Contributing to peace and development in Afghanistan through volunteerism

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme actively contributes to the mission of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), a special political mission that supports the achievement of peace and stability. On the occasion of the International Day of UN Peacekeepers, we highlight the contributions of women volunteers to UN peace operations in Asia.

In 2008, 50 UN Volunteers were deployed to support UNAMA; in 2019, the number of volunteers had increased to 109. This year, 90 UN Volunteers (60 international and 30 national) serve in different functions to support UNAMA’s mandate. These support peace and reconciliation, human rights monitoring, strategic communications, political and judicial affairs, as well as the service delivery, supply chain and operations/resource management pillars of the mission.
The majority of UN Volunteers supporting UNAMA are women – 56 out of 90 serving volunteers, and 30 of these are Afghans. This reflects the mission’s strong commitment and efforts to integrate the voices of women in peace and reconciliation efforts for a sustainable peace process.

Today, we share the story of UN Volunteer Humaira Nazari, and her journey and passion to empower women and communities in her country through volunteerism.

“I have wanted to serve with the United Nations since my childhood. As an immigrant, I moved to Iran in 1997 with my family. Four years later, our return to Afghanistan was facilitated by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Since then, I have dreamt of working with the UN. --Humaira Nazari, UN Volunteer with UNAMA

Humaira joined UNAMA as a Programme and Administration Associate in UNV’s Field Unit in 2019. She is among 30 Afghan women serving with UNAMA under the National Female UN Youth Volunteer Project – supporting people and institutions in achieving peace and stability.

“When I got the opportunity to join UNAMA as a UN Volunteer, it was a dream come true. I am serving for a cause, not applause; this is something that gives me the energy to help people, including my colleagues, while serving my community. --Humaira Nazari

In her current role, Humaira supports the coordination and effective implementation of the National UN Youth Volunteer Project. She
collaborates with different counterparts in UNAMA and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) to support volunteers serving in the country.

Humaira’s focus is on the effective orientation of volunteers and partners who are involved in delivering the UN’s mandate in Afghanistan. She is also the focal point for organizing activities and events for UN Volunteers serving with UNAMA. In her capacity, she also looks forward to sharing stories on the impact the volunteers are making in Afghanistan with the world.

UNAMA’s National UN Youth Volunteer Project has played an instrumental role in attempting to overcome the barriers to entry to the UN workforce in the country. Launched in January 2019, the project is funded by the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA).

UN Volunteers with UNAMA contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by supporting peace, justice and strong institutions. They also promote gender equality through volunteerism, as an effective means of implementation and people engagement.

“Based on my wonderful volunteering experiences at the community level, with international organizations, and now with the UN, I believe that volunteering is key to bringing about a positive change in society. Volunteering as a UN Volunteer has also been an enriching experience for me, both at a personal and professional level. I will always encourage anyone to become a volunteer without any hesitation. -- Humaira Nazari

As a national UN Youth Volunteer, Humaira, and her fellow volunteers, are making a significant difference to empower women in their home country. They play a crucial role in addressing the challenges in incorporating the voices and needs of women into the mission’s work to advance the UN women, peace and security agenda.
Asia and the Pacific

• UNAMA • International Day of UN Peacekeepers • gender

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 5: Gender equality, SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions, SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals