



UN Volunteer, Romeral Ortiz-Quintilla, Regional Peace and Citizen Security Programme Specialist for UNV's Regional Office in Panama. (UNV, 2017)

Joining forces for youth, peace, disarmament in Latin America and the Caribbean

I started my journey as a Regional Peace and Citizen Security Programme Specialist at UNV Regional Office in Panama in July 2015. My responsibilities included project development and partnership building on topics related to peace and volunteerism as part of the UNV 2014-2017 Strategic Framework. Since I arrived at the office, I started contacting potential partners primarily within the UN system to explore avenues for collaboration in programming for peacebuilding and promotion of peace with a focus on civic participation and

volunteerism.

In the process of finding a right programming partner, I was able to get in touch with [UNLIREC- the Regional Center for Peace, Disarmament and Development for Latin America and the Caribbean](#), part of the [UN Office for Disarmament Affairs](#). UNV was investing in programming under its five Global Programmes, and together with UNLIREC, we assessed the possibility of submitting a proposal that would align with our respective mandates under the UNV Global Peacebuilding Programme.

This joint UNV-UNLIREC project developed a great partnership in achieving the process of peace and disarmament through youth volunteerism in the region. UNLIREC’s mandate for disarmament has a solid reputation and expertise in the area, and UNV contributes to peace and development through volunteerism, which is a key instrument to empower youth as active agents for positive change. Therefore, with the support at a global level, UNV and UNLIREC collaborated to develop a regional initiative for Colombia, Honduras, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago: “Youth Volunteerism for Peacebuilding and Disarmament: Youth Measuring Community Security through Participatory Indicators.”

“ My volunteering story is one of life, work, commitment, dedication, and friendship that awaits an international UN Volunteer working for peace.

The main objective of this project was to promote youth engagement and volunteerism as tools to ensure the relevance of SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, at the community level in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The project was officially launched with two comprehensive trainings in Peru and Trinidad and Tobago to develop the competences of UN Youth National Volunteers who were responsible for the implementation of the initiative in their countries. The project has three main phases: (1) UN Youth Volunteers strengthen their understanding on SDG 16, youth, peace, security and volunteerism and develop their competencies to guide young community volunteers; (2) young community volunteers develop participatory indicators based on their perception and experiences to measure security in the community context; and (3) present those indicators to relevant stakeholders.

The UN Youth National Volunteer focal points in the mentioned countries are currently in the process of helping young community volunteers with capacity and skill development on peace, security, disarmament and volunteerism which allow young community volunteers to propose indicators to measure violence and security in their communities through a participative process.

Upon ending my assignment as an UN Volunteer, I feel proud to leave this regional initiative

as a legacy. Through coordinating this project, I found that when engagement, work, and passion come together, it creates great synergy; project partners become friends, youth's concern to achieve peace transforms into motivation and passion, and, at last, my journey in Panama with UNV confirmed my belief that volunteerism is inspiration in action.



Latin America and the Caribbean

• Panama • peace • youth

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions](#)