Why volunteering matters in gender-based violence intervention in Cambodia

Making a difference: An assessment of volunteer interventions addressing gender-based violence in Cambodia (Partners for Prevention, 2010) highlights the crucial role and the far-reaching positive effects that community volunteers play in the prevention and response to gender-based violence. This research was conducted in Cambodia by Partners for Prevention, which is a regional joint programme on the prevention of gender-based violence for Asia and the Pacific implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the
Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme.

In Cambodia, one reason why volunteering matters is because it addresses the needs of survivors of violence. Living in the communities, volunteers bring added value to gender-based violence interventions as they have a better understanding of the particular situations, and are also available for support. They help to prevent violence by sharing information and raising the awareness of potential perpetrators.

Volunteering satisfies the needs of organizations because, with the help of volunteers, they can improve the coverage (including remote areas), impact and sustainability of their community programmes. Volunteers are trusted and stay engaged with the communities after their assignments are completed. They also help to build human resource capacity of the organizations they work for by providing technical expertise and support.

Finally, volunteers themselves are pleased with the change that their work produces and it motivates them to continue. They are also gratified and encouraged by the recognition and respect they receive from survivors, communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and even perpetrators. Volunteers appreciate the knowledge and experience they gain through their work, and feel a positive change in self-growth and their place in their families and communities.