Giving a human face to the fight against gender-based violence

World Humanitarian Day is more than just a day to recognize aid workers who dedicate their lives to humanitarian causes. It is a day to remind us that aid workers make the world not only safer, but also more equitable and inclusive. Among them is Emmanuel Egorp, a 39-year-old Nigerian UN Volunteer who is committed to combating gender-based violence (GBV) through daily engagement with communities.

Emmanuel is a national UN Volunteer Gender-based Violence Programme Specialist at the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). He supports programming for innovative prevention, risk mitigation and quality response.
interventions in the Bay States of Nigeria (Borno, Adamawa and Yobe).

Emmanuel contributes substantively to his unit’s focus on increased engagement of men and boys, particularly in prevention of gender-based violence and risk mitigation. He also leads the pilot intervention on school-based gender violence, in line with UNFPA’s Humanitarian-Development-Peace Interface strategy.

Indeed, UNFPA’s mission is to provide a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, and every young person’s potential is realized by achieving the three transformative outcomes of ending unmet need for family planning, preventable maternal deaths, and gender-based violence by 2030.

Supporting UNFPA efforts “is truly fulfilling for me,” Emmanuel says. He affirms that all his previous experiences, knowledge and skills in clinical, public and primary health care, strengthening related systems, managing programmes and results-based financing have provided him with a unique integrated and innovative vision. And they enable him to support his agency’s efforts more effectively and efficiently.

“The world is changing very quickly and the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance is increasing due to climate change, conflict and more. I really want to help, even in the smallest way possible, so that someone – anyone – preserves the dignity of being human first, regardless of age, race, religion or gender. UNV offers me an incredible opportunity to do this and much more.” – Emmanuel Egorp, UN Volunteer at UNFPA, Nigeria

As part of his mandate, Emmanuel led a UNFPA team visit to the GRA Model School in Maiduguri, Borno State, on International Menstrual Hygiene Day, celebrated 28 May. The day is an opportunity to sensitize adolescent girls and boys on menstrual health and hygiene management. The UNFPA team also distributed menstrual kits to 120 schoolgirls, including seven boys.

“My family was displaced from Bama Local Government Area. Now that we live in a host community in Maiduguri, it is even more difficult with each menstrual cycle to deal with the intense pain while cleaning, going to school and concentrating in class. It is very difficult for me to find sanitary pads, so I fall back on old pieces of cloth. The fear of staining my uniform and being teased by my classmates (especially the boys) is what causes me to miss at least three days of class each month. Sometimes, I just want to be a boy, so I don’t have to go through all that anymore!” – Halima, 15 years old, student of the GRA Model School, beneficiary of the menstrual hygiene management training

The most rewarding experience Emmanuel has had is the Global Gender-Based Violence Intervention in Schools Pilot Project launched in November 2021 to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence, in partnership with UNICEF.

Together with his team of five other UN Volunteers, Emmanuel was able to train over 50 secondary schools, including private schools, in establishing reporting mechanisms, providing psychological first aid, establishing
referral linkages, developing a code of conduct for teachers and learners, as well as creating school clubs on gender-based violence and a community-based network of referral counselors.

Prior to becoming a UN Volunteer, Emmanuel volunteered as a frontline responder during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the Federal Capital Territory Administration, Abuja, called for health workers to volunteer. He is very committed to his community and never misses an opportunity to collaborate with organizations or the government to provide humanitarian assistance to his people, no matter where they live.

In 2022, 95 UN Volunteers were mobilized in the West and Central Africa region to support the UN system’s humanitarian-oriented programmes in five different agencies and missions in eight different countries.

West and Central Africa

- World Humanitarian Day

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 3: Good health and well-being  
SDG 5: Gender equality  
SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals