



Volunteer number 10,000 in 2021: From Refugee to UN Volunteer with UNHCR

Every day at UNV, newly selected UN Volunteers commence their assignments with our partners in communities across the world. Each has their own unique story. Whether they are deploying remotely to faraway places, packing bags to head to international assignments, or showing up in their own communities, towns or cities, every volunteer plays a part in global peace and development.

As 2021 draws to a close, Farah Ismail became the 10,000th UN Volunteer mobilized by UNV. Coming from a family of Palestinian refugees, Farah serves on assignment with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Pakistan.

From a young age, Farah has had a passion to devote her career to working directly with refugee communities. She has supported refugee literacy projects in Egypt and served with UNHCR in Jordan to protect the human rights of migrant and refugee workers and on refugee status determination projects. She also worked as a Refugee Appeal Officer and Research Analyst with the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada.

As a UN Volunteer Associate Protection Officer and member of UNHCR's protection team, Farah's passion, skills and experience have proved a vital foundation as she adjusted to the local context.

“ This regional and operational context differs a lot from my previous experience. It pushed me outside of my comfort zone, and I had a massive learning curve. I found it rewarding to work with amazing colleagues and learn local culture in Pakistan.
– Farah Ismail, UN Volunteer Associate Protection Officer

Farah contributes to information management, including collection, analysis, and dissemination. She also aids operations by preparing reports and situation updates, designing materials and implementing case monitoring systems.

Volunteers play a vital role in extending the reach of UNHCR services to the most marginalized communities and ensuring that no one is left behind. Farah believes that volunteerism is the first step to engaging with the local community, helping to build strong relationships that generate long-term, sustainable and culturally appropriate solutions for refugees. Indeed, volunteerism engages more people in local and national planning.

“ I became a volunteer, because I wanted to get international experience serving in a challenging duty station and be part of a big operation. I was interested in working with Afghan refugees.
- Farah Ismail

Farah is one of 950 UN Volunteers who have served with UNHCR in 2021, and the 10,000th UN Volunteer mobilized since January this year. Under extraordinary circumstances driven by the global pandemic, the commitment and dedication of volunteers like Farah to make communities better is essential to our ability to support peace and development worldwide.

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)