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Miguel Mateos Muñoz

Miguel Mateos Muñoz (centre), from Spain, was an international UN Youth Volunteer serving as Monitoring and Reporting Officer with the Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG) in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). His UN Youth Volunteer assignment was fully funded by the Government of Spain. (UNV, 2016)

Helping improve the rule of law

Port-au-Prince, Haiti: After working for the Spanish government, several media outlets, EU institutions and NGO networks, I decided my future was working for the United Nations. The UN represents all the values I believe in and could specifically focus on human rights and migration issues.

During my UN Youth Volunteer assignment in the front office of MINUSTAH, I coordinated the work related to the rule of law mandate. In quite an understaffed office at the moment of my arrival in the country, I was key in sustaining the daily work of the Deputy Special Representative – for a month I was his only substantive support. Though mostly desk work, my post included regular trips to the field to better understand the situation in different regions of Haiti.

The correct implementation of the rule of law mandate of the mission had a direct impact on the local community, as it facilitated access to a fair and standardized judiciary system, a
more transparent and accountable police, a stronger correctional system, and a better implementation of the human rights obligations of the country.

My experience in Haiti provided me with holistic knowledge of the work of the UN entities in the field. Moreover, it helped me to understand the weight of factors such as history and international dynamics in the unfair situation faced by developing countries as well as the need of a strong civil society to overcome it. Operating in a highly stressful situation was challenging, but made me more resilient and mature, and taught me the importance of being objective, fair and serene in this kind of environment.

One of the main highlights of my assignment was having the opportunity to accompany the Deputy Special Representative on a field visit to the border region between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. During this visit, I had the opportunity to see how the UN can play a key role as a facilitator between partners by helping them to work together on the development of traditionally impoverished areas.

Bio: Miguel has a Bachelor’s degree in Communications by Universidad Complutense in Madrid, as well as a Masters in International Relations and Diplomacy from the Diplomatic School of Spain, and a Masters in European Political and Administrative Studies from the College of Europe in Brugge, Belgium. Prior to joining MINUSTAH, he worked as a journalist in Spain, as well as for the European Parliament and advocacy organizations (humanitarian aid and migration) in Brussels and Vienna, and as a Policy Officer for the Embassy of Spain in Lebanon.

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