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Ghassan Alsanabani, UN Volunteer Information Mgt. Officer, UNDP

National UN Volunteer contributes to war recovery efforts in Yemen

Millions of Yemenis are affected by a terrible armed conflict, an impending famine and one of the world's largest cholera outbreaks in recent history. In May 2018, over 7.5 million people were receiving emergency food assistance — more than twice the number of people reached over a year ago.

"Despite the tremendous scale of humanitarian needs, the war in Yemen remains a neglected crisis," says Jason Pronyk, UNV Regional Manager for Arab States, Europe and CIS. "That's why UNV is doubling its efforts to increase the number of national and international UN volunteers deployed in the country," he explains.

One of them is Ghassan Alsanabani, a Yemeni UN Volunteer serving with UNDP under the Early Recovery Cluster. This is a new approach that is trying to move beyond short-term, supply-driven response efforts towards demand-driven outcomes that reduce need and vulnerability in the long term.
"I will never forget the moment when I learned I was accepted to be a UN Volunteer," Ghassan recalls. "It was one of the happiest days of my life. Thus far, I am really enjoying my work as an Information Management Officer and am proud to help my people," he explains.

My work on a daily basis consists of identifying gaps in the humanitarian response to the crisis in Yemen, mapping intervention areas, ensuring the quality of collected data. The aim is encouraging public/private partners to improve their response to the war – Ghassan Alsanabani, UN Volunteer with UNDP, Yemen.

"One of the most moving moments of my volunteer experience was when I visited the Centre for Children with Special Needs in Amran Governorate," he recalls. The Centre had to suspend its services because of the war, meaning that 200 children were left without any assistance for 18 months.

Once UNDP assisted a local cement plant to resume its production activities, it encouraged the management to contribute to humanitarian assistance in the governorate. The management was responsive. The plant made several donations to cover the monthly expenses of the Center, that could resume its activities.

When I visited the Center with my supervisor, I met a seven-year-old girl who wasn't able to stand up alone. After several physiotherapy sessions, she managed to take her first steps and she shook my hand. I saw true joy in her smile. This was a reward that still keeps my motivation alive”– Ghassan Alsanabani, UNV with UNDP, Yemen.

"My work with the UNDP," Ghassan concludes, "made me realize that people saw me as a local representative of the UN in my community. We need to do whatever we can to alleviate the suffering of thousands of Yemeni families, and volunteer mobilization can be extremely impactful."
Arab States

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Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 3: Good health and well-being, SDG 10: Reduced inequalities, SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals