



Winston Siafa, a UN Volunteer Civil Engineer serving with MONUSCO Democratic Republic of Congo.
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My UN Volunteer experience at MONUSCO

My name is Winston Siafa, from Sierra Leone. I am one of the 316 UN Volunteers serving with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) and now serving as a Civil Engineer in the field in Goma.

As a Civil Engineer, I support building compounds when staff has to move to new offices. Since December 2020, I have overseen the construction of 48 offices. Along with this task, I am also in charge of civil infrastructure, sanitation and environmental projects within Goma town. I provide daily reports on activities and also contribute to the results of my section.

I am proud that I have taken part in improving the well-being of communities in Northern Goma, between the Mweso-Mpeti axis. Before then, many people struggled with substandard road conditions, which made it difficult for children to go to school; farmers had to pay expensively to transport their agricultural products to big towns and cities.

With a facelift given to the road segment by connecting bridges and culverts, the community residents now enjoy shorter travel times, reduced agricultural production costs and access to better medical and health services.

“ Just seeing the joy and relief connecting the missing links brought to the community made me proud to be a UN Volunteer.

Currently, I am supervising a team of 35 individual contractors and militaries. This has been quite challenging as COVID-19 has drastically changed the way of working. I had to work from home for almost three months at a time when the number of COVID-19 cases started increasing alarmingly. I found it very strange as a civil engineer as my job will never be complete without site visits.

But I adapted to that new situation, trying as much as possible to maintain balance. I elaborated work plans for my team to keep them safe while ensuring the continuity of service. Also, my previous experiences in administration and staff management helped me properly run the team during the pandemic.

Serving with MONUSCO helped me manage and adapt to different cultures as I interact with multiple nationalities in a good atmosphere. It also allowed me to develop not only as an employee but also as a good team player outside of work.

“ To anyone who wants to volunteer, all you need is a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love. There may be obstacles, but nothing you can't overcome.

I am grateful to the UNV programme for the opportunity that widens my career perspective. UNV is more than a team — we are a family.

 West and Central Africa

• COVID-19 • Coronavirus

Sustainable Development Goal: **SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure** **SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals**