Young Arab UN Volunteers with a common goal

Young Arab Women Talents is a joint initiative of UNICEF Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional Office and UNV Regional Office for the Arab States. This initiative started in October 2022 gives opportunities to talented young Arab women to serve as UN Volunteers in UNICEF offices across the MENA region. In January 2023, seven women began their 12-month UN Volunteer assignments with UNICEF in Iraq and Jordan under the Young Arab Women Talents initiative. The areas of service are communications, social and behavior change, water, sanitation and hygiene, talent acquisition, and gender inclusion. These UN Volunteers are between the ages of 24 and 32 years. They bring diversity and increase the representation of women in UNICEF’s regional workforce.

“One of the key principles of this initiative is to strengthen UNICEF’s
talent pipeline and to contribute to reaching gender parity in the MENA region by engaging young people that can become the leaders of tomorrow.” -- Paul Badiane, UNICEF Regional Chief of Human Resources.

Championing Sustainable Development Goal # 5 of gender equality, this initiative is in line with UNICEF’s Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

The UN Volunteers serving under this initiative receive training related to their UN Volunteer assignments helping them increase their knowledge of the area of service, and also of the United Nations system as a whole.

Ghena Haikal is from Jordan and she’s 24. She is a national UN Volunteer Gender Specialist with the UNICEF country office in Jordan. She will support UNICEF’s gender equality outcomes in the country and make sure gender is included across the programming.

Yasmeen Kurdi is also from Jordan and she's 31. She is a national UN Volunteer Social and Behavior Change Officer. Yasmeen will support strategy design, and develop social and behavior change activities. Her UN Volunteer assignment will support the rights of all children, a major priority for UNICEF.

With this initiative, young women like Ghena, Yasmeen, and others, take on leadership roles while sharing a common goal - an inclusive future for all.

We are extremely proud of this collaboration with UNICEF. First, it is innovatively blending volunteering with professional development. Secondly, it is bringing underrepresented young women to the forefront, where they can influence, inspire, and innovate. Thus, it showcases a prime example of how UNV talent solutions are enhancing diversity and inclusion within the UN system.” -- Dr. Christian Hainzl, UNV Regional Manager for the Arab States.
Sustainable Development Goal: **SDG 5: Gender equality SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals**