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Online Coaching

UNV Ethiopia partnering
with Rejoice Africa

UN Volunteers in Ethiopia connect with youth through online coaching initiative

Social distancing and preventative practices aiming to curb the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly impacted our lives, reducing our social and physical contact with peers and movement. These often lasting measures severely challenge one of the key missions of UN Volunteers, namely to work with local communities to link UN initiatives with their local needs for sustainable solutions.

This year, in Ethiopia, 10 UN Volunteers decided to overcome emerging obstacles. Leveraging the power of e-communication platforms, they embarked on an online three-month journey to connect with young, passionate Ethiopian students.

The goal of this bridge-building coaching initiative was to enhance digital, communication and presentation skills and to support young mentees in facing challenges in identifying future career paths. This collaboration was of mutual benefit to the personal development of both mentors and mentees.

The coaching programme was supported by the Rejoice Africa non-governmental organization, based in Addis Ababa, which is responsible for outreach to and enrolment of motivated Ethiopian students. Rejoice Africa strives to create a nurturing and empowering space for young people to develop soft skills that can facilitate their transition to professional careers. Ruth, one of the mentees, reflected on her experience:

“ I had the opportunity to be part of online mentoring at Rejoice Africa, and was matched with a mentor that I shared interests with. Through this experience, I gained some valuable tips and information that will help me during my career and personal development. --Ruth, a mentee of the coaching programme

In the final evaluation, the initiative was praised by both UN Volunteers and mentees. Of the 20 participants, 18 indicated that they would recommend joining the next coaching cohort to their friends.

“ It was a very humbling and compelling experience to build a relationship with a gifted young student and witness how our session expanded in depth and length over time. I hope we can take stock of lessons learned from the pilot, improve technical support to mentors and work towards embedding this coaching approach into UNV's structures and long-term planning in Ethiopia. --Tomas Kral, UN Volunteer and co-initiator of the programme

The upcoming closing ceremony of the first cohort will provide an opportunity for interested UN Volunteers to sign-up for the second iteration of this intervention, envisaged to be launch in early 2022.

Tomas Kral started serving with UNV as a UN Youth Volunteer fully funded by the Czech Republic. He is currently a UN Volunteer specialist with the United Nations Development Programme.

 **East and Southern Africa**

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