Stepping up to support the COVID-19 response in Burundi

My name is Arlene Gisele Gafura and I was a National UN Youth Volunteer in the Republic of Burundi. I proudly served as the COVID-19 Response Programme Assistant at UNDP Burundi through the Global Fund project.

With the main responsibility of assisting the Public Health Officer in the development and implementation of COVID-19 response programme, I learned that volunteering does not entail only performing your assigned duties, but to providing support to all spheres of the organization mainly the Global Fund Project Management Unit.

As the COVID-19 response programme is housed by the Global Fund, I am now able to identify that the Global Fund is a financial mechanism and a partnership aimed at accelerating the end of AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria as epidemics. This has helped me gain insights on how to build partnerships and good relations with implementing agencies such as government entities, non-governmental organizations who are partnering on the project,
and other stakeholders.

During my nine months of being a volunteer, my primary focus was the administrative and logistical services of the COVID-19 project and Global Fund Burundi.

I provide assistance in Procurement – evaluation of bids for the acquisition of goods and services, which in turn supports the purchasing manager in the preparation of the required documents needed for the acquisition process. Along with this, I also provide support in Finance – preparation of payrolls for Mass Campaign payments, and assistance in verifying supporting documents.

“I was thrilled that I got a chance to work with other spheres of the unit because I’m always willing to learn. As a professional who specializes in human rights and gender, I got the opportunity to notice how gender lenses are applied in the health context and atmosphere.” Arlene Gisele Gafura, COVID-19 Response Programme Assistant

I always find it delightful to achieve results – for instance, when incarcerated people are given adequate support in the context of prevention and protection against COVID-19, or when the prevention and protection mechanisms against COVID-19 are put in place and advocated in the communities. It is always a remarkable moment for me when I am assigned to do the transfer of required goods and services during this pandemic to partners and sub-recipients.

“My wish as a human rights and gender professional is to get a chance to apply more of my knowledge and experience in the context of COVID-19 response. As they say that “charity begins at home”, I’m thrilled to have gotten this opportunity to
volunteer in my native country for the very first time in my career." Arlene Gisele Gafura, COVID-19 Response Programme Assistant

• International women's day • COVID-19 • Coronavirus • national UN Volunteer

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 3: Good health and well-being SDG 5: Gender equality SDG 13: Climate change