Shamimu Siraji, national UN Volunteer IT Associate, speaks after receiving her Volunteer of the Year Award at the East and Southern Africa Volunteer Awards Festival, held on 5 December 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya.

UN Volunteer enhances productivity through optimized IT services in Tanzania

Shamimu Siraji’s passion is enhancing the role of information technology in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). During 2019 International Volunteer Day celebrations, Shamimu was honoured for her commitment as a UN Volunteer Information Technology Associate, serving with the UN Sub-office for Zanzibar, Tanzania, receiving the "Volunteer of the Year Award". Shamimu shares her perspective.

I became a UN Volunteer because I want to offer my skills to make the world a better place. This experience has not only been a platform to gain professional experience, meet and work with people from different cultures or improve my communication and social skills. It has also changed my life.

As an IT Associate, I serve all 10 UN entities currently working in Zanzibar. It is an important role because information technology is essential in all stages of project implementation and for achieving the SDGs. Therefore, I take care of internet connectivity, proper working conditions of the laptops/computers
and the provision of training, so that the UN entities can deliver more of their work digitally and reduce dependence on paper and manual work.

“Technology is not a silver bullet, but it holds the incredible potential to transform sectors rapidly and globally, increase the productivity of systems while lowering emissions and waste, enable us to monitor and manage the earth’s resources at a speed and scale we couldn’t have dreamt of before, collect and harness vast amounts of data, and make breakthrough advances in areas like health care, agriculture, energy, education and mobility. -- Shamimu Siraji, UN Volunteer IT Associate

Since joining the UN in Zanzibar, I have ensured timely response to user needs and questions regarding network access, trouble shooting and monitoring of network problems. Moreover, I enabled users to migrate from Microsoft Office 2013 to Microsoft Office 365.

I reintroduced preventive maintenance measures to all UN working equipment, with the purpose of increasing performance and speed through disk fragmentation and disk clean up. I also facilitated the proper working conditions of the Rapiscan X-ray machine at the UN Office in Zanzibar.

In 2019, I was fortunate to participate in three big events. The first was the commemoration of International Youth Day, held on 12 August, where UN Volunteers in Zanzibar organized dialogue among secondary school youth on "Transforming Education from the Information Technology point of view".

The second was the commemoration of the International Day of Peace. On this occasion, the UN Volunteers in Zanzibar, in collaboration with the local community, planted a total of 500 mangrove trees in Unguja Ukuu.

Lastly, during the 2019 IVD celebrations in Nairobi, Kenya, I received the "Volunteer of the Year Award" among. I am honoured to be one of more than 50 volunteers from across the region.
"This award has become my motivation to uphold the spirit and attitude of volunteerism, the readiness in my working environment and outside. It has empowered me to be a positive force for change, by recognizing that each of us can make a difference. -- Shamimu Siraji

Sub-Saharan Africa

• UNDP • gender • STEM • Information and Communications Technology

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 4: Quality education, SDG 5: Gender equality, SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals