



UNV Executive Coordinator, Mr Olivier Adam, while launching the second Community Volunteerism Centre in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya

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UNV Executive Coordinator inaugurates second Community Volunteerism Centre in Kakuma refugee camp with partners

The Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, Olivier Adam, together with partners from the German Embassy in Nairobi, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), officiated the official opening of the second Community Volunteerism Centre in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya, on 27 March 2019. Like the first centre opened last year, this second facility will bring together both refugee and host communities for events and workshops and offer a common space for community development activities. The opening ceremony saw entertainment in the form of group dances and musical

interludes and included speeches from funding and implementing partners and the local government. Similar to the first facility launched last year, this centre boasts meeting rooms and halls with a capacity of 220 seats, a solar powered lightning system and two sports fields.

The Kakuma community centre is managed by a committee comprised of motivated volunteers, including a manager and representatives of youth and women. By bringing people together for joint events, the centre is expected to contribute to the overall wellbeing of host and refugee communities and improve the relationship between the two.

"Young people can come together here and organize music festivals, for example," says David Omoth from South Sudan, one of the Youth Representatives of the center. In addition, "Everything you need is here; you can have meetings and trainings in the halls here. We also have the sports grounds for playing football and volleyball," explains the centre's Manager, Ojulu Ochalla from Ethiopia.

This facility is part of the joint UNHCR-UNV project "Enhancing Security, Co-Existence and Refugee Protection through Refugee Outreach Volunteers" supported by the Government of Germany, represented by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and implemented by the LWF.

The project aims to facilitate joint activities between the host and refugee communities, safeguarding common interests on issues such as security and making everyone a responsible citizen of the community. The project objectives are in line with the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, of which Kenya is a pilot country.

Now at its completion, the project has mobilized and trained 146 Outreach Volunteers. These outreach volunteers have formed four women and four youth groups that engage on various community development activities in health, water and sanitation, sexual and gender-based violence, entrepreneurship, education, environment and sports.

The volunteers have been provided with bicycles to facilitate their mobility. One of the project beneficiaries is Ojulu Ochalla. Aside from being an outreach volunteer, Ojulu doubles up as the manager for the community volunteerism centre in Village II, where he is in charge of the day-to-day administration, including bookings and management of resources.

For Ojulu, the volunteerism project not only gave him the opportunity to give back to his community, but also to lead and acquire management skills.

“ I came to realize that there is so much I can do to support people in my community. This project has touched many lives. It has brought

“ people together and changed the lives of many youth who previously never had anything to do. --Ojulu Ochalla, Outreach Volunteer in Kakuma

Ojulu's reality has significantly changed from when he joined the camp a few years back. "When I first came here, I spent most of the day sleeping or hanging out with friends, which was not very productive," he says.

The two centres are equipped with a sports field and solar powered electricity will also provide safe spaces for community dialogue, knowledge sharing, workshops, discussions on thematic areas, recreational and sport activities. Students from nearby schools are already using the first centre as a safe space for school-related activities.

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