded by Mount Kenya University Foundation, the first batch of the volunteers are expected to onboard in May 2020. The volunteers will be selected through a competitive process.

UNV hopes to engage more youth from the East and Southern Africa region to meet the increasing requests from UN agencies to integrate the creative and flexible approaches of young women and men for the realization of the SDGs. --Njoya Tikum, Regional Manager, UNV East and Southern Africa Regional Office said during the meeting to launch the implementation process.

UNV has served as a bridge between the United Nations (UN) system, UN Member States and civil society since its establishment in 1970. UNV leverages volunteerism as an essential mechanism that meaningfully engages people in social, environmental and economic transformation.

UNV offers its partners – including UN entities, governments, universities, civil society organizations and the private sector – an opportunity to fund UN Volunteer assignments. UN University Volunteers can be deployed with a UN host entity within their
country (national assignment) or abroad (international assignment).

UNV launched the UN Youth Volunteer modality in 2014, to bring a welcomed and vibrant youth perspective to the UN system’s work. This modality provides for the deployment of young people aged 18-29 as UN Youth Volunteers and UN University Volunteers. These partnerships are mutually beneficial to all parties involved.

The volunteers gain experience in the UN system and international development cooperation as they contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, develop professional and interpersonal skills, while enhancing their civil engagement capacities and expand their social and professional networks through experience in a multicultural environment.

Universities invest in their students, helping them realize their potential academically and personally, while providing opportunities for youth to engage as volunteers in global peace and sustainable human development.

UN partners receive valuable support to their work towards the achievement of the SDGs, fostering innovation by leveraging young people’s creativity, flexibility and capacity to learn.

A total of 486 UN Youth Volunteers have served in the region since the inception of the programme, with Kenya leading as host country over the years.

Sustainable Development Goal: **SDG 4: Quality education**