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Milanka Nikolic, national UN Volunteer Human Rights Associate with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Serbia.

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Contributing to an inclusive future through leadership and participation

With the International Day of Persons with Disabilities coming up on 3 December, we share the stories of two UN Volunteers with disabilities serving in Serbia and Ukraine. Read more about how they are facilitating a more accessible and inclusive future. The theme for this year's commemoration is: Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world.

Milanka Nikolic is a national UN Volunteer Human Rights Associate with OHCHR in Serbia. Her assignment is fully funded by the Government of Sweden.

Her involvement in volunteering and interest to learn more about human rights and UN core values led her to join the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme.

“ My work area has always been activism, primarily for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, alongside promoting media literacy and social media education.

After graduating with Bachelor's and Master's degrees in literature, Milanka got involved in radio journalism and eventually became a radio host on the

Serbian National Broadcaster (RTS). She also worked on online communications, writing articles for different online platforms.

Now, as a human rights associate, Milanka's area of focus is human rights and the UN Disability Strategy. This includes working to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, LGBTI and other vulnerable groups.

Milanka has conducted media research and prepared social media content on various thematic areas. Additionally, for International Women's Day and UN Day, she had the opportunity to be the master of ceremonies for the events.

“ I feel grateful that my contribution can make a positive and continuous impact on the community. I hope that social media posts and stories related to my volunteer work can inspire youth and encourage them to be part of the United Nations system.

Yurii Chernukha has been serving as a UN Volunteer Operations Assistant in the procurement unit of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in Ukraine since August 2019. With his long dream of working in the UN, joining UNV seemed an excellent place to start.



Yurii supports with different administrative and procurement tasks, such as creating vendor profiles, posting new tender announcements on the UNDP procurement notices platform, and modifying the UNDP Ukraine staff list. He collaborates not only with colleagues from UNDP units, but also with the ones from various UN partner agencies.

Recently, Yurii joined a Zoom call with the Deputy Executive Coordinator of UNV, Ms Kyoko Yokosuka, during her visit to Ukraine. "It was such a great pleasure to meet Ms Yokosuka during her meeting with UN Volunteers serving in the country. This was a most memorable moment," Yurii shares.

“ I am happy that my work can help UN agencies in achieving the Global Goals and UNV's Strategic Framework. It is also meaningful to see volunteerism as a driving force for sustainable development and a better future.”



Europe and the CIS

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Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 10: Reduced inequalities](#) [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)