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UN Volunteers Alpha Makanera and Fanta Fofana (left) contributed to training 800 girls and women leaders that promote peace in their communities, Guinea.

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UN Volunteers train 800 girls and women leaders for conflict prevention in Guinea

In Guinea, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNV mobilized 14 UN Community Volunteers to provide support to women community leaders for the prevention of possible conflicts related to the legislative and presidential elections. This project, financed by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), is implemented in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Government of Guinea to strengthen community conflict management systems, including the participation and engagement of girls and women leaders in community settings.

The UN Community Volunteers deployed – seven women and seven men – initially

underwent training in the peaceful resolution and management of conflicts, including gender-based violence, to sensitize women and girls, local and religious authorities, and the population. The volunteers held 132 dialogue sessions in the five communes of Conakry: Matoto, Kaloum, Ratoma, Dixinn, and Matam. One of these is Alpha Makanera.

“ At the beginning, we had to face women's reluctance and at times, the mistrust of local authorities. But with perseverance, we were able to get communities to support the project and raise awareness on the role of women in the management of public affairs. Our sessions reached more than 2100 people, including 1,549 women and girls. -- Alpha Makanera, UN Community Volunteer with UNICEF

Fanta Fofana, a national UN Volunteer Gender Officer serving with UNICEF, contributes to the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the project. In her opinion, the UN Volunteers helped reduce the tensions before and during the presidential elections, despite some violence noted in the post-electoral period. The dialogue sessions allowed actors such as law enforcement, journalists, and local authorities to gain a better understanding of the role everyone can play for peaceful elections and an equal society where everyone's rights are respected.

After the first series of sessions, the UN Community Volunteers, supported by two national consultants specialized in gender and project management, identified and trained 800 women and girls in transformational leadership and the management of gender-based violence, among other things. The participants will then engage in dialogue with non-formal women's organizations, youth organizations and local communities ,to sensitize them on conflict prevention and promote a culture of peace.

“ During the training with girls and women leaders, we explained to them in their dialects how to differentiate between political, economic and community projects. We also talked about gender-based violence and how to prevent it. The way they delivered the messages within their groups made a deep impression on me. They were comfortable expressing themselves on the problems of their communities. --Fanta Fofana, national UN Volunteer Gender Officer with UNICEF

The project assumption is that mediation and conflict management strategies that systematically involve women and civil society actors in general are more likely to be supported at the national level and lead to sustainable peace. The volunteers will thus continue to build the capacities of leaders and accompany them in their new role as relays for peace promotion in Guinea.

“ The UN Volunteers are essential to the success of our activities. They are the main actors and the anchoring of institutions in the field, and our effective intermediaries with the communities. We benefit from their commitment and their dynamism in the implementation of this project, for which the participatory approach is crucial. --Liliana Pardo Guerrero, Gender Programme Specialist, UNICEF



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