



International UN Volunteer Dr. David Musa in his clinic in Trinidad and Tobago. (UNV, 2015)

Practicing medicine in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, then Trinidad and Tobago

I have had the privilege and pleasure of practicing as a UN Volunteer Medical Doctor in three different countries, the Democratic Republic of Congo (2009), Lesotho (2013) and Trinidad and Tobago (2014). My greatest pleasure is to see someone who has been ill returning home healthy and smiling.

I have had the privilege and pleasure of practicing as a UN Volunteer Medical Doctor in three different countries. My first experience was in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2009) with the United Nations Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). This was my first opportunity to learn how the work of a UN mission is conducted, attending at the same time several important training sessions. During this assignment, our Level 2 Clinic treated many cases of malaria and other medical problems.

My second mission led me to Lesotho in 2013. The hospital where I served treated many cases of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. At that time, the national incidence of HIV/AIDS was 23% for males and 26% for females. One in four patients I was treating during that time lived with HIV/AIDS. The need for

medical services and broader development assistance in such communities could not be overstated.

In 2014, I accepted another assignment, this time serving in a project by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Trinidad and Tobago. Practicing as a primary care provider in a medical centre some distance from Tabaquite, I provided services to rural community such as maternity care and treatment for chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and asthma.

“ I am grateful to UNV and UNDP for giving me the opportunity to volunteer. My only regret is that I did not start volunteering sooner. I started late, when I was 56. However, I feel that I would gladly go on a new volunteer mission if the opportunity presented itself.

Through these volunteer experiences, I provided medical aid to people in need—especially women and children in remote places. Volunteerism gave me the strength to accept the things I cannot change, as well as the difficulties that present themselves in such environments. It also allowed me to share my skills with colleagues, and as a team, to provide improved and quality health care to less fortunate local communities.

For me, the greatest challenges were working in a country coming out of conflict like the DRC with its enormous security risks, then in a country with limited resources like Lesotho, and finally in the remote places of Trinidad and Tobago. There is nothing like field training to gain valuable experience in treating diseases.

Volunteerism also gave me a chance for international exposure. By travelling to these distant countries, I met different cultures. Through UNV, I have travelled thousands of kilometres, leaving the comforts of my home and family behind to serve in unknown lands.

I can honestly say, it was worth it in every way.



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