Big data and blockchain: using innovation to tackle Moldova’s development challenges

As an international UN Youth Volunteer fully funded by the Czech Republic, Tereza dedicated most of her time at MiLab to designing technology-based solutions to address development challenges in the country.

Her work involved projects such as digital education for Moldovan children, using behavioral science to reduce plastic and energy consumption, utilizing Big Data for urban development, and introducing blockchain-based solar power solutions for public institutions.

An essential part of Tereza’s work was partnering with the private sector, which she pursued with great conviction.

“It was great to see that the way the UN operates has increasingly been shifting towards collaboration with...
the private sector, as these actors not only have the resources, but also the know-how. The ideal way to drive development efforts is in tandem with private sector partners, who know the market and have the latest innovations at hand. --Tereza Sacha, UN Youth Volunteer with UNDP, Moldova

With a Master of Science degree in Management and skills in technology, public and private sector, as well as general entrepreneurship, Tereza wanted to put her knowledge and expertise to good use through volunteer work in an emerging economy. She decided to join the United Nations as a UN Volunteer, as she believed this would help her make a greater impact.

Tereza Sacha engages with colleagues during a team-building activity. ©UNDP/Moldova, 2019

On a professional level, I feel like I have made most
out of my UNV experience, as I was really able to add value to the Innovation Lab’s work, by combining my technical knowledge with business development skills. UNV does a great job of matching the candidates’ profiles with the roles and skills that are in demand.

For Tereza, who served on an assignment fully-funded by the government of her country, being a UN Volunteer in a foreign country came with a big set of benefits as well. "To work and travel in a foreign country is always a challenge, no doubt, yet I would need several sheets of paper to list all the rewarding aspects of such an experience," Tereza shares. "It all boils down to putting yourself outside your comfort zone – that is when you grow the most."

Summing up her UN Volunteer experience, Tereza says:

A lot of what you do as a UN Volunteer is up to you. As in all aspects of our lives, it is up to us to design the experience. I made the most out of my UNV placement by being proactive and saying what I love doing and which projects most interested me. There is no risk involved in asking, or better offering your particular skillset to different projects if you spot the opportunity.

Moreover, the time Tereza spent as a UN Volunteer made her more humble and grateful for the opportunities she has in life. The chance to explore a new region and discover the Moldovan culture was particularly rewarding to her. "I can recall a number of heart-warming experiences while visiting Moldovan rural villages, where I found no lack of authenticity, generosity and kindness," Tereza shares.
Following her UN Volunteer assignment, Tereza moved on to become the Founding Director of an EdTech start-up.

---

Europe and the CIS

- UNDP • innovation for development • Czech Republic • full funding programme

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure, SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals