



Doris Tabepuda (centre) serves as national UN Volunteer Research Assistant with the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties, as part of the UNDP-UNV National Graduate Initiative in the Solomon Islands.

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UNDP-UNV Graduate Initiative gives young graduates professional experience through volunteering

In the Solomon Islands, fresh graduates often struggle to find employment opportunities due to their lack of experience. To address this challenge, the UN Development Programme collaborated with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme on a Graduate Initiative. This gives young graduates a professional opportunity through volunteering.

The UNDP-UNV [Graduate Initiative](#) was launched in 2021 with financial support from the Government of Australia. Its aim? To support the Solomon Islands Electoral Office and the

Office of the Registrar of Political Parties.

The volunteering journey of Doris Tabepuda, a fresh graduate, started with this initiative and, as they say, the rest is history! Doris came across the initiative while browsing social media. She was not familiar with volunteering opportunities with the United Nations but thought of giving it a try. After registering in the UNV database, Doris became one of the thousands of candidates in UNV's global talent pool.

After being recruited as a national UN Volunteer, Doris served as a Research Assistant at the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) under 'Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP)'. Her daily responsibilities included research on the policies of the Political Party registration, comparative analysis on anti-defection laws and policies that will improve the political party system in the Solomon Islands.

The goal of the ORPP is to strengthen the political party system in the Solomon Islands, as one of the ways to have a representative form of Government. The ORPP also raises people's awareness about the importance of voting.

“ The Graduate Initiative gives me the chance and the platform to utilize my skills and knowledge, and to learn and build my capacity. Volunteering with the United Nations is certainly a breakthrough for me to share my knowledge and make a small change in communities. --Doris Tabepuda, national UN Volunteer with the UNDP-UNV Graduate Initiative

The ORPP team educates voters before upcoming general elections and advocates to vote for policies. This is what helped Doris to understand how the political party system promotes democracy in the Solomon Islands.

“ The Graduate Initiative is an empowering mechanism to promote democratic values in Solomon Islands. Moreover, it gave me an experience of a lifetime that perhaps would pave my career path. -- Doris Tabepuda

Previously, Doris imagined the United Nations as foreign and not befitting a young local woman like her. Nevertheless, her UN Volunteer experience brought forward another perspective. "The UN is not only for expatriates, but also for nationals - their voice matters too, and can impact people's lives," asserts Doris.

She cherishes her experience as part of the UNDP dynamic team, which helped strengthen her work ethic and learning. She now sees herself as one of a passionate group of leaders who contribute to strengthening democracy in the Solomon Islands.

"At some point, I doubted if I'd be given a chance to use the skills and knowledge that I have acquired through years of toiling to get my qualifications," Doris shares.

“ New graduates have the potential to help in the public and private sectors. I am confident that graduates like me are vibrant, and can contribute their time, skills and knowledge effectively. All we need is a chance and recognition of our capabilities. That is what the UNDP-UNV Graduate Initiative has given me. --Doris Tabepuda

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