



José Ignacio Martín Galán is a UN Volunteer Coordination and Communication Officer fully funded by the Government of Spain. He serves with the Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Haiti. (UNV, 2017)

Building spirals of peace in Haiti

Listening to how the people of Haiti understand the Sustainable Development Goals and how determined they are to improve this world for future generations has been for me an opportunity to learn, and a motivation to continue sharing, debating and learning with the Haitian population.

As a UN Volunteer with the Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) at the [United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti](#) (MINUSTAH), I have had the chance to combine work on coordination, joint communication and planning in the office with capacity development in the field.

I have organized and run workshops on non-violent communication and on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), consultations and debates with youth, football games to promote gender equality, as well as other volunteer

activities. Listening to how the people of Haiti understand the Sustainable Development Goals and how determined they are to improve this world for future generations has been for me an opportunity to learn, and a motivation to continue sharing, debating and learning with the Haitian population.

These actions have allowed me to work together with young prisoners, school and high-school students, young rappers, dancers, sport practitioners, and painters, among others.


“ In almost all these activities, we end by playing 'the thread of peace', a game that shows the interconnection of all the SDGs and how every action that we take has an impact on people we don't even know, as if we were all connected by a strong, yet fragile thread.

My work involves facilitating the coordination between UN agencies in Haiti and MINUSTAH, with responsibilities such as reporting, supporting UN country team meetings, preparing joint information notes and events, and drafting briefings and talking points, as well as managing requests from journalists. I also had the opportunity to work on drafting, approving and implementing the 'Communicating as One' strategy for the UN in Haiti.

I have found a genuine human synergy in every corner of Haiti: while working of course, but also while running or playing soccer with soldiers in the military compound, singing with civilian colleagues and local friends, or discovering the local culture and its history. I found kind and talented colleagues, partners and new friends who were open to support, to listen to new ideas, to share knowledge and to start new exciting initiatives of communication for peace and development.

I can say that I found what I was looking for when becoming a volunteer for the United Nations: countless people willing to make a difference through genuine solidarity. I also found the most incredible support from my family and friends, to the point that it is almost as if they were here by my side volunteering with me. Now Haiti is part of me, and a little part of all of them. This is what I call 'spirals of peace in action'.

José Ignacio Martín Galán is a UN Volunteer fully-funded by the Government of Spain. He is a journalist expert in advocacy, capacity building for peace and reporting, with previous experience in the Israel-Palestinian Territories, Western Sahara, Mexico, Morocco, Greece and Spain, as well as with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations at UN Headquarters in New York. He holds an international PhD in Communication for Peacebuilding, Nonviolence and Peace Education from Jaume I University, with research periods at Columbia University (NY) and Université Sorbonne Nouvelle (Paris).

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Sustainable Development Goal: **SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions**