A Live2Luv volunteer equips youth with the knowledge, skills and competencies to protect themselves from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections through a school-based event.

Supporting Nepali youth as they take sexual and reproductive health rights into their own hands

Some 103 UN Volunteers served with UNAIDS in 38 countries over the past 10 years. Supporting the mandate of UNAIDS, they have been working towards stopping new HIV infections, ensuring that everyone living with HIV has access to treatment, protecting and promoting human rights and producing data for decision-making.

Live2Luv in Nepal was launched in Kathmandu on the eve of World Aids Day in November 2017. Focused on youth aged 15-30, the Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram-based movement is harnessing young celebrities, entrepreneurs, teachers and other influencers to advocate for access to youth-competent sexual and reproductive health services, while engaging with young people to raise awareness of sexual and reproductive health rights.

International UN Volunteer Tobias Volz (Germany) recently joined the UNAIDS Country Office for Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. In cooperation with UN Volunteers serving with UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA and the Resident Coordinator’s Office, Tobias developed, implemented and led Live2Luv in Nepal for four months. He continues to provide technical assistance to the movement, in addition to serving as the Youth and Gender Focal Point of UNAIDS in Nepal, among his other responsibilities.
Live2Luv in Nepal strives to achieve an environment where Nepali youth can openly ask questions about sex, sexuality, contraception and get the right answers. Because adolescents need access to age appropriate comprehensive sexuality education, in this youth-led movement, young teachers will educate and inspire others to provide comprehensive sexuality education. --UN Volunteer Tobias Volz

UN Volunteer Tobias Volz (Germany, second from left) and other volunteers serving with the youth-led social media initiative, ‘Live2Luv in Nepal’. (UNV, 2017)

The HIV epidemic in Nepal is largely driven by sexual transmission, accounting for more than 85 per cent of new HIV infections, according to the National HIV Strategic Plan 2016-2021. Populations affected by HIV/AIDS are often the most marginalized and are frequently denied the ability to exercise their basic right to health. The right to health is the right of everyone, including people living with and affected by HIV, to the prevention and treatment of ill health, the ability to make decisions about one’s own health and to be treated with respect and dignity and without discrimination.
As young people begin to form and explore their own identities, they can be at increased risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Combined with societal taboos and a lack of age appropriate sexual and reproductive health services youth are often vulnerable and disengaged from safe sexual and reproductive health practices.

Live2Luv in Nepal is motivated to facilitate the removal of obstacles young people face in accessing and exploring their sexual health and reproductive rights. Entirely volunteer-led, Live2Luv in Nepal aims to build capacity of the youth involved. Over time, the movement will contribute to demand for age appropriate sexual and reproductive health services and put pressure on health providers and policy makers to provide them. It also provides a platform for vulnerable and marginalized young people to share their stories and claim their right to health.

I am very proud of the momentum Live2Luv in Nepal is building, and I find the fact the movement is purely led by youth volunteers captivating. Through the support of UNAIDS, other UN partners and volunteers, the movement will continue to build and reach even more marginalized and vulnerable youth.

Recognizing that encouraging young people to access and remain engaged with sexual and reproductive health and other adolescent health services is key. The Live2Luv movement supports Nepal in its commitment to the UNAIDS global goal of 90 per cent of young people having the knowledge, skills and competencies to protect themselves from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and having access to youth-competent sexual and reproductive health services and age appropriate comprehensive sexuality education by 2020. #HealthforAll #World Health Day

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