



ON THE FRONTLINES OF THE EBOLA RESPONSE IN WEST AFRICA

In 2014, UN Volunteers were on the frontlines of the Ebola response in **Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia**. UN Volunteers supported awareness raising, prevention measures, tracing the ties of Ebola patients, support coordination and food distribution. At the close of 2014, there were 23 UN Volunteers in Sierra Leone, 16 in Liberia, nine in Guinea and 10 in Ghana, all working for the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), which has been coordinating the UN response.

UNV established a field unit in Accra to help recruit, train and manage volunteers specializing in field crisis management. In Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, UNV is supporting UN entities in community mobilization and sensitization by engaging networks of local volunteers

from youth groups and non-governmental organizations. UN Volunteers were integral to the WFP efforts in Sierra Leone to scale up its operation to reach more than 600,000 Ebola-affected people.

In September 2014, UNV initiated an Ebola Special Recruitment Campaign to enable rapid mobilization and deployment of medical and logistical personnel. The roles of these volunteers range from awareness raising on preventative and disease control measures, to water and sanitation hygiene training, distribution of food and essentials such as soap and chlorine, social mobilization, nutrition, logistics and midwifery.

Mohammad Sharaz (Pakistan), UN Volunteer Information Management Officer with the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response, discusses the importance of continuing to observe Ebola preventive measures with Ebola survivors and people affected by Ebola in the rural village of Kambia district, Sierra Leone. (Michael Mondeh, 2015)



As of May 2015, 3,922 candidates have expressed interest in being part of the UN response to Ebola as UN Volunteers. These candidates include around 2000 medical professionals, 550 crisis management specialists, 250 community development experts, and 250 logistics specialists. As of late January 2015, 55 volunteers had been deployed and 45 candidates had been selected and were under deployment.

Youth volunteers also played an invaluable role in the fight against Ebola. In Guinea, UN Volunteers partnered with youth organizations in carrying out sensitization campaigns in communities around the country about Ebola prevention. The youth demonstrated proper hand-washing techniques and how to avoid contact with possible Ebola patients, while distributing soap and chlorine. They also offered guidance on steps to take if someone was suspected of exhibiting Ebola symptoms.

Innovation is central to UNV's work. Hundreds of UN Online Volunteers supported the Ebola outbreak response in West African countries through geo-mapping; over 300 UN Online Volunteers were mobilized by the US State Department's MapGive campaign. In less than five days in August 2014, UN Online Volunteers produced or updated maps of relevant areas in Sierra Leone and Liberia to facilitate the work of humanitarian responders. According to the MapGive website, 95 per cent of the Joru/Gola region of eastern Sierra Leone and western Liberia were mapped. UN Online Volunteers also assisted in developing outreach materials to raise community awareness about Ebola.

// What has turned the tide on Ebola is the community engagement, is peer educators, is volunteers, is young people, is the women.

Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator

Khalid Javed Choudry



UN VOLUNTEER INSPIRATION

UN VOLUNTEER WINS VILLAGERS' HEARTS ON EBOLA FRONTLINES

UN Volunteer Khalid Javed Choudry (Pakistan) was a Field Crisis Manager with UNMEER in the Kambia district of Sierra Leone. He supervised the construction of quick-impact projects to help local communities fight Ebola, including toilets for quarantined homes. He also helped secure fuel for a generator that pumped treated water into a reservoir for use in communities and Ebola treatment centres, and helped the community obtain funds for Ebola survivors to raise awareness and produce radio programmes in local languages.

Previously, Khalid had been involved in efforts to eradicate polio in Pakistan, so when the Ebola crisis struck, he was aware of the behavioural change necessary to fight the disease. Despite the challenges of working in a crisis situation, Khalid connected emotionally with the villagers. "I look at them, particularly the families that have lost loved ones due to Ebola, and find in them the energy to work even harder. I am hoping these people can return to a normal life very soon."

"Khalid is a good man, we love him. He is a catalyst. He pushes us to do our jobs. He has adapted himself to the culture of our people. He feels our pain, and we like his style." Mohamed Kamara of United for the Protection of Human Rights, UNMEER's implementing partner in Kambia, Sierra Leone.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO TYPHOON HAIYAN IN THE PHILIPPINES

A category five typhoon, Typhoon Haiyan (locally known as Yolanda) killed 6,000 people, displaced four million, and destroyed community infrastructure in the **Philippines**. UN Volunteers worked with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Manila at the forefront of the recovery response. UNV complemented the urgent emergency relief needs of UNDP and the UN Country Team by ensuring the rapid deployment of UN Volunteers. UN entities were able to draw upon UNV's vast database of technical experts for rapid deployments, including detail assignments from UN Volunteers serving in the region or elsewhere.

As part of UNDP support to *Typhoon Haiyan recovery and resilience in the Visayas* region, UNV mobilized

20 UN Volunteers: one international UN Volunteer who specialized in livelihoods and small- to medium-size enterprises, and 19 national UN Volunteers who supported the UNDP cash-for-work programme as field monitors. At the end of the emergency phase, these individuals shifted their focus towards disaster risk reduction, livelihood development and waste management.

As part of the Recovery and Livelihoods Phase of the response, UN Volunteers supported UNDP implementation of a food stall/livelihood project at Barangay 88. This pilot project served 50 beneficiaries who received food carts and capital funding in the amount of PHP 4,000. Constructed from coconut lumber, the carts were made by workers through the cash-for-work programme.

// I could see, and supported through volunteering, the achievement and success of the projects facilitated by UNDP and other non-governmental organizations in helping people by providing them with an immediate livelihood. This had a big impact on the beneficiaries, giving them back some of the assets and livelihood that they had lost through the typhoon.

Alma de la Cruz, National UN Volunteer (the Philippines), Typhoon Haiyan survivor



National UN Volunteer Field Monitor Catalino Benitez Jr. monitors the coconut lumber production in sawmill sites operated by a local cooperative. He serves with UNDP in the Philippines, assisting farmers affected by Typhoon Haiyan to regain their livelihoods and use the lumber as shelter materials for reconstruction. (UNDP, 2014)

National UN Volunteers were also involved in implementing the **Direct Employment Generation Project**. This pilot project, a partnership with the Leyte Chamber of Commerce and participating enterprises, allowed unemployed informal sector workers affected by the typhoon to gain technical certification, as well as on-the-job training and employment with local private sector firms. Participants were given the necessary basic tools and a UNDP stipend, and received a national certificate upon successful completion.

Environmental restoration was another priority following the typhoon. The typhoon uprooted crops, which were gathered to serve as construction materials for shelter reconstruction rather than go to waste. UNDP deployed seven national UN Volunteers to implement a coconut lumber project in which UN Volunteers assisted farmers in collecting and transporting fallen plants or trees to lumber processing centres and finally distributing the lumber for sale on the open market. With their fields cleared of debris, farmers were able to replant and regain their livelihood.

National UN Volunteers proved invaluable in monitoring and documenting this project, as well as coordinating better activity flows. Furthermore, UN Online Volunteers supported UNOCHA by geo-tagging thousands of Twitter messages and images of the areas affected by the typhoon to map the urgent needs of the population.



Askal Tilahun

UN VOLUNTEER INSPIRATION

SUPPORTING WOMEN AT THE DZALEKA REFUGEE CAMP

UN Volunteer Associate Community Services Officer Askal Tilahun (Ethiopia) serves with UNHCR **Malawi** on a multifunctional team assessing the general social conditions of refugees and their needs for social services at the Dzaleka refugee camp. Among other responsibilities, Askal has been helping women at the camp find markets where they can sell their crafts. Working together, the women started the UMOJA Crafts group to earn extra money to support their families. Not only does Askal motivate these women in running their business and providing forums for product and training discussions, she also collects their products to showcase and sell at local UN functions. The craft group, which has grown to more than 50 women, has helped participants develop the skills needed to be financially independent.

“Volunteering at a refugee camp has helped me to grow on both a professional and personal level. We visit different zones of the camp each week and every day there is a different challenge. The stories of women and children of persecution, survival and building a new life are always inspiring. It takes courage and resilience to build a new life in exile. It’s always priceless to restore a smile on a child’s face and be part of the positive changes in their life.”



PROTECTING CIVILIANS IN SOUTH SUDAN

On 15 December 2013, conflict broke out in **South Sudan**, beginning in Juba and rapidly spreading to other states. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) opened its gates to civilians, offering refuge from the fighting. Civilian and national personnel were relocated from the worst-affected states: Central Equatoria, Upper Nile, Jonglei and Unity. A core group of personnel with the critical skills needed to respond to the ever-evolving situation and to manage the UN facilities remained in the conflict locations. UN Volunteers teamed up and stepped in to assist with setting up and organizing Protection of Civilian sites.

Before Protection of Civilian areas were designated by humanitarian actors, internally displaced peoples sought protection in the living and working compounds of UNMISS personnel. In Juba, engineers were tasked with setting up tents to shelter the displaced. Due to the lack of manpower, Building Maintenance Unit Assistant Meaway Barley (Liberia) was required to train volunteers from various sections, including the Communications and

Information Technology Section. Similarly, in Malakal, Recovery, Reintegration and Peace Building Officer Ronald Mayanja (Uganda), Associate Officer Hodhan Ismail (Kenya) and Child Protection Officer Margaret Aleper (Uganda) worked together to organize communities and to assist with the establishment of the Protection of Civilian area. The demand for tents was so intense that they were occupied even prior to completion.

South Sudan represents a unique combination of UN Volunteers supporting UN peacekeeping as well as UN agency development interventions. Throughout the country, UN Volunteers are serving with UNMISS and other UN entities. There are a total of 400 UN Volunteers with UNMISS and an additional 104 UN Volunteers associated with other UN agencies on the ground. In Malakal, for example, there are 32 UN Volunteers with UNMISS and two with UNFPA.

Access to health care, including reproductive health services, is challenging in complex emergency

// Since the beginning of the 2014 crisis in Unity State, the UN Volunteers on the ground have performed important tasks, usually going beyond their call of duty to ensure the protection and well-being of the thousands of internally displaced people who took refuge inside UNMISS premises. They participated in body searches, food distribution, grave digging, counseling and advising new arrivals, and organizing peace dialogues between the different communities in the camps. The UN Volunteers in Bentiu, working long hours in very challenging conditions, showed the true spirit of volunteerism and commitment to the people of South Sudan. The contribution of UNVs to the daily work here is enormous and their support is vital to our operations.

Mary Cummins, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and State Coordinator, UNMISS State Office, Bentiu, Unity State, South Sudan

settings, complicating development efforts. Therefore, strengthening midwifery services was highlighted as a priority in Malakal. To cater to women and children's health, a Midwifery and Sexual Reproductive Health Services unit was established by UNFPA, International Medical Corps (IMC) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) clinics. The goal was to ensure increased access to quality midwifery services and care for pregnant women in humanitarian Protection of Civilian settings.

The two UN Volunteers associated with UNFPA reintroduced midwifery and sexual reproductive health services and delivery at the Malakal Teaching Hospital, which were halted during the crisis. Through the project, UN Volunteers provided parenting and health education for expecting women, supervised and assisted mothers in childbirth, supported and advised on daily care of newborns, and provided counselling on family planning options.

The results of these UN Volunteer contributions has been impressive. Quarterly records (October-December 2014) indicate that the UN Volunteers provided quality antenatal care for a total of 3,581 internally displaced women at the IOM clinic, IMC clinic and the Malakal Teaching Hospital. They also provided quality neonatal care for 63 babies at the IOM clinic and 335 at the IMC clinic. In the labour and delivery units, 65 women at the IOM clinic and 337 at the IMC clinic had safe vaginal deliveries, and 13 caesarean sections were performed at the level-2 IMC clinic. UN Volunteer Midwives serving with UNFPA mentored 26 health workers on reproductive health, including six traditional birth attendants at the Malakal Teaching Hospital.



Katia Cristina Da Silva

UN VOLUNTEER INSPIRATION

REVEALING THE TRUE SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM
AND COMMITMENT TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH
SUDAN

Katia Cristina Da Silva (Portugal) has served as a UN Volunteer on three assignments. In April 2013, she joined UNMISS as a UN Volunteer Civil Affairs Officer. Since then, Katia has worked in conflict prevention, mitigation and resolution. Organizing peace conferences and reconciliation meetings are part of her day-to-day job. She also trained her counterparts in conflict prevention and resolution techniques, and designed an early warning/early response programme in local communities.

"2014 in South Sudan showed me the real spirit and commitment of the Volunteers and the strong ability to cope with hard situations never losing the will to do more and more regardless the conditions and the situation."

UNFPA South Sudan supports human capacity building in the health sector. UNV Olive Makuwira, midwife tutor from Malawi, with a newborn baby at the reproductive health clinic at the Protection of Civilians site 1 in Juba where currently 15,000 internally displaced persons live. (Christina Feldt, 2014)





RAISING AWARENESS OF SPECIAL NEEDS IN INDIA

In Churachandpur, **India**, a remote tribal area, few services are available for persons with disabilities. However, in 2006, members of the local community took the lead in establishing a centre for children with special needs, with financial support from UNDP. In 2014, four national UN Youth Volunteer specialists provided rehabilitation and disability support services to these children under the **Malsawm Initiative**.

Serving at the Centre for Community Initiatives, UN Youth Volunteer Special Educator Dipak Prasad, UN Youth Volunteer School Administrator Kaylie Lalrokim, UN Youth Volunteer Physiotherapist Shakeeb Ahmed

Khan and UN Youth Volunteer Speech Therapist Margaret Hmangte help the local community operate the school. Thanks to the speech and language therapy UN Volunteers provided, children with special needs improved enough in their language skills to prepare for entry into mainstream schools. The value and success of this initiative is evident by an almost 100 per cent increase in the special needs school enrolment, which jumped from 13 students to 25. The UN Volunteers continue to work closely with local organizations, teachers, volunteers and public and government officials to raise awareness of the unique needs of the children. By training teachers and parents, they are building local

National UN Youth Volunteer Speech Therapist Margaret Hmangte provides therapy to Paumuanlian, a 10-year old child with a speech impairment. Margaret is one of four national UN Youth Volunteers providing services to children with special needs as part of the Malsawm Initiative in Churachandpur district, a remote tribal area of India. (Ruhani Kaur/UNDP, 2014)



capacity to support these children and others who might require services in the future.

The UN Volunteers trained 40 parents, nine Malsawm Initiative teachers and 10 teachers from a private school on physiotherapy, speech therapy, special education and inclusive education. The special needs children suffer from conditions such as cerebral palsy, severe autism and hydrocephalus. Daily activities such as tactile stimulation, balancing and coordination training and phonation duration exercises have facilitated a more seamless transition as the children integrate into mainstream classrooms. To achieve this transition, UN Volunteers and school representatives collaborated with local government officials and mainstream school officials about removing stigmas and enabling children with disabilities to successfully integrate.

Furthermore, UN Volunteers supported the preparation of the school's grant-in-aid application to the Government of India, which was positively reviewed by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

National UN Volunteers have organized regular events to raise awareness and remove the stigma associated with disabilities. Aside from town rallies, public panel discussions and sports events, UNV/UNDP India also produced a short film entitled 'Oasis of Ability' on the work of the UN Volunteers, which was showcased at various regional and national events. By working closely with the community and family members on the importance of inclusive education, the national UN Volunteer specialists helped the community overcome prejudices and laid the groundwork for peace, development and a united society.

// At a personal level, volunteerism has helped me realize the importance of team work in developmental issues, and made me realize disability is a human rights issue. We have solidarity for our fellow citizens in faraway places, which may act as a building block for promoting peace and development and I believe this spirit of volunteerism will help to unite society with their differences intact. Above all volunteerism has made me a humble and better human being!

Shakeeb Ahmed Khan, National UN Youth Volunteer Physiotherapist, India

Eliane Luthi



UN VOLUNTEER INSPIRATION

ENHANCING CHILD PARTICIPATION IN BURUNDI

Eliane Luthi (Switzerland) served as a UN Volunteer Communications Specialist with UNICEF in Burundi. She is involved in the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) child journalist programme, where she helps to facilitate the participation and expression of Burundi children in peace and development processes such as the World We Want consultations, Children's Forum of Hope, and the U-report mobile communication platform. Launched in January 2014, U-report is a free SMS-based mobile service to facilitate the involvement of children in their communities. It gives a voice to children who might not have supportive circumstances or accessible avenues for being heard. Initially, a committee of local civil society representatives and government members review topics for children throughout the country to consider and discuss. Through reviewing children's feedback and poll results, stakeholders better understand the realities of life countrywide and the concerns of the children and youth in Burundi.

"All young people can become U-reporters. The messages from different youth are subsequently analyzed by UNICEF's project team, who visualize and share the results with decision makers responsible for essential public services, thus enabling young people to play a direct role in improving conditions in their communities."



BUILDING CAPACITY FOR VOLUNTEERISM THROUGH SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Promoting volunteerism around the world is central to UNV's mandate. A critical part of this effort is engaging with partners to strengthen the national and regional systems needed to ensure an environment where volunteering can flourish. These systems are part of the supportive infrastructure required to connect volunteers with communities in ways that benefit all. UNV's role in these initiatives and its added value is its convening power, legitimacy and expertise.

In 2014, UNV commissioned a global evaluation of its contribution to supportive volunteer infrastructures. The evaluation covered 19 countries and two regional programmes through 220 interviews, 23 focus groups, 281 document reviews and eight country missions to **Peru, Nicaragua, Nepal, Viet Nam, Cabo Verde, Liberia, Togo and Burkina Faso**. A total of 22 projects were reviewed.

In the countries assessed, UNV activities have contributed to volunteer-enabling legislation or policy; volunteer mobilization (recruitment and deployment); capacity building for effective volunteerism; and the promotion, recognition and public discussion of volunteerism.

// One of UNV's greatest achievements is its consistency in ensuring objectives of volunteer infrastructure projects are aligned with priorities and policies of host nations, local stakeholders and partners. For instance, volunteer schemes provide youth with opportunities for participation in the social and economic development of their countries, while they gain skills for future employment. In post-conflict countries, volunteer programmes were designed to promote peace and social cohesion.

UNV's Experience in Strengthening Volunteer Infrastructure, Global Evaluation Report, 2014

The evaluation identified four broad spheres in which UNV has successfully supported volunteer infrastructure in partner countries: assisting national volunteer schemes, building national networks of volunteers, strengthening coordinating bodies, and building the capacity of volunteers.

UNV's assistance with volunteer schemes is closely aligned with national priorities. In **Burkina Faso**, for example, employment and social engagement among youth is a critical concern: 58 per cent of the population is under 20 years of age and has limited access to formal employment. With UNV support, the *National Volunteer Programme (Programme National de Volontariat au Burkina Faso)* has recruited about 25,000 young volunteers (half of them women) since its inception in 2011. UNV was critical in facilitating a participatory approach involving the central government, local civil society and volunteer organizations and trade unions. It also provided technical assistance and initial funding for the pilot phase and contributed to adoption of a national law on volunteering.

In **Peru**, UNV's support to the *Soy Voluntari@* project demonstrates its approach to building national networks of volunteers. The project works to strengthen the role of volunteerism and raise awareness through regional volunteer networks. UNV joined partners in supporting this initiative, both financially and technically. Currently Soy Voluntari@ networks gather 200 volunteer organizations in five regions across the country – a number that is steadily growing. Given the networks' convening role, expertise, and legitimacy, they have been able to exert significant influence on national policies related to volunteerism.

An important dimension of a country's volunteer infrastructure is its volunteer coordinating bodies. Since 2004, UNV has supported initiatives aimed at creating a favourable policy environment for volunteering in **Cabo Verde** and enhancing the intervention capacity and effectiveness of national volunteer organizations. This led in 2012 to the



National UN Volunteer Financial Management Advisor Daouda Idani (left) provides business advice and guidance to a livestock farmer in Dedougou, Burkina Faso. (Red Circle Films, 2014)

creation of the National Volunteer Corps (Corpo Nacional de Voluntariado), an administratively and financially autonomous public department charged with coordinating volunteer initiatives. Achievements include a high number of volunteers mobilized, including youth at risk, and a sound legal framework, including formal recognition of volunteer work through a 'Volunteer passport'.

Building the capacity of volunteers in a particular sector is another way in which UNV helps strengthen volunteer infrastructure in a country. In **Nepal**, UNV supported the Government-managed National Development Volunteer Service as part of a large UN *Joint Programme Fund for the Local Governance and Community Development Programme*. Despite a modest budgetary contribution (1.7 per cent of the total UN contribution), UNV was viewed as playing a significant role in supporting communities and organizations to participate in local governance processes. UNV supported the National Development Volunteer Service with recruiting, training and deploying 100 volunteers in 48 district development committees and 52 municipalities to assist in programme implementation.

The 2014 global evaluation yielded important lessons that UNV is now working to integrate into its volunteer infrastructure initiatives. For future projects and initiatives, UNV will focus increasingly on sustainability, resource diversification and exit strategies; emphasize realistic project outcomes and corresponding timeframes; and institutionalize standardized monitoring and evaluation. The evaluation indicated room for UNV to build more effective field-level monitoring and evaluation systems, and to enhance the capture and dissemination of lessons learned needed for building an evidence base for advocacy and replicating successes. Building on these findings, UNV developed a UNV Guidance Note on Establishing a Youth Volunteer Scheme and is also currently designing its global programme on volunteer infrastructure.



María Peña

UN VOLUNTEER INSPIRATION

SUPPORTING VOLUNTEER INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE FACE OF NATURAL DISASTERS

In the **Dominican Republic**, the *Resilient Communities: Earthquakes and Tsunamis in Puerto Plata* programme was developed by UNDP, UNV, IOM, and UNESCO. National UN Volunteer María Peña was tasked with coordinating local volunteers for emergency response through a 32-person (including 13 women) volunteer training network. Volunteers from the Puerto Plata Civil Defence, Fire Department, Red Cross and Caritas Diocesan were trained in first aid, search and rescue, incident command systems and natural disaster emergency response. Thanks to mobilization efforts, civil defence volunteers rose from 83 to 136, and firefighters from 73 to 119. María supported an emergency simulation that mobilized 1,200 people and 137 institutional representatives, and held a five-day risk management camp with 50 youth. Over 60 per cent of the district's population was sensitized to emergency responsiveness.

"Initially, coordination of emergency response training was very daunting but what supported me was seeing how dedicated the local volunteers were. They became like family to me and I watched over them like a mother hen! I got to see first-hand how our efforts empowered the local community with emergency response and resilience knowledge. I might just be one ordinary UN Volunteer but I've learnt everyone has a role to play and you never know how wide your positive impact can be."

POSITIONING VOLUNTEERISM IN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The sunset of the Millennium Development Goals, and the dawning of a new international development agenda, present a unique opportunity to position volunteering in the post-2015 era as a mechanism to enhance people's participation in peace and development. Since 2012, integrating volunteerism into discussions around the post-2015 development agenda has been a priority for UNV.

In 2014, UNV focused on supporting the second round of UNDG dialogues on implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. The dialogues were framed around six themes: localizing the post-2015 development agenda, helping to strengthen capacities and build effective institutions, participatory monitoring for accountability, partnerships with civil society, engaging with the private sector, and culture and development. UNV co-led the dialogues on partnerships with civil society and was

strongly engaged in the dialogues on participatory monitoring for accountability. Field Units and Post-2015 International UN Youth Volunteers supported all six dialogues in several countries, contributing to and conducting local, national and global events and workshops to ensure stakeholders' voices were heard, good practices shared and concrete opportunities identified.

Thanks to these efforts, the outcomes of national dialogues included recommendations underlining the added value of volunteerism and positioning the concept as a complementary means of implementing the post-2015 agenda. *Delivering the post-2015 Development Agenda: Opportunities at the National and Local Levels*, the UNDG report on the dialogues, notes that, "to tap into the potential of volunteerism, public awareness also needs to be created about its benefits. Volunteerism can be seen as a cross-cutting means of

// As we seek to build capacities and to help the new agenda to take root, volunteerism can be another powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation. Volunteerism can help to expand and mobilize constituencies, and to engage people in national planning and implementation for sustainable development goals. And volunteer groups can help to localize the new agenda by providing new spaces of interaction between governments and people for concrete and scalable actions

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon in The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet, Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Agenda



In Khartoum, volunteers from the UNV Field Unit in Sudan raised awareness among students at Mamoun Humaida University about volunteerism, development issues and the post-2015 agenda through MY World. Some students were trained to inform and engage their communities in voting for their development priorities. (UNV, 2014)

implementation, producing benefits such as capacity-building, empowerment and social integration.” National dialogue reports from **Cambodia, Colombia, Cameroon, Guatemala** and **Jordan** feature similar strategies to integrate volunteerism. In particular, the final report of the global dialogues on partnerships with civil society encourages governments to foster an enabling environment for multi-stakeholder dialogues. This includes systematically involving volunteer organizations at the national level in aligning policies and strategies for the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2014, UN Volunteers also continued to support MY World – the UN global survey asking people to vote on their development priorities. UN Volunteers capitalized on the opportunity to raise awareness, establish partnerships and promote volunteerism at the national level. Together with their field units, post-2015 UN Volunteers took the survey to remote areas and engaged youth organizations in reflections about ways to address key challenges. In **Bangladesh**, these efforts led to the creation of a Youth Committee that gained regular access to UN officials in the country.

Overall, the efforts of UNV at headquarters and in the field, combined with joint advocacy with volunteer organizations and networks at global and national level, led to a considerable increase of recognition of volunteerism and presence of volunteer groups in the global and national arena in the context of the post-2015 discussions in 2014. This recognition culminated in a statement by the UN Secretary-General in the final synthesis report on all UN-led post-2015 consultation processes since 2012.



Paula Hogrebe

UN VOLUNTEER INSPIRATION

SUPPORTING UN EFFORTS AND PROMOTING VOLUNTEERISM: THAT’S WHAT A UN VOLUNTEER DOES!

Paula Hogrebe (Germany), a UN Youth Volunteer from Germany, served as Volunteering and Post-2015 Officer in the UNV Field Unit in Cameroon. In a country where volunteerism infrastructure is in the process of being set up, Paula raised awareness about the potential of volunteerism among different national groups and sectors. She also supported the UN system in organizing and running the post-2015 dialogues on how to localize the post-2015 agenda in the country. Together with the Field Unit, Paula ensured that a variety of civil society groups, including youth and volunteer-involving organizations, were involved in the dialogues. “I really appreciated the initiative of UNV Cameroon that allowed us to participate in the national post-2015 consultations and to promote volunteerism among all the stakeholders involved in the implementation of the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals,” comments Nelly Diane Alemfack, a volunteer with Cameroonian Youth Volunteers for the Environment.

Paula’s facilitation and catalyst intervention led to two major achievements for the volunteer community in Cameroon: the integration of volunteerism in the Cameroon report on the dialogues and in the National Action Plan for the Localization of the Post-2015 Agenda, and a joint Declaration signed by the Cameroonian network of volunteer-involving organizations and the Government in which they committed to support the implementation of the post-2015 agenda through volunteerism and to establish a conducive environment for volunteer engagement. “My assignment gave me the unique opportunity to contribute to shape a new agenda that will hopefully enable the truly sustainable and inclusive development of our planet. Promoting people’s participation in the development and implementation of the post-2015 agenda has been a very interesting and rewarding experience,” Paula shares.

CELEBRATING VOLUNTEER INSPIRATION IN ACTION

Every year, UN Volunteers join the commemoration of key international days to highlight the contributions of volunteers and applaud hundreds of millions of people who volunteer to make change happen. On International Women's Day in March, UNV saluted those who have led by example making our world a place where all women can fully enjoy equality and human rights. On International Youth Day in August, UN Volunteers vividly illustrated the active engagement of youth in small and large-scale change initiatives. And on International Volunteer Day in December, UNV joined the global volunteering community in celebrating volunteerism in all its facets, paying special tribute to people's participation in making a difference locally, nationally and globally.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The theme for International Women's Day in 2014 was 'Equality for Women is Progress for All'. UNV participated in the global commemoration, reflecting its commitment to women's engagement and empowerment in participatory processes. On 18 March 2014, UNV organized a side event to the 58th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, moderated by its Deputy Executive Coordinator. Panellists came from UN Member States, UN entities and global volunteer organizations. Participants discussed means of ensuring women's participation within the post-2015 development context through enhancing volunteerism, breaking gender stereotypes and supporting a more gender-equitable society.

UN Volunteers marked International Women's Day in the **State of Palestine** by partnering with the Aid and Hope Programme for Cancer Patient Care Association in Gaza to honour 50 women survivors of breast cancer and the association's founder, Eman Shenan. Despite their personal struggles, these survivors volunteered their time to raise awareness about breast cancer, provide psychosocial support to 750 women with cancer, and produce low-cost breast prostheses for free distribution to hospitals and care centres through the Aid and Hope

Programme. The volunteers manufactured 1,350 breast prostheses in over 30 workshops over three years, providing training to 67 women.

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

The theme for International Youth Day in August 2014 was 'Mental Health Matters', drawing attention to mental health challenges among youth. Trauma, gender inequality, poverty, disability, violence and unemployment contribute to youth feeling marginalized from society and can result in mental health issues. Volunteerism can inspire and engage youth by facilitating their participation and channelling their energy to effecting change in their communities.

In **Nepal**, UN Volunteers celebrated International Youth Day at the UN House with a public speaking competition, awards ceremony, presentations and discussions on Nepali youth and mental health. Close to 100 guests attended, including representatives of national and international volunteer-involving organizations. Members of Youth Initiative, a leading youth organization in Nepal, presented a drama performance and provided logistical support during the selection rounds of the public-speaking competition. The panel covered topics such as common mental health issues among Nepali youth and their possible causes, government initiatives to address these issues, and ways to enhance the integration of youth with mental health conditions in Nepali society.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

In 1985, the United Nations designated 5 December as International Volunteer Day to celebrate the power and potential of volunteerism. In 2014, volunteers and volunteer organizations around the world celebrated the day with their grassroots communities, local authorities and UN organizations. It was a day to pay tribute to people's positive contributions at all levels of society in areas such as sustainable development, social cohesion, stronger governance, peace, and inclusive decision-making processes.

On International Volunteer Day 2014, the IMPACT 2030 Declaration – a UNV-brokered collaboration between the UN and the private sector on corporate volunteering – was presented to the UN Secretary-General's Special Advisor on Post-2015 Development Planning at an event organized by UNV in New York. IMPACT 2030 is a global coalition of private sector leaders and other stakeholders aiming to expand and encourage corporate volunteering activities to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, UN Volunteers and staff of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo joined to celebrate International Volunteer Day in Goma. 'Volunteer and put your weapons down!' showcased the potential of young volunteers to advocate for sustainable peace. Some 300 volunteers equipped with spades, brooms and wheelbarrows took to the street, sweeping and cleaning as they went. In addition, volunteers helped plant trees and painted a mural about environmental protection in the yard of a local school to encourage environmentalism in the young. Aimed at promoting youth commitment to peace in the Kivus region, a concert featured local young artists and volunteers raising awareness of their shared culture and identity. More than 200 volunteers from nine associations took part in the International Volunteer Day activities in Goma.

// The volunteer spirit can be indeed enriching. Anyone who goes through this experience comes out of it stronger and richer, with enhanced capacities and a broader vision... I highly recommend people to volunteer and contribute to the empowerment of communities.

Samira Keita (Niger), UN Volunteer Civil Affairs Officer in Man, Côte d'Ivoire

Shahd El-Swerki (left), national UN Volunteer Communications Assistant at UNDP Gaza, State of Palestine, visited the Aid and Hope Programme for Cancer Patient Care Association and joined the women from the centre in sewing breast prosthetics which are distributed for free to female cancer patients. (UNV, 2015)

