

17 June 2022



UN Volunteer Yvette Ndaya (blue jacket) during the verification of the plots for internally displaced persons in Kitshanga.

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Promoting the human rights of refugees in the Democratic Republic of Congo

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), armed conflict has transformed the lives of thousands of men, women and children. UN Volunteers are working every day to try to give refugees and internally displaced persons their lives back, together with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and UN Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), among other UN partners.

The 1951 UN Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol establish the rights of refugees and their responsibilities to host countries, as well as the legal obligations of States to provide protection. The theme of this year's World Refugee Day is the right to seek asylum. Refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons or stateless people often leave behind everything they have known and are exposed to abuse and persecution as well as exploitation.

Yvette Ndaya is a 33-year-old UN Volunteer Project Monitoring and Evaluation Assistant at the UNHCR office in Goma. She has supported the monitoring and evaluation of 24 projects

**General
enquires**

Email: unv.media@unv.org
Tel: +49-228-815 2000
Fax: +49-228-815 2001

**Partnership
enquires**

Email: partnershipsupport@unv.org
Tel: +49-228-815 2000
Fax: +49-228-815 2001

in the field of protection of refugees and asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees and stateless persons.

Yvette has developed innovative monitoring and evaluation tools that allow the monitoring of monthly activities in the field for all partners in North Kivu, South Kivu and Maniema. Every day she analyzes and documents the impact of UNHCR activities on the lives of beneficiaries.

“ Implementing partners use the planning and reporting tools I have developed and integrate impact and gender sensitivity indicators into projects to achieve transformational change in the lives of beneficiaries. I am very proud of my contribution, as UNHCR’s partners have taken ownership of these tools, use them and have improved the quality of their services. –Yvette Ndaya, UN Volunteer Project Monitoring and Evaluation Assistant with UNHCR, DRC

Yvette is the only UN Volunteer in her unit. Thanks to her commitment and the work of her team, many beneficiaries have seen their lives changed. Indeed, many of them have been supported by the project’s activities, which have allowed them to buy plots of land and be self-sufficient.

According to Yvette, her UNV assignment has allowed her to learn about the real problems of communities affected by armed conflict and the appropriate responses to solve their problems.

"I remember once, during a field mission in Masisi in North Kivu, I was following up on internally displaced persons who were supported through land grants so that they could leave the camp and settle down. So, one of the reporting tools I developed allowed me to correct errors in the field regarding the size of the plots of land given to returnees. The corrections were made, and the beneficiaries got slightly larger land than expected," she shares.

In North Kivu, Nadine El Homsy is a 38-year-old UN Volunteer who left her native Lebanon to provide her expertise to MONUSCO since 2020. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in psychology and an advanced degree in information, communication and public relations.

Nadine is currently writing her thesis on the role of communication in child protection in the DRC. She is an experienced humanitarian actor, who helped the OCHA office in Beirut to coordinate humanitarian activities during the war in Lebanon.

From Lebanon to Beni, North Kivu, where she arrived during the COVID-19 outbreak, this UN Volunteer has defied all odds. As an Administrative and Communications Officer, she is

now working relentlessly to bring hope and build a future for children who have been affected by the rampant conflicts in the region. This includes integrating former child soldiers and building their future through the Community Violence Reduction Child Protection Project.

“ This was my first mission outside of the Middle East and my first time in Africa. I was excited to embark on a new adventure on another continent, and I was not sure what surprises awaited me. However, my desire to play a part in bringing peace drove me. --Nadine El Homs, UN Volunteer with MONUSCO, DRC

Nadine's commitment has had a significant impact on the lives of children in the Eastern DRC She facilitates trainings, capacity building and conducts raising awareness activities on the six grave violations against children in the DRC. She also conducts advocacy and screening for children displaced by war and conflict, develops strategies with partners, and prepares strategic outreach plans.

There are over 419 UN Volunteers on the ground in the DRC, working with MONUSCO and UN agencies like UNHCR in peacekeeping, stabilization, refugee and IDP protection programs. Yvette and Nadine are among those volunteers who work tirelessly to ensure that refugees are treated fairly and that the resettlement and refugee assistance projects in are carried out successfully.

West and Central Africa

• World Refugee Day

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions](#) [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)