Leena Saarinen (Finland, far left) serves as a UN Youth Volunteer Support Officer with the Durable Solutions Programme of the International Organization for Migration in Somalia. Here, she engages with women, youth and partners in Baidoa, south-west Somalia.

Volunteer voices of inclusion from IOM Somalia

Serving with the IOM Durable Solutions Programme, Leena recognizes the opportunity to consult people with various backgrounds as a real asset in her daily activities as a UN Volunteer. She sees the diversity of their ideas and opinions as a rich resource to build cohesion and sustainable solutions.

Volunteerism strengthens civic engagement, social inclusion, solidarity and ownership. It also builds capacities, ownership and connections between local communities and national authorities for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

"A great part of the success of this durable solutions and stabilization project is local (re)integration and inclusion in the host communities, which is the result of inclusive and participatory practice in the design and implementation of the project," Leena says.

Inclusiveness is very important in UN Volunteer assignments, simply because most of the tasks involve integration and prioritizing community cohesion activities. --Daniel Norfolk, Programme Manager of the IOM Recovery & Durable Solutions Unit, Somalia
Daniel Norfolk, Programme Manager of IOM Recovery & Durable Solutions Unit, is Leena’s supervisor. He shares, "Leena has been increasingly engaged in leading the communications component of the RDS unit, which includes drafting terms of reference for third party monitoring, designing donor briefs, and consolidating inputs from partners to generate quality reporting."

"My work concentrates on enhancing environment for durable solutions through access to basic services, as well as social cohesion/reconciliation processes for internally displaced persons and returning refugees in their host communities in Somalia. --UN Youth Volunteer Leena Saarinen with IOM, Somalia

Leena has demonstrably taken the lead in several communications' initiatives for the durable solutions projects, which include monitoring and reporting on the Department for International Development (DFID) consortium.

Her initiative to learn Geographic Information Systems mapping techniques has enabled the unit to visualize interventions for better day-to-day work progress.

Sub-Saharan Africa

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Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 10: Reduced inequalities, SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals