Making an impact on local communities in Kosovo

Andreas Nord (Sweden) served with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in Kosovo* as a UN Youth Volunteer funded by Sweden/SIDA in the role of Socio-Economic Programme Associate. Two years later, he became a UN Volunteer Programme Support Officer with the Inclusive Growth and Climate Resilience Portfolio. Andreas recently shared his reflections before moving to the UNDP Syria Cross-Border Initiative as a Programme Officer for Early Recovery and Livelihoods.

I have a long history of service that began at a young age. I completed residencies for unaccompanied refugee children and volunteered with CISV, an international youth organization that promotes peace through education.

My previous experiences prepared me well for my UN Volunteer assignments with UNDP in Kosovo, fully funded by Sweden. They played a crucial role in helping me truly understand the challenges people face and the significance of finding solutions to alleviate human suffering.

Volunteers are essential for progress, as collective efforts are intrinsic to human nature. Without them, society will stagnate. --Andreas Nord, former UN Youth Volunteer and UN Volunteer with UNDP, Kosovo

During my time at UNDP, I supported the Inclusive Growth and Climate Resilience portfolio. The dynamic and fast-paced nature of the work was one of the reasons I enjoyed it. From reviewing the COVID-19 Rapid Socio-Economic Impact Assessment to managing a project assessing the impact of the war in Ukraine on the people in Kosovo, my days were filled with diverse tasks.

I felt that I had the most direct impact on local communities when I worked together with Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises. One of my fondest memories is of a two-day crowdfunding workshop for such enterprises and start-ups within the ecotourism sector.

I was pleased that participants left the workshop with valuable knowledge and expanded networks. The fact that only a couple of start-ups decided to carry out a campaign, due to
the relatively small crowdfunding scene in Kosovo, did not put me off. The inspiring conversations during coffee breaks and the cheerful atmosphere made this an unforgettable experience.

“Being a UN Volunteer offers a huge learning opportunity, both professionally and personally. Experiencing new cultures, making friends and engaging with local communities will change your perspective of the world and spark new thoughts. --Andreas Nord

I highly recommend volunteering as it provides a unique perspective on how we perceive and experience daily life and its struggles in vastly different ways. Besides, it is a great opportunity to enter the field of development and take the first big leap into a potential UN career, provided one works hard and remains curious and motivated.

As a graduate in Politics, Philosophy and Economics with a master’s degree in Economic Development and Growth from the universities of Lund, Sweden, and Groningen, the Netherlands, I find that my education has benefited from international and interdisciplinary exposure.

*References to Kosovo shall be understood in the context of UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

This article was prepared with the kind assistance of Online Volunteer Anna Quici. Find out more about how to become an Online Volunteer or engage Online Volunteers.

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