



Wenceslas Wanjala, UN Volunteer Associate Compound Management officer with UNHCR Somalia, goes about his duties.

© UNV, 2021

Enabling UN personnel to serve refugees in Somalia

Wenceslas Wanjala joined the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Somalia as a UN Volunteer Associate Compound Management Officer in July 2020. As a professional in the hospitality field, he has worked in conflict situations for most of his career, in South Sudan and Somalia. For Wenceslas, one of the greatest lessons one learns in such situations is the tremendous value of peace. He shares his story on the occasion of the International Day of Peace.

In my current role as an Associate Compound Management Officer with UNHCR Somalia, I have been working closely with the UNHCR technical team in fast-tracking the construction of UNHCR accommodation and office facilities. Since I joined UNHCR, I have supported and coordinated efforts to ensure that the staff facilities are ready for occupancy within the stipulated timelines.

I have coordinated several operational activities, including procurement of construction materials, office equipment and furniture. Additionally, I have been involved in the selection of service providers and movement of staff from previously rented accommodation to the new compound.

“ I have contributed immensely to ensuring the wellbeing of UNHCR staff and strengthening their capacity to provide protection and critical emergency assistance for refugees, instilling hope and trust in hard times, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. --Wenceslas Wanjala, UN Volunteer Associate Compound Management Officer with UNHCR, Somalia

I have achieved this by working hard and in close collaboration with colleagues to create a conducive living and working environment for UNHCR staff in the country.

“ UNHCR Representative, Mr Johann Siffointe recently commended my work, saying: "Your work is excellent. I am glad that I made the decision of recruiting a UN Volunteer as our Compound Manager. You provide an enabling environment for UNHCR personnel to improve the lives of others."

Due to the flexibility of the conditions of service for the UNV programme, my volunteering assignment has not just been limited to supporting UNHCR. I have also been dedicating my time to supporting local communities whenever circumstances allow me.

During my volunteering period, I have faced a few challenges.

“ The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected my social life by denying me physical interaction with colleagues since I started my assignment in Somalia. I have also lost colleagues, friends, and relatives to the pandemic, causing me deep emotional pain. --
Wenceslas Wanjala

The language barrier has also been an issue for me when interacting with local service providers. I have learned to adapt to the reality of the field settings – working in multicultural environments with different languages and limited facilities. Though challenging, the environment has made me more resilient and determined to continue serving humanity.

 East and Southern Africa

• COVID-19 • Coronavirus

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 10: Reduced inequalities](#) [SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities](#) [SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions](#) [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)