

Programmes

Story

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UNV partners with UNFPA to provide humanitarian relief

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) works closely with UN Volunteers to ensure that reproductive health is integrated into emergency responses. Over the past ten years, there have been more than 500 UN Volunteer assignments with UNFPA across the world.



UN Volunteers work in collaboration with UNFPA and other partners in Bahr El Ghazal, South Sudan, to assure availability of Emergency Reproductive Health Kits for use during crisis. (UNV South Sudan, 2012)

During conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies, sexual and reproductive health needs are easily overlooked – yet these needs are often staggering. UN Volunteers work in conflict-affected areas hand in hand with [United Nations Population Fund](#) (UNFPA) staff to deploy hygiene supplies, obstetric and family planning supplies, trained personnel, and other support to vulnerable populations, and works to ensure the needs of women and young people are served through both an emergency and the reconstruction phase.

UNFPA has actively integrated volunteers in all of its programmes and operations. UN Volunteers, in particular, have long been strong supporters of our mandate worldwide.” —Dr Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of UNFPA (2011-2017)

In crisis situations, one in five women of childbearing age is likely to be pregnant. Without access to reproductive health services, these women face an increased risk of life-threatening complications. Many women also lose access to family planning, exposing them to unwanted pregnancies in perilous conditions. Women and young people also become more vulnerable to sexual violence, exploitation and HIV infection. And the hygiene needs of women and girls are often neglected.

Since March 2014, West Africa has experienced the largest outbreak of Ebola in history. In response to the outbreak in terms of manpower, UNFPA recruited and deployed seven UN Volunteers with different skills (Midwives, Medical logistics and Monitoring Evaluation). Working as a UN Volunteer in an organization like UNFPA is a life changing experience. It gave them the opportunity to understand real issues faced by people that they were serving especially during that difficulty time. The recruited volunteers gave something of themselves and made a valuable contribution to the community while learning new skills and culture.

When asked about why choosing to work with UN Volunteers, Cheikh Fall, the Director of UNFPA Guinea Country Office explains:

UNFPA recognizes that volunteers play an integral part of its mission which involves the improvement of reproductive health; including creation of national strategies and protocols, and providing supplies and services. UN Volunteers help UNFPA meet its mission and better serve the community.”

UNFPA and UNV have recently started a new initiative of inviting talents from [UNV Talent Pool](#) to participate in its Humanitarian Training and Assessment Workshops. The successful candidates from the workshop will be added into UNFPA Surge Deployment Roster for rapid deployment under emergencies. After UNV nomination and joint selection process, the first group of five UNV candidates were invited to participate in the workshops that took place in earlier this year. Given the successful performance of UNV candidates in the first two workshops, UNFPA is expecting to invite more UNV-nominated candidates in the upcoming workshops.

This new initiative marks a new and deepened level of partnership between the two organizations, especially under humanitarian settings. UN Volunteers have been providing timely and quality support for UNFPA under humanitarian settings and this valuable partnership continues very strongly.

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