



UN Volunteer Florent Dabangdata Dimissia (right) together with a peace ambassador in Kousséré, Cameroon.
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Feeding local knowledge into inter-religious and inter-generational dialogues

Florent Dabangdata Dimissia is a UN Volunteer Expert with the Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). With his strong knowledge of local customs and languages, Florent is involved in inter-religious and inter-generational dialogues. He helps build peace among communities made vulnerable through extremist insurgencies.

Florent serves in the locality of Kousséri in the far north of Cameroon. In this area, conflict and instability are triggered by extremist groups such as Boko Haram. To prevent violent extremism, UNDP focuses its interventions on conflict prevention, inclusive governance, social cohesion and the creation of economic opportunities.

As part of UNDP, Florent's assignment is focused on the social inclusion of youth. He collaborates mainly with youth groups and organizes social and recreative activities, such as soccer and handball games, to bring youth together. For instance, he participated in the rehabilitation of the Makary Youth Promotion Centre and the set-up of a multimedia centre for youth in the town of Fotokol.

“ Florent is a valuable resource, especially at the grassroots level where he is active. He was involved in the training, socio-economic integration and support of nearly 600 young people. Florent works independently and with full responsibility to empower internally-displaced persons, refugees and Boko Haram victims. --Zephirin Emini, Head of UNDP's Governance and Crisis Prevention Unit, Cameroon

Florent's work brings smiles to vulnerable people who have lost everything because of the Boko Haram crisis.

"I particularly remember Mahamat Abakachi, a young father of eight children who had to travel from village to village to sell his agricultural products, risking his life. Thanks to the UNDP cash programme set up to facilitate socio-economic reintegration, he has managed to open a store. Mahamat's life has improved considerably through this stable source of income. He has even been able to re-enroll his children, who had previously spent a year out of school," Florent shares.

With a strong knowledge of the locality, customs and local languages, Florent is involved in inter-religious and inter-generational dialogues. Together with local communities, he works with traditional and religious authorities, women and youth leaders to identify possible sources of conflict and provide solutions through peaceful conflict resolution. They set up community-based early warning systems that include peace ambassadors to fight violent extremism.

“ I love what I do, despite the security challenges and the difficulty of accessing some communities due to road conditions. Serving vulnerable people has allowed me to develop more empathy and a greater appreciation for human life. I am certain that this experience will open new doors for my career growth in the humanitarian field. -- Florent Dabangdata Dimissia, UN Volunteer Expert with UNDP

According to the UNDP security assessment, the activities implemented under the PVE project have significantly reduced violence and associated death rates in the community.



West and Central Africa

• Youth Development • prevention of violent extremism • peace building

Sustainable Development Goal: **SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth** **SDG 10: Reduced inequalities** **SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions** **SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals**