



Abraham Kanneh serves as a national UN Volunteer with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Liberia. Here, he speaks with local community members on COVID-19 awareness and prevention, also of gender-based violence.

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Volunteering out of a passion for contributing to society

Abraham Kanneh is a national UN Volunteer in Liberia serving with the Resident Coordinator's Office. He shares his volunteer experiences over the years – from electoral support to combating gender-based violence in the COVID-19 context.

I am currently serving as a national UN Volunteer in Liberia for [the Spotlight Initiative](#). My role is to develop an outreach strategy and distribute awareness-raising materials for the Coronavirus pandemic, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health.

We engage with community members and religious leaders to promote preventive measures for vulnerable community members, including women, girls and persons with

disabilities.

The COVID-19 outbreak brought an increase in the rate of domestic violence against women and girls. In order to tackle this crisis, we are monitoring and tracking the number of cases to understand the root causes of gender-based violence in our communities.

I am also involved in setting up study groups for children in their neighbourhoods. This gives young people the social contact and access to education that they are missing during the pandemic.

My first volunteer experience dates back to my university years. I once saw a group of young people painting. Before then, I had never thought that I would one day be a painter. I took initiative – and found not only an opportunity to paint, but to show my talent.

My experience with volunteering is similar. When I decided that I wanted to volunteer, this choice suddenly changed my perspective. I realized that everyone is allowed – and encouraged – to contribute what they can to help others.

“ Whether you are skilled or not, whether you are physically challenged or not, you can make a meaningful contribution on an equal level, as long as you have passion.

At the beginning, I served as a UN University Volunteer. In collaboration with UNV and the national government, I supported establishing volunteer institutions in other universities and high schools. I helped set up a national volunteer institution to engage young people in Liberia's volunteer activities.

I also supported the volunteer movement during the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10) in 2010, together with other university volunteers.

From there, I moved on to become a UN Youth Volunteer. In 2017, while serving with the Regional Coordinator's office in the South East of Liberia, I was a youth coordinator and supported election activities. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), I served as a supervisor for youth volunteers from across different communities.

Notably, at the time I joined the project, Liberia was struggling with the Ebola crisis. I supported efforts to eradicate the virus by interacting with communities on health and safety and raising awareness about preventive measures. From this experience, I learned lessons about the nature of health emergencies and community engagement, which are

incredibly helpful in the work that I am doing in the current COVID-19 situation.

“ Being a volunteer is the best way to make a contribution to your community. While serving as a volunteer, I really don't look at my disability. I try to do what I can do best: be passionate and share my talent!

Volunteerism made me who I am right now. Everything I have learned over the years comes from my volunteer experience. During the past ten years, volunteering has always motivated me to share myself with others, pushed me to do more for my country, and allowed me to contribute, even with my physical disability and challenges that I face in the field.



• COVID-19 • Coronavirus • World Health Day • Ebola • volunteerism • Persons with disabilities

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 3: Good health and well-being](#) [SDG 5: Gender equality](#)
[SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)