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Noran Adly (Egypt), UN Volunteer Community Engagement Officer with UNICEF, visits a refugee family.

From social listening to countering misinformation, a volunteer reports on addressing COVID-19 in Jordan

Noran Adly (Egypt) started her assignment as UN Volunteer Community Engagement Officer at the Jordan office of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in February 2021. Since then, she has been able to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Health to respond to the pandemic, train community health workers and contribute to the national health strategy to eliminate COVID-19 in Jordan. Noran shares her motivation and experience.

I came to Jordan to support the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) response, as part of the national campaign to eliminate the COVID-19 virus. The main role of UNICEF in the campaign is to build the capacities of the government to respond to COVID-19.

Two weeks after my arrival in Amman, the situation in the country reached its peak, with an almost 14 per cent infection rate and about 10,000 reported infected cases from an overall population of 10 million people.

The situation was critical and my role in community engagement was to provide daily and weekly reports on the COVID-19 situation in the country. I led the social listening activities in the project, along with a team of 12 volunteers, and we acted as community ambassadors.

“ Our role was to gather community questions, concerns, complaints and demands, counter rumours and misinformation about the Coronavirus, and encourage people to get vaccinated. As a result of this work, over 100 ‘Question and Answer’ posts were designed to respond to people’s inquiries about the COVID-19 virus and its vaccines. --Noran Adly, UN Volunteer Community Engagement Officer with UNICEF, Jordan

The campaign used surveys and questionnaires, as well as other social listening input, to inform its awareness messages and influence the design of awareness-raising activities.

Over a three-month period, the situation experienced a positive shift, and the cases decreased to 300-400 cases per day, due to the massive vaccination campaign undertaken by the government.

During my volunteering assignment, my tasks included assisting in developing and implementing activities to increase the reach and impact of key messages to reduce COVID-19 in Jordan. Alongside this, I have been recommending strategies and implementing community engagement activities, together with partners and stakeholders, while keeping the local context in mind. I also develop monthly reports to partners, including the World Health organization and Ministry of Health.

I believe that the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us a lot in terms of community engagement and the importance of adopting a human-centred approach to crises. This pandemic has proven beyond any doubt that social norms and behaviour change are vital in any human development process and could be further integrated into different UN interventions.

“ I hope the huge health awareness that we have gained during the COVID-19 pandemic continues to contribute to other immunization and health programmes across the world. My dream is that one day the most vulnerable families and children, especially in the South, will have much better access to adequate health and educational services. --Noran Adly

I was happy to enable the most vulnerable children and their families to access equitable health, nutrition and early intervention services. Owing to my field experience with local and refugee communities, I was able to assist in strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Health to respond to the pandemic by delivering several training sessions to community health workers. I am proud of my contribution to the national health strategy to eliminate COVID-19 in Jordan and I hope I can help more countries to better engage with their communities in the future.

My first international experience as a UN Volunteer has broadened my experience and enhanced my field involvement, while also boosting my interpersonal communication and leadership skills.

“ I feel responsible for giving back to the community, whether at home in Egypt or elsewhere in the global South. I believe these areas are more vulnerable and face more challenges, due to their limited financial resources and lagging development. --Noran Adly

Before joining UNV, I worked for seven years with international non-governmental organizations and UN entities such as UNHCR, where I was a community-based protection assistant, interned with UN Women, was a regional facilitator for the British Council's Active Citizens Program, and Founder of Active Artists Project under the social incubator of the Think Tank for development solutions. Additionally, I worked as a political researcher with the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs.

Noran is studying for a Master's degree in Euro-Mediterranean Affairs at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science, and a post-graduate diploma in Cultural Development, also from Cairo University, and is proud of her track record of volunteering, nationally and internationally, since 2010.



 Arab States

• International Day of Epidemic Preparedness • COVID-19 • South-South cooperation;

Sustainable Development Goal: **SDG 3: Good health and well-being** **SDG 10: Reduced inequalities** **SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals**