UN Volunteer GIS Officer Oladipo Akinpelumi (Nigeria) at his desk in the offices of OCHA in Erbil, Iraq.
© (Karzan Saadon/UNDP, 2018)

x

Mapping data to aid response to humanitarian emergencies in post-conflict Iraq

The humanitarian crisis in Iraq remains one of the most volatile in the world. Although the conflict ended in 2017, some 8.7 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance and two million are internally displaced. UN Volunteer Oladipo Akinpelumi (Nigeria) joined the Information Management Unit of UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Erbil, Iraq, as a Geographic Information Systems Officer in 2016. In this role, he is constantly integrating information to aid response to humanitarian emergencies.

Serving with OCHA, UN Volunteer Oladipo Akinpelumi responds to the demand for vital data to coordinate humanitarian response. He combines expertise gained from his previous work as a GIS analyst in Nigeria and his two master's degrees: one in Geographic Information Systems, and another in International Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid.

> 66 An important part of my role is to map and update the presence of humanitarian organizations in Iraq. The infographics I produce enable the country operations to make informed decisions to facilitate the provision of aid where it is needed. --Oladipo Akinpelumi, UN Volunteer GIS Officer with OCHA, Iraq

Other volunteering activities Oladipo engages in include providing support on security and ensuring that the warden lists of OCHA Iraq staff are accurate and up-to-date.

He also provides technical support for the coordinated assessments conducted in Iraq, such as the Rapid Needs Assessment in areas that have just opened to humanitarian access, or where there is little information available.

Because of the rapidly changing environment, data quickly becomes outdated; therefore, it should be used in the most efficient way possible and constantly updated.

The data also depends on the perception of community members and key informants in each location. This means that Oladipo must ensure that his data is reliable, accurate and up-to-date as possible.

Collecting data is not just a matter of numbers. Oladipo interacts with many different people who have been affected by the conflict in the country in countless different ways.

The distance between him and his family is taxing. While Oladipo has been volunteering for peace in Iraq, his newborn baby was born.

> 66 *As a UN Volunteer, I realize how much displaced families truly miss their* homes *and way of life. The opportunity is given for expatriates to aid and help people, using skills they have acquired over the years. --Oladipo Akinpelumi*

This story was drafted with the kind assistance of Online Volunteer *Erin O'Neill.*

Arab States

• OCHA • Nigeria • GIS • Humanitarian assistance

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals