UN Volunteer informs South Sudan on COVID-19

Radio Miraya, the station of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), provides essential information on COVID-19 to the public. Based in the capital Juba, Miraya has the largest reach of any broadcaster in South Sudan and is heard throughout most of the country. Behind the scenes, developing programming for the radio station, is UN Volunteer Martina Brooks who is assigned to UNMISS as a radio producer.

UN Peacekeeping radio stations play a vital role in informing communities in conflict-affected states about the coronavirus pandemic and how people can keep safe. A better-informed public is key to fight COVID-19 and peacekeeping radio is playing its part.

“The stations ability to reach both big urban centers and isolated...
communities in countries which lack basic communications infrastructure, can play an important role in addressing the disease.” states UN News on March 27th, 2020.

Martina Brooks' role as a UN Volunteer for UNMISS is as a radio producer. She spearheads several programs at the radio as well as serves as one of the news editors and manages the social media pages of the broadcaster.

Martina currently produces a new version of the Weekend Sports show. In the absence of sporting events locally and internationally, Radio Miraya sensitizes sports fans across the country about the dangers of COVID-19 and why it is important to put all sports activities on hold for now.

“We also feature different campaigns being carried out worldwide by prominent sports personalities in response to the pandemic.” states Martina Brooks, UN Volunteer, Radio Producer, UNMISS.

In addition, Martina produces the show Youth Forum. Since the majority of the population of South Sudan are young people, this night-time program features youth from across the country to talk about the work they are doing in the fight against COVID-19.

Two other important slots that Martina curates currently are Kalam Niswam, focussed on women’s issues, and the Miraya Breakfast Show.

“In time of crisis or any outbreak, women are major caregivers in every part of the country. They are mostly at risk and therefore come out with measures to prevent infecting themselves and family. Currently, through Kalam Niswam, we are featuring rural women to talk about their challenges during this period and what is being done to tackle those challenges,” explains Martina.
The UNMISS’ early morning show features both young and old, from diverse backgrounds, to talk about their work in the corona response. Martina explains that she also uses the program to broadcast regular updates from the Coronavirus taskforce, the Ministry of Health, and World Health Organization (WHO) in South Sudan.

Martina Brooks is a UN Volunteer in action who not only brings essential information to South Sudan, but inspiration to us all in this crisis.

Some information in this article was adapted from the United Nations website where Radio Miraya was featured as a powerful example of the UN’s response to the current crisis.

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 3: Good health and well-being