Addressing gender issues in the COVID-19 context in Senegal

Analyzing the gender dimensions of the impact of COVID-19 has become a priority in Senegal. Serving with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), Lea Desgranges delivers results as a UN Volunteer Governance Programme Analyst.

The Governance Unit of UNDP works with the Government of Senegal in the fight against corruption, territorial development and administrative modernization through digital transformation. With the COVID-19 outbreak, however, the unit has had to reorganize its activities to address governance issues stemming from the crisis.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, Lea has been working relentlessly with her colleagues to provide medical equipment for communities. She has also facilitated telecommuting for government members and digitizing of the administrative processes to ensure the public service’s continuity.

Alongside these activities, she regularly conducts gender-based violence prevention training for security and defense forces on how to guide gender-
based violence victims at a time when women are even more exposed to such an issue, due to the emergency measures taken by the government.

To date, Lea has help train 72 police and gendarmerie members, 17 heads of security departments, and 20 midwives in gender-based violence’s victim support. She is inspired by a quote of former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

“Through their energy and will, the contribution of volunteers, so dynamic, committed and creative, leads us to revisit our strategies and approaches, but also to rethink a development that is more focused on leading change. -- Seynabou DIAW BA, Governance Team Leader, UNDP Senegal

Lea Desgranges decided to become a UN Volunteer because she believed that sustainable governance policies and institutions are the way to fight inequalities. In her current volunteer assignment, she combines her will to address gender-related issues with her first motivations, including women empowerment efforts and preventing gender-based violence.

“My assignment allowed me to develop expertise in governance and development issues, to impact people, but also to discover other cultures and realities. I am also more aware of the world surrounding me, which makes me curious, and this is open-mindedness. --Lea Desgranges, UN Volunteer Governance Programme Analyst with UNDP, Senegal

At the door of Lea’s office building at UNDP Senegal, shared with the
Resident Coordinator’s office, there is a mural painted by RBS Crew street artists to raise awareness against COVID-19. Through its urban artistic language, the image addresses the global sanitary crisis. View the video below for more.

There are currently 86 UN Volunteers serving in Senegal, including 20 with UNDP.
Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 3: Good health and well-being, SDG 5: Gender equality, SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals