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"Volunteer experiences provide the insights and satisfaction for my work"

Peshawar, Pakistan: My name is Hina Yousafzai and I am from Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in Pakistan. I am currently working as a UN Volunteer supporting the FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) Recovery Project carried out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the capacity of Reporting & Monitoring Associate based in Peshawar.

Since early childhood, my life has been driven by two factors: my love for knowledge instilled in me by my parents, and my efforts at being understood and appreciated.

As a girl, growing in a highly patriarchal and conservative society, I had to make my way up through sheer devotion to knowledge. My real challenge presented itself when my motivation towards change led me into the developmental sector where I am currently rendering my services and contributing to volunteerism.

The project I am working with aims at supporting the FATA Secretariat in the implementation of its Sustainable Return and Rehabilitation Strategy, which seeks to address the most immediate rehabilitation and recovery needs in the region in order to facilitate the sustainable return of more than 300,000 temporarily displaced (TDP) families - including over 100,000 families from North Waziristan.

I hail from a region which is at the heart of the current strife. After closely working with the various conflict groups, I have reached the conclusion that social development at the lower level is the only viable solution towards deradicalization, and by having the sense of responsibility one can contribute towards developmental activities through volunteer efforts.

The lives of women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the FATA region are circumscribed by traditions, which enforce seclusion and submission to men. Women are still constrained because of the prevailing patriarchal culture and norms.

As a woman in my current role, I believe I am in a good position to give a helping hand to the project by reaching out and providing assistance to the vulnerable TDPs families

(especially women) in FATA. I have been collecting the stories of the TDPs and helping in monitoring and reporting the on-the-ground progress while identifying the issues faced by the vulnerable communities so that they can be assisted.

I have been successful enough to achieve this goal, and the project during its implementation continue to assist thousands of TDPs and their families through community engagement, the provision of vocational training, the rebuilding of community physical infrastructure and the provision of livelihood opportunities especially to women, to ensure a swift return to normal life.

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme motivated me and gave me useful insight for my work. All these experiences are, in my understanding, essential for continued personal development and capacity building, that will surely improve my delivery at the service that I am currently rendering.

I strongly believe everybody can contribute to social development through volunteering if they really want to bring a positive change to the society, because there is a very human aspect to the conflicts we are faced, and this human aspect has to be properly understood and appreciated.

Hina Yousafzai is a national UN Volunteer Monitoring and Reporting Associate with UNDP Pakistan.

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Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 4: Quality education](#), [SDG 5: Gender equality](#), [SDG 10: Reduced inequalities](#)