Souley Garba (third from right), from Niger, dedicates his free time outside of his full-time job as UNV Electoral Advisor with the regional office of MINUSTAH to help local youth organizations make and sell products from recycled plastic containers. This initiative, which he finances himself, offers employment opportunities to young people while contributing to environmental protection. (UN/MINUSTAH, 2014)

Towards more democracy, youth empowerment and environmental protection

Since September 2010, Souley Garba, a UN Volunteer from Niger, helps the young people in Hinche, Haiti, to develop economic activities while protecting the environment; and this in parallel to his day-time responsibilities as UNV Electoral Officer with the regional office of MINUSTAH. So not only does he contribute to political stability in the country by providing logistics and security assistance to the Haitian body responsible for supporting the electoral process, but he also creates employment opportunities for the youth of the region.
Since September 2010, Souley Garba, a UN Volunteer from Niger, helps the young people in Hinche, Haiti, to develop economic activities while protecting the environment; and this in parallel to his day-time responsibilities as UNV Electoral Officer with the regional office of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). So not only does he contribute to political stability in the country by providing logistics and security assistance to the Haitian body responsible for supporting the electoral process, but he also creates employment opportunities for the youth of the region.

Besides my full-time job, I dedicate my free time to helping community associations in the area, and in particular the Association of Youth Volunteers for the Development of the Central region (AJVDC), he says proudly.

Souley sets aside one hour each day for this activity. Last September, he set up a micro project to protect the environment. He himself financed the initial part of the project to train and advise the members of AJVDC and to provide them with some 20,000 plastic containers for recycling.

With the containers that he generously put to our disposal, we make baskets, pot hangers, beer carriers, frames and art which we then sell to raise funds for our organization’s activities, explains Rosier William, president of the AJVDC. The association gathers 80 students in various fields: art, culture, plumbing, water treatment and environment protection.

The Representative of the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Citizenship, MézandCelestin, welcomes this project which combines two advantages: protecting the environment and creating employment opportunities for many young people in Hinche.

Local people have indeed started buying these recycled products. Roger Augustin, a restaurant owner in Hinche, explains that he buys them not only to use them in his restaurant, but also to support and promote the activities of the young members of AJVDC.

The Head of the regional office of MINUSTAH in Hinche, Marc Nteturuye, also welcomes this innovative initiative which reflects positively on his organization and on UN Volunteers as a whole. This initiative should inspire others to render themselves useful to the community, he says.

Souley Garba first started as a UN Volunteer Electoral Advisor in 2007 in Madagascar, then in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, before joining the regional office of MINUSTAH in Hinche.
"Thanks to my previous experience organizing elections, I am confident with my responsibilities here in Haiti, he says. And by volunteering with human rights organizations, I am happy to be able to assist my Haitian brothers and sisters, members of NGOs and community organizations.

Souley Garba hopes to continue supporting other organizations in the central region of Haiti. Taking charge of other projects, besides my professional responsibilities, allows me to be more open to the world, he claims.

Sustainable Development Goal: