



Fatima-Zahra Benyahia (first from right holding a camera), international UN Volunteer Partnerships and Innovation Specialist with UNFPA in Lao PDR, documents UNFPA's work with midwives in Savannakhet, in July 2022.

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## Shedding light on challenges preventing women and girls from fulfilling their potential

Fatima-Zahra Benyahia is a staunch supporter of the rights of women and girls. Through the stories she writes, she sheds light on what prevents women, girls and youth from fulfilling their potential, such as child marriage, early pregnancy, maternal death and gender-based violence. As a UN Volunteer Partnerships and Innovation Specialist with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Fatima-Zahra has been based in Lao People's Democratic Republic since March 2022.

Fatima-Zahra has written more than 50 human interest stories, highlighting [UNFPA initiatives](#) that benefit women and girls. This includes family planning measures, sexual and reproductive health services, midwifery, access to comprehensive sexuality education, women's empowerment and vocational training.

"In collaboration with my colleagues, I build communication tools to raise awareness about the rights of women and girls, share life lessons and raise their voices at national, regional and global level," Fatima-Zahra shares.

“ The most gratifying part of my assignment is telling the stories of women and girls who we aim to see and portray as powerful, empowered, capable and able to enjoy their rights and lives. --Fatima-Zahra Benyahia, UN Volunteer Partnerships and Innovation Specialist with UNFPA, Lao PDR

Fatima-Zahra seeks partnership opportunities for projects to promote women's rights and their empowerment. She also monitors the implementation of UNFPA interventions. In a typical day, she oversees partnership documentation and meeting the requirements of donors, collaborates on project proposals, writes success stories and highlights emerging issues impacting women and youth.

She and her operations team help setup the activities for women empowerment. Through concrete documentation, she also ensures that donors see the impact of UNFPA's programmes so their economic support to ongoing projects remains intact.

“ Fatima-Zahra is an example of a female professional who demonstrates UNV and UN values. She has a passion to learn, looks for solutions and embraces the values of advancing rights and choices for women and girls. -- Mariam A. Khan, UNFPA Representative in Lao PDR

Fatima-Zahra exudes positivity wherever she goes. She says, "I strongly believe that by giving opportunities to other women, as it was given to me, we ensure women continue to grow, to gain confidence and show to the world what women are capable of."



 Asia and the Pacific

• International Women's Day • Gender-based Violence • women empowerment • maternal health

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 5: Gender equality](#)