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PARTNERS FOR YOUTH:

UNV
SUCCESS
STORIES





*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

UNV is administered by the
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

*Christian Tchalla Bigalalou (Togo),
Physics Teacher, Behanzin High
School in Dalaba, education, Guinée*
Photo: Philippe Pernet/EVP, 2014

FOREWORD

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme has been engaging young people in global peace and sustainable development for nearly 50 years. Recognizing that volunteerism has the potential to bring the energy, enthusiasm and creativity of young people to development processes while at the same time building their skills and experience, UNV has been working with partners around the world to advocate for youth volunteerism, support national and regional volunteering initiatives, and directly mobilize youth volunteers.

Among others, UNV's interventions have included providing technical and financial support to governments developing laws and frameworks for youth volunteerism, supporting the inclusion of youth voices in the Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 processes, and mobilizing thousands of international, national, and online youth volunteers to support the work of UN, civil society and government partners.

In 2014, UNV brought together all of its work on youth under the Global UN Youth Volunteers Programme. The programme scales-up and replicates best practices, and supports new initiatives that best nurture the power and potential of youth while bringing their voices into global peace and development processes. Under the programme, regional UNV projects like *Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future* are already working to empower youth and strengthen their capacities as active participants in development of their countries.

*Richard Dictus
Executive Coordinator
The United Nations Volunteers
(UNV) programme* **Photo:** UNV



One of UNV's strengths is our ability to bridge effective partnerships between governments, youth-led and volunteering organizations and UN entities. These partnerships lead to greater spaces for youth engagement in global peace and sustainable human development at every level.

As you will see in the following pages, UNV has rich experience in this area. Our initiatives span a wide range: the ability to support the creation of West Africa's first law on volunteerism, train and mobilize youth volunteers from Brazil to respond to a devastating tropical storm in El Salvador, or help disabled Uzbek girls to become more self-reliant through handicrafts and knitting. All of these were the result of strong partnerships that called into play a range of complementary skills, resources, and knowledge. UNV and our partners are helping young people to overcome their historic exclusion, instilling a sense of empowerment and agency by engaging them as volunteers for peace and development while at the same time building their personal and professional skills.

Including young volunteers in global peace and sustainable development processes is not only a way to be more inclusive: it also has a revitalising effect. Youth are passionate, energetic, and creative, and they seek innovative solutions to the world's problems. It is our responsibility, as partners for youth, to empower them to do so. As you will see by the inspiring stories in this publication, UNV has begun this journey.



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GOVERNMENT OF
GERMANY AND UNV.**

Youth Volunteer Summer Camp in Jordan
in August 2013. **Photo:** UNV, 2013

BUILDING TRUST BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE, THEIR COMMUNITIES AND GOVERNMENTS IN THE ARAB REGION

Following the momentous political transitions that swept the Arab region in recent years, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme's groundbreaking Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future regional project is building trust between young people, their communities, and governments in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen. The project brings young women and men, governments, the United Nations, and other partners together to share their ideas about youth volunteerism for development in safe, open, equitable forums, many for the first time ever. This lays the groundwork for real, sustainable change and progressive development during a crucial stage in the region's history.

At the time of the Arab Spring popular uprisings, UNV already had a long-established presence in the region, working with governments, civil society, and community partners to advance peace and development through volunteerism. However, in 2011, after the largely youth-led revolutions swept across the region and raised an urgent call for a more equitable and inclusive social, cultural and political system, UNV undertook to develop a programme

to meet the needs of young people in the region—a programme that would be planned and implemented by youth for youth in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen. UNV, which serves as a bridge between the UN system, civil society and governments, was well positioned to bring together diverse stakeholders in an environment where little trust had existed before. According to the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ahmad Alhendawi, this is an important role: "The major role of the United Nations is advocacy for better legislation for youth volunteering and participation in political processes".

The project followed a participatory, bottom-up approach, where consultations were undertaken by UN Volunteers in each of the five countries with a range of stakeholders, including youth, governments, and civil society. Following this, the project was endorsed by the five partner governments. This is critically important, as it indicates government support for the establishment of a safe space for volunteerism to flourish in the region. Samy Al-Majaly, President of the Higher Council for Youth in Jordan,



H.E. Dr Ossama Yassin, Egypt's Minister of State for Youth, signs the 'Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future' project agreement in the presence of UN Resident Coordinator in Egypt Ms Anita Nirody.
Photo: UNV, 2013

highlighted the importance of this initiative during the project's first board meeting in April 2013:

"These different youth projects, especially those regarding volunteerism, are very important to our youth these days. We strongly believe in youth volunteerism as it is the foundation for young people in different fields. Volunteerism helps in developing youth and honing their talents, leading to strengthening their relations on different levels."

Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future aims to empower youth in the Arab region and strengthen their ability to participate meaningfully in socio-economic development through volunteer engagement. It focuses on building the capacity of governments, increasing awareness of the benefits of volunteerism and building the capacity of youth networks and civil society organizations.

In 2013 and 2014, the programme trained officials in the Egyptian Ministry of Youth's Volunteerism Unit in the skills necessary to design and manage equitable and inclusive youth volunteer programmes. The training, which will be rolled out in the other countries beginning in 2014, also examined youth motivations for volunteerism, youth empowerment through volunteerism, the characteristics of good volunteer programmes and volunteer management.

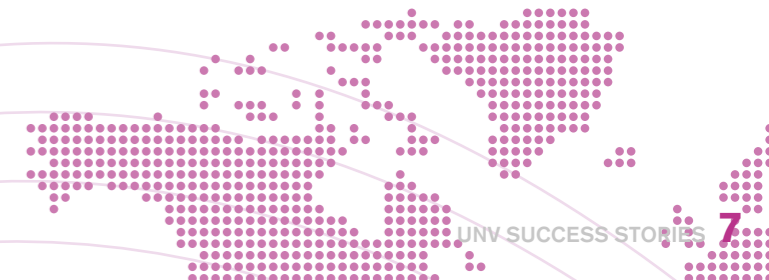
At the training workshops, the barriers to youth volunteerism in Egypt—a lack of laws and regulations, low awareness about youth volunteerism, and inadequate support for marginalized youth through volunteerism—were also explored. The fact that UNV was able to hold a workshop for a government body where the wider environment for youth volunteering was critically examined is an indication of growing trust between the stakeholders. Maha Ahmed Kamel, one of the participants of the workshop, who runs a youth center in Port Said, said:

"The way we are used to organizing volunteer activities is very ad-hoc, but the training has made us much more professional and organized, and enabled us to look at volunteerism from a management perspective."

Poor awareness of the potential of youth volunteerism to support development is a common theme across all five of the project countries. As such, the project conducted a street poll on volunteerism in Jordan, events in Yemen to commemorate International Youth Day, and a "Caravan of Volunteerism" in Tunisia. Despite substantial security risks the caravan travelled across eight governorates of Tunisia to reach out to local youth centers, civil society organizations, universities, schools and municipalities to raise awareness about youth volunteerism. At each stop,

the local youth organized a one-day volunteer activity, such as cleaning green areas or rehabilitating public spaces, inspiring others to join them. Through their work, and the related media coverage, at least 3,000 youth across the country were motivated to participate.

In April 2014 the project organized its first regional youth volunteering forum in Marrakesh, Morocco, bringing together around 100 participants, 45% of whom were young women. Participants included youth, civil society, governments, and UN entities. Given the widespread mistrust and uncertainty that have been pervasive in much of the region between different groups, the forum presented a unique opportunity for young people, especially young women, to speak openly and honestly about their experiences, expectations, and hopes for youth volunteerism in the region. This climate of trust between governments and young people speaks to UNV's unique ability to bridge the gap between the grassroots and policy-making levels. Fares Khiari, a Tunisian participant and journalist, said that:



"The regional forum was a mind-changing experience. It really changed the way I think about volunteerism, about how we need to look to our history and culture when we think about volunteerism, and it will affect how I implement volunteer activities when I come back to Tunisia."

In order to increase the capacity of youth networks and civil society to support youth volunteerism, UNV organized a summer camp for young volunteers in Jordan in August 2013. The camp was held in partnership with the Higher Council on Youth in Jordan, and was attended by 27 young Jordanians from a wide range of volunteer backgrounds, including university students, youth activists and representatives of civil society organizations. Participants were encouraged to implement volunteer activities in their communities based on their experiences during the camp. The camp was successful in giving participants a deeper understanding of the power that they have to bring about positive change, regardless of their nationality, religion, gender, or identity.

According to one summer camp participant, Zaidoon Sahawneh, an electronics engineering student and current president of the local committee of AIESEC in the city of Irbid:

"In the summer camp I had a chance to interact with people from different backgrounds and with different mentalities, which helped me understand that these small differences are needed to create a perfect and collaborative environment in Jordan. The camp helped me understand my role as a young Jordanian and how individuals can have a huge impact and change the current reality of their communities."

The activities that *Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future* has undertaken since its inception in 2011 have all been contributing to the establishment of an open forum across the region that includes young people, governments, civil society and the UN, where all participants feel safe and empowered to share their ideas about how to improve youth volunteerism, and where volunteering initiatives incorporate best practices. The continued support for the project from all stakeholders has made it possible to both scale-up pilot initiatives and launch new initiatives, such as a youth volunteering award.



SUPPORTING THE CREATION OF WEST AFRICA'S FIRST LAW ON VOLUNTEERISM AND PROVIDING EDUCATION TO THE MOST NEEDY

A groundbreaking partnership between the Burkina Faso Ministry of Youth and Employment, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and France Volontaires in 2007 led to the development of the first national law on volunteerism in West Africa, and mobilized more than 13,000 youth volunteers to support national development, including more than a thousand young volunteer teachers who served in classrooms that otherwise would have been closed due to a lack of staff.

For Burkina Faso's large population of young people, social and economic conditions are difficult. Sixty-five percent of the unemployed are aged 24 and under, young people are often excluded from training opportunities, and young people and women are not always adequately involved in political and social decision-making processes.

The *Programme National de Volontariat du Burkina Faso* (PNVB) was developed to establish a mechanism for the promotion and development of national volunteerism in

Burkina Faso. Specifically, it aimed to establish a national volunteer pilot scheme in six regions, in which a first group of volunteers for development would be fielded. By maximizing the engagement of volunteers, especially young men and women in the development of the country, the project aimed to contribute to poverty reduction.

UNV played a critical role as the implementing partner, providing technical support with regards to setting up the volunteer scheme, strengthening the government's capacity to recruit and field volunteers, and ensuring that a monitoring and evaluation system was in place to capture relevant data for statistics, learning and decision-making purposes. An international UN Volunteer led the overall project implementation until early 2009, working side-by-side with the national Director General of the programme, who later took over, supported by a number of national UN Volunteers in a range of monitoring and evaluation, capacity building, and training roles. UNV also assisted with training volunteers, and running public awareness campaigns.

Christine Ouedrago, a volunteer primary school teacher with the Burkina Faso National Volunteer Programme, is one of the increasing number of young Burkinabé who are getting involved in the development of their country. Christine had more than 50 students in her class in the village of Worokuy in the Boucle de Mouhoun region.

Photo: Giacomo Pirozzi/UNV, 2010

THE PROGRAMME NATIONAL DE VOLONTARIAT DU BURKINA FASO WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF BURKINA FASO, UNDP, UNV AND L'ASSOCIATION FRANÇAISE DES VOLONTAIRES DE PROGRÈS (AFVP) NOW RENAMED 'FRANCE VOLONTAIRES'.





In Dedougou, Burkina Faso, Adama Désiré Ky and Raouda Savadogo (centre) are national UN Volunteers with UNDP. Here they meet with a group of women who received training in entrepreneurship as well as microcredit loans, empowering them through greater financial independence.

Photo: Celine Bolton/
UNV, 2014

The project was highly successful in establishing a legal framework for volunteerism in Burkina Faso (Law 031-AN/2007 adopted in November 2007). In fact, it was the first in West Africa to lead to the development of a national law on volunteerism, and it provided a model for other countries such as Togo and Mali to develop their own laws. In Togo, the *Law on Volunteerism* was adopted in February

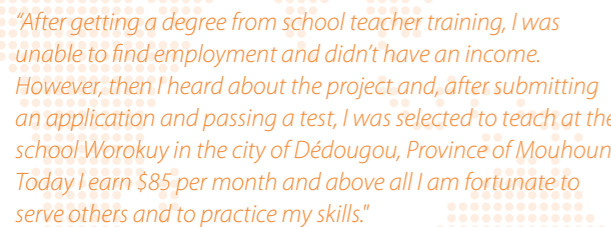
2011 and two laws were adopted in Mali: one on volunteerism in general and another regarding the National Centre for the Promotion of Volunteerism (CNPV). Senegal and Burundi sent teams to visit Burkina Faso to study the project and, based on the PNVB experience, develop their own national volunteer programmes.

The project also achieved its objectives with regards to establishing youth volunteering initiatives in six regions. Critical to this was the designation, by government decree, of the PNVB as the country's first *Groupement Intérêt Public (GIP)*. GIP is a groundbreaking type of public interest group which brings together local authorities, the state, public institutions, workers unions and public or private entities to work towards a single public goal, in this case volunteerism. Importantly, while it gets subsidies from the central government, it has financial autonomy, which means that it can transcend political motivations to act in the public interest. PNVB is represented in eight regions by NGOs at the regional level, recruited in a transparent, consultative process. UNV's extensive experience as a bridge between government, civil society, and the UN system enabled it to provide an important technical advisor role in this process.

Finally, the project mobilized more than 13,000 youth volunteers between 2008 and 2012, 53% of whom were young women. The volunteers were actively involved in the education, health, environment and government sectors. According to PNVB, more than 66% of the volunteers recruited in 2013 were able to get decent paid jobs following their volunteering experience, which is a good indication of the programme's contribution to the improvement of youth employability.

One group of volunteers provided microcredit loans and financial training to young women in rural areas through women's associations, empowering them through greater financial independence and giving them the knowledge to manage their capital. Therese Sankara, who produces a local millet beer called 'dolo', is one of many beneficiaries who managed to increase their income through the initiative. Her microcredit loan of 50,000 FCFA (around US\$96) permitted her to buy and stock a large quantity of millet just after the harvest when the price was several times lower than the rest of the year. Now she can produce much more beer at a lower cost. "Before I earned 750 FCFA in a day... now I can [make as much as] 2,000 FCFA (US\$3.80). It helps me take care of my children's health and schooling", she says.

In 2012, working through PNVB the government was able to supplement a shortage of teachers in remote rural areas. Some 806 youth volunteer teachers were mobilized to provide young people (especially primary level students) with access to education. Thanks to the project, more than 30,000 elementary school students were able to attend classes in classrooms that would have otherwise remained closed. The project, which is continuing to mobilize volunteers, was equally beneficial for the volunteers involved. Many of these were recent graduates unable to find work, like Christine Ouedraogo:



"After getting a degree from school teacher training, I was unable to find employment and didn't have an income. However, then I heard about the project and, after submitting an application and passing a test, I was selected to teach at the school Worokuy in the city of Dédougou, Province of Mouhoun. Today I earn \$85 per month and above all I am fortunate to serve others and to practice my skills."

The programme is also contributing to social inclusion, as indicated in this testimony of a parent of a student at a rehabilitation centre for people who are deaf:

"Since my son has been learning carpentry here, thanks to Wenceslas, their hearing-impaired trainer, I am not worried about his future. Two years ago he was always at home, instead of going to school with his classmates. Now, at 11 years old, he's learning a trade that could be useful to him. I can see that it's already been good for him as he has become less taciturn and much happier. I encourage young people to get involved with volunteering. I can't express enough how good it is for people with no financial resources like us."

Professor Justin Koutaba, former Minister for Youth and Employment, summarises the contribution of the programme to Burkina Faso in these terms:

"Personally I think very highly of the National Volunteer Programme of Burkina Faso. Given the results after the five years of the project phase, I think it's a useful programme—above all for the volunteers themselves. They have the opportunity to expand their talents and capabilities, as well as the opportunity to exercise good citizenship by improving their employability. Secondly, it is useful for public administration, the urban and rural municipalities, the associations and NGOs, because the national volunteers are a human resource that helps overcome the lack of staff and expertise. The support of PNVB for education, for example, is clear, without which many children, particularly in the remote areas, would never have been able to get to school!"

In addition to fielding volunteers within the programme, PNVB also promoted other forms of volunteerism and organized post-volunteer training to prepare the former volunteers for an entry test in the public administration. By enabling young people to become national volunteers, the programme put their skills at the service of the community and helped them to develop a good sense of civic identity while gaining professional experience and increasing their employment prospects.





Nwafor Oluchi Blessing Makeni
(Nigeria), Nurse in the emergency unit,
Makeni Regional Hospital, Sierra Leone.
Photo: Philippe Pernet/EVP, 2014

THE ECOWAS VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, UNV, THE ECOWAS PEACE FUND AND YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (EYSDC), THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE HOST COUNTRIES.

HARNESSING THE POWER OF YOUTH VOLUNTEERS TO BOLSTER HEALTH AND EDUCATION IN WEST AFRICA

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are harnessing the power of youth volunteers to bolster the education and health sectors, among others, left badly damaged by a legacy of conflicts. Across three pilot countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone), thousands of students have benefited from language and science classes taught by youth volunteers, leading to an improvement in students' test results in national exams in many cases. Healthcare has also improved, with volunteers filling crucial doctor, nurse, laboratory technician and midwife roles.

ECOWAS was established to foster cooperation and economic union in West Africa, with the objective of limiting the negative consequences of conflict and economic deprivation suffered by many countries in the region. Since 2005, ECOWAS has targeted the structural causes of vulnerability, instability and outbreaks of violence in the region using, as one of its chief instruments, the ECOWAS Volunteer Programme (EVP). UNV was chosen as a

strategic partner for its unique position as a global convener of diverse stakeholders and its 40 years of expertise in volunteering for development and its strong ability to mobilize youth.

Prior to starting the project UNV commissioned fact-finding missions in six ECOWAS countries in order to assess their suitability. UNV also prepared key documents related to the programme including the project document, manual of operations and procedures, and conditions of service for the volunteers. UNV's careful preparation undertaken in partnership with the implementing governments was one of the critical success factors that enabled the creation of the first regional-level volunteering exchange of this type in Africa.

UNV is also managing the programme funds and, through its relationship with UNDP, providing services and goods to the programme at country level. The regional office of the EVP in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso is mainly staffed with

national and international UN Volunteers, and three international UN Volunteers are serving as Country Advisors in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, former President of the ECOWAS Commission is grateful for UNV's intervention:

"We really thank you for the technical and financial support that provided the ECOWAS Commission with tools to develop and mainstream the volunteer mechanism into our support for Member States and to youth."

Since November 2010, 96 ECOWAS Volunteers, aged between 18 and 35 years (the official definition of youth for the African Union and the ECOWAS Commission), have been trained and fielded by the programme. The volunteers come from 11 of 15 ECOWAS countries, with Togo, Nigeria and Burkina Faso having the highest number of volunteers.

In Guinea, one ECOWAS volunteer nurse from Niger, Gomese Dominique Abdoulaziz, took the initiative to open an intensive nutritional recovery and education center, where children with severe acute malnutrition accompanied by complications are hospitalized. This was achieved with the support of the international NGO "Terre des Hommes" because of the nurse's previous experience with the NGO, "Doctors without Borders". In appreciation

for the volunteer's innovation and dedication one grateful community member donated an ultra-sound machine, an X-ray machine and an ambulance for the hospital.

A follow-up survey of the volunteers serving in Guinea also found an improvement in the health sector. One of the midwives from Benin, Kpelly A.M. Firmine, reported 90 consultations per month and 30 assisted deliveries of pregnant women, some of whom are adolescents aged 13 to 16 years. Yindaya Wariba Constance, a volunteer midwife from Togo, reported about 1,155 consultations in 2013. In one instance, more pregnant women were able to access the services that they needed in a local clinic staffed by ECOWAS youth volunteers than travel to the nearest city where there is a gynecologist. Other results include the training of 15 students on HIV/AIDS sensitization, who themselves trained around 1,000 people, 90% of whom are under the age of 30 and 72% of which are young women.

In the education sector, ECOWAS volunteer teachers helped students achieve dramatic increases in national exam test results. For instance, in Dabola district in 2013, thanks to an ECOWAS Volunteer from Togo, Sedan Komlan, more than 80% of 700 students passed their experimental sciences and mathematics degrees (compared to 2012, when almost none passed).



In Sierra Leone, ECOWAS volunteer youth teachers supported thousands of students who otherwise would not have received education. For instance, Abdoulaye Sawadogo, a volunteer from Burkina Faso, and another from Togo, Yacoubou Tchaba, reported that for the first time in their school more than 50% of students passed their French exam during the first term. The teachers also helped to improve the administration of the schools and develop a culture of learning. Ifeanyi Jerry Ilekendi, a volunteer from Nigeria, brought together other volunteer teachers to organize a seminar on leadership and peace that assembled 800 students from eight different schools to discuss issues of youth engagement in peace, peacebuilding, and leadership.

Anna Mar N'deye (Senegal), Youth Organisation Capacity-Building Specialist giving a presentation on how to prepare a project proposal to youth in Kankan, Guinea.
Photo: Philippe Pernet/EVP, 2014

The contribution of ECOWAS Volunteers to Sierra Leone's health sector was also profound. Three optometrists from Nigeria were added to the roster of staff in Connaught Hospital in Freetown (Chinwe Clara Osuagwu), Government Hospital in Bo (Asemota Frank) and Government Hospital in Kenema (Nsonwu Magnus Chinonye), providing critical support to the only optometrist who had been working in the entire country. These optometrists have not only been able to fill a gap in providing medical care to local people, but they have also been able to train optometrist nurses and provide administrative support to patients. In Sierra Leone, nurses from Nigeria and Liberia play a critical role in filling in the gaps in public health caused by a shortage of doctors, and their training by the ECOWAS optometrists allows them to provide basic healthcare to many more patients.

ECOWAS Volunteers in Liberia were deployed mainly in the education and health sectors, mostly in locations that had not benefited from such expertise in many years. One Nigerian ECOWAS youth volunteer, Stephen Udu Arusi, used the book *Somebody Should Talk to our Wives (a Play)*, which he wrote in his home country to teach his students about gender issues, to teach his students in Liberia. The Government of Liberia decided to incorporate this book into the national curriculum, where it remains today as standard reading for students.

The *ECOWAS Volunteer Programme* also had the unexpected benefit of helping to consolidate peace and mitigate the consequences of long-term conflicts. This can be attributed to the power that the volunteers had to inspire others (especially young people), demonstrating that individuals have the potential to be active agents of positive change. During the launch of the programme, the former President of the ECOWAS Commission, Ambassador James Victor Gbeho, emphasized that:

"The youth of the region are the most precious resource that we can depend on and look forward to the growth and continuity of our common patrimony. The ECOWAS Volunteer Programme gives young people the ability to become active agents of peace and reconciliation and inspire others with their actions."

Following the end of the pilot phase UNV and ECOWAS are preparing to scale-up the programme. In addition to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the programme will be extended to Guinea Bissau. If additional resources are mobilized Cote d'Ivoire and Mali will be the next countries to benefit from ECOWAS youth volunteers.



SUPPORTING DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND FOOD SECURITY THROUGH A UNIQUE, SOUTH-SOUTH PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN BRAZIL, EL SALVADOR AND UNV

Following the devastation of tropical storm Ida in November 2009, a unique, triangular South-South partnership was initiated with the governments of Brazil and El Salvador and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme. The project, 'Living Schools', mobilized Brazilian volunteers to help thousands of El Salvadoran youth to deal with natural disasters, climate change adaptation and food security by teaching them about agronomy, health, nutrition, risk management, gender and education. During a subsequent tropical storm, many young people who were undertaking the training volunteered to construct temporary shelters for more than 500 people, carry out landslide risk assessments, and distribute food.

From 1980 to 2010 El Salvador was affected by 49 natural disasters, killing over 4,000 people. In the wake of tropical storm Ida in November 2009, which caused devastating

floods and landslides in much of the country, the governments of Brazil and El Salvador agreed to cooperate to promote a culture of disaster prevention, adaptation to climate change and food and nutrition security in one of the regions most affected by this storm.

The project, called *Living Schools*, aimed to transfer skills, knowledge and best practices from Brazil (which at the time had been operating a similar school and community disaster prevention project for a number of years) to El Salvador and brought together the governments of the two countries, UNV, UNDP. UNV played a critical role in providing technical expertise and training, and mobilizing UN Volunteers.

UNV's ability to provide technical advice stems in part from its long history of work in El Salvador. For many years, UN

LIVING SCHOOLS WAS MADE POSSIBLE WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF BRAZIL AND THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP).



UN Volunteers climbed the San Salvador volcano to pay tribute to the 66th anniversary of the United Nations, to their country and to volunteerism. When they reached the top, they used stones to write 'UNV Brazil' on the ground. Photo: UNV, 2011



Brazilian street festival in Rio de Janeiro, raising awareness for volunteerism. Photo: UNV, 2011

Brazilian UN Volunteer Flavio Lopes Ribeiro addresses the UN General Assembly during a session dedicated to the follow up to the International Year of Volunteers on 5 December 2011. Photo: UN Photo/Ryan Brown, 2011

Volunteers have joined local and international efforts to make El Salvador more resilient, supporting first aid, undertaking reconstruction after natural disasters, and putting in place prevention strategies. UNV also played an important role in the adoption of a national law on volunteerism in 2011.

The Government of Brazil sponsored five Brazilian UN Volunteers (who had experience in the Brazilian disaster preparedness project) to join one national UN Volunteer from El Salvador to lead the project. Specialized in disaster risk reduction, nutrition, education and engineering, the six UN Volunteers trained 560 community youth volunteers in emergency response and worked closely with teachers, students and communities in the Department of San Vicente to increase their knowledge of nutrition, food security and preventive disaster activities. This makes this initiative a true South-South cooperation in action.

The project, which ran from 2011 to 2012, arrived almost at the same time as *Tropical Depression Twelve-E*, a tropical storm that lasted for more than nine days and caused great

destruction across the country. "Our programme and everything else in the region was interrupted," explains Flavio Lopes Ribeiro, a youth coordinator of the team of Brazilian UN Volunteers in El Salvador, "but our volunteerism spirit was kept alive, and we joined efforts with the local civil protection committee to help families in need." In response to the storm UN Volunteers in the Department of San Vicente helped with the construction of shelters for more than 500 people, putting together food baskets for affected families, evaluating landslide risks, and assessing post-disaster needs.

Overall, the project benefited three target communities of San Vicente: Guadalupe, Verapaz and Tepetitan. Some 311 volunteers, who had been trained by the UN Volunteers, in turn trained more than 1,700 students, with a further 1,000 families supported through volunteer actions. In addition, three school gardens were created and an additional four schools received technical support and materials to create their own. In order to ensure project sustainability, a "Living Schools Manual" and various toolkits were created to help other schools use youth volunteerism for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. UNV and the Government of Brazil are currently exploring the possibility of partnering on a second phase of the programme and possibly scaling it up to Central America.

CREATING AN INNOVATIVE CHANNEL FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN TOGO

In partnership with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other development partners such as France Volontaires, GIZ, and the Peace Corps, le Programme de Promotion du Volontariat National au Togo (PROVONAT) is a flagship initiative of the Togolese Ministry of Community Development, Craft and Youth Employment to create an innovative channel for youth employment. Thanks to the programme, more than 4,000 young volunteers have been placed in areas linked to national priorities such as maternal and infant health, preventable diseases, sanitation, rural development and social protection. UNV's ability to broker partnerships between stakeholders at the community, regional, national and international level played a crucial role in the programme's success.

In Togo, youth unemployment and underemployment reach over eight percent and twenty percent, respectively. The economy is strongly dependent on agriculture, and qualified students struggle to find jobs in other sectors. PROVONAT was launched by the Togolese Ministry of

Community Development, Craft and Youth Employment in partnership with UNV, UNDP and France Volontaires in September 2011 as a means to train young people and engage them as volunteers in public, private, and civil society institutions.

Over its first three years the programme engaged 4,280 young people (40 percent of whom are young women) in a wide range of fields, such as communications, health, agriculture and the environment. The programme was extremely successful in improving the employability of young people, as, according to the Minister of Community Development, Craft and Youth Employment, over 40 percent were later able to find paid employment as a result of their volunteer experience. More than 635 Togolese organizations are now providing volunteer placements, and a database of potential young candidates set up by the programme includes more than 20,000 volunteer applications.

The positive achievements of the programme have enhanced the government's ownership and championship

PROVONAT volunteer Lami Ezoula, midwife at the Ahepe Maternity in Togo is tending to a mother and her newborn.

Photo: UNV, 2013

PROVONAT WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF TOGO, FRANCE VOLONTAIRES, GIZ, THE PEACE CORPS AND UNDP.





A PROVONAT volunteer working in a very rural area of Togo organizes workshops for young people on sexual and reproductive health where she aims to raise awareness about girls being forced into marriage.

Photo: UNV, 2013

of PROVONAT, and a law creating a public agency to manage the national volunteers was adopted on 17 June 2014. With the agency's creation, PROVONAT is now an autonomous institution linked to the Togo Ministry of Community Development, Craft and Youth Employment.

UNV played three principal roles in PROVONAT: advocacy for national volunteering (including input to the drafting of the *Togo Law on Volunteerism*, adopted in February 2011), brokering partnerships for political, technical and financial support and capacity-building for volunteers, regional centers and host organizations. It also played an important role in motivating partners: as the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Togo pointed out, "it was UNV which... developed the concept [and] got people on board."

At the national level PROVONAT is overseen by the National Council of National Volunteering in Togo (CNVN), which includes representatives of UNV and UNDP. CNVN provides the strategic orientation of the programme and oversees the application of the national law on volunteerism. At the operational level, the National Coordination Committee coordinates the everyday management of PROVONAT. The programme also includes five regional centers, each of which is staffed by two national UN Volunteer Coordinators, who train, support, and monitor youth volunteers and undertake communications and the promotion of youth volunteerism. UN Volunteers played critical roles in the implementation of the programme both at the national and regional level.

Through PROVONAT many regional and local youth-led initiatives have been made possible which have had profound development impacts, especially on young women. For instance, a palm oil project in Kpalime provides 400 young women with technical advice and co-operative banking, and this has enabled them to achieve much higher production levels and generate more income. In another, a young female lawyer has been working at the regional directorate for the Ministry for the Promotion of Women in Kara, translating the rights of women into local languages and carrying out awareness-raising activities regarding their rights.

A positive secondary effect of the programme comes from its ability to bring volunteers from the south of the country to the north, and volunteers from the north of the country to the south. This is important in Togo, where there have historically been political tensions between the south and the north. Victoire Dogbé, the Togolese Minister of Community Development, Craft and Youth Employment, is confident that PROVONAT is not only providing crucial assistance to young people entering the job market but is also contributing to the country's social and cultural cohesion: "There are young people who do not know the north of the country at all, and vice versa, and I think that through this programme they can get to know their own country better, discovering other people and other cultures."

Leveraging the success of PROVONAT to integrate young graduates, a new government-led initiative called PROVONAT-JDS (*Promotion du Volontariat National des Jeunes Déscolarisés et Semi-Scolarisés*) is also underway to target out-of-school youth and school drop-outs. This initiative will be run under the current volunteer infrastructure of PROVONAT, with the aim of mobilizing 5000 school drop-outs or unschooled youth between the ages of 15 and 35 to volunteer on local development projects for six months, after which they will receive training or apprenticeships.



Training session in Uzbekistan conducted by the Minister of Health, facilitated by the community volunteers of UNDP/UNV TB project for the nurses involved in MDR – treatment.

Photo: Leonid Kudreyko/UNV, 2010

SOCIAL INNOVATION AND VOLUNTEERISM IN UZBEKISTAN WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE GOVERNMENTS OF KOREA, SWITZERLAND AND THE UNITED KINGDOM, UNDP, AND UNV.

UNLOCKING THE SOCIAL INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURISM OF UZBEK YOUTH

The joint United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme Social Innovation and Volunteerism in Uzbekistan Project is harnessing the social innovation of young people to tackle development challenges. By providing training, advocacy, and grants to young innovators UNV is helping to unlock the talent and entrepreneurial skills of Uzbek youth, many of whom previously lacked opportunities to contribute to development. The project has mobilized thousands of young people across Uzbekistan, and has launched a range of creative youth-led initiatives related to income generation and the environment—from handicrafts and knitting workshops for disabled Uzbek girls to Uzbekistan's first cloth 'eco' shopping bag scheme.

People under 30 constitute more than sixty percent of Uzbekistan's total population and face many of the same challenges as their counterparts in other developing countries: high unemployment and limited ability to participate in development processes. Uzbekistan has a long tradition of mutual help, but this has been largely localized to the community level. In order to create an

enabling environment for youth volunteerism, to systematize it and broaden its scope beyond the community level, and to empower young innovators to tackle development challenges in their communities, UNV and UNDP jointly developed the Social Innovation and Volunteerism in Uzbekistan Project (SIV) in 2012.

UNV is playing a crucial role in managing the project. Out of 13 project staff, 10 are UN Volunteers, specialized in IT and volunteer mobilization. The project is run from a central headquarters in the capital, Tashkent, but has a regional presence in order to ensure that the project reaches young people in rural areas, who likely have fewer opportunities than their urban counterparts. The regional representatives, who are national UN Volunteers, help deliver initiatives such as the small grants scheme, and train volunteer leaders, NGOs, and local government authorities on various aspects of community action and development. One representative, Maksuda Muhsinbaeva, supports local youth volunteers by conducting HIV/AIDS training, distributing information booklets, and preparing training and advocacy materials.

According to Ms. Muhsinbaeva, “strengthening the culture of volunteerism is a crucial step, as much of the population is still unaware of the important work that volunteers do.”

Youth volunteerism and innovation do not necessarily happen on their own – they need an enabling environment to thrive. For young volunteers to bring innovative perspectives to development challenges, and moreover, to be empowered to put them into practice, they need to be equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge and given an open, safe environment to work in. The project therefore aims to provide young people with a safe space for participation in volunteerism, and where innovative youth-led ideas can be nurtured. The project therefore undertook to develop a nationwide code of conduct for volunteers, launch a volunteer toolkit, establish a nationwide network of regional UNV representatives, and create an online portal, which has helped more than 150 young volunteers to find volunteering opportunities.

SIV is working to nurture a culture of innovation in Uzbekistan by providing IT equipment and skills training to young people, organizing public events called ‘Café Scientifique’, where young people and others can discuss scientific topics with broader social relevance, and, in partnership with a private Uzbek tech company called

brand.uz, inviting young innovators to create mobile applications with a social impact.

In addition, SIV is supporting young innovators by awarding small grants to youth groups across the country that develop creative solutions to the environmental, social and health challenges that their communities face. In 2013, the project awarded grants of goods and services each equivalent to \$1,500 to 18 groups. One, called “Club Fantasy”, was launched by youth volunteer Lola Yuldasheva in order to teach knitting and handcraft skills to young women with disabilities, increasing their professional skills and their opportunities to gain economic independence in the future. For young participants like Khakinjanova Mavluda, “Club Fantasy” was a powerful experience that not only taught them handiwork skills, but also gave them the desire and confidence to start social enterprises of their own.

Volunteer Husan Umarov, supported by the grants programme, developed a social and learning club at a nursing home in Tashkent region that brings other young volunteers to the home to socialize with residents and teach them how to use computers. This inter-generational support has a powerful effect: not only are elderly residents empowered to read the newspaper online and

communicate with their family members, but the young volunteers also learn valuable life lessons and better understand the experiences of older people.

Another initiative, undertaken in partnership with a large Uzbek supermarket chain, Korzinka.uz, aims to raise public awareness about the environmental costs of using plastic shopping bags and promotes the use of ‘eco-friendly’ cloth bags instead. The project, run entirely by young volunteers, uses bags manufactured in social enterprises which were organized with support of UNDP to promote employment among vulnerable groups, and expects to give up to 60,000 consumers a day the option of purchasing the eco-bags. Based on the success of the project, two other shopping chains have also expressed an interest in selling the eco-bags.

The eco-bags initiative is the result of an activity of the programme designed to stimulate youth innovation for development: the ‘Social Innovation Lab’. The labs were developed with the help of a partner university in Tashkent, and aim to provide access to the necessary equipment and expertise to help youth social innovation ideas grow into mature development projects. Labs are held throughout the year in different locations around the country. One lab that ran from 9-11 July 2014 explored the idea of recycling



Participants of Project Development and Management Workshop organized jointly by UNV and UNFPA Uzbekistan displaying their training certificates.
Photo: UNV Bukhara, 2010

items that otherwise would have been thrown away, such as plastic bottles and wooden pallets, and turning them into sofas and other pieces of furniture that could be donated to orphanages and other social institutions that didn't have enough money to buy their own goods.

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF VOLUNTEERISM FOR DEVELOPMENT IN VIET NAM

In an effort to fight high levels of youth exclusion and vulnerability in Viet Nam, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) partnered with the Vietnamese Central Committee of the Ho Chi Minh Youth Union (HCYU) in 2009 to create the Strengthening the Capacity of Volunteerism for Development in Viet Nam (VDVN) project. The project created the country's first national institution for the promotion, support and coordination of volunteerism for development in Viet Nam, the Viet Nam Volunteer Information Resource Centre (VVIRC). Since its inception, the VVIRC has brought together thousands of youth volunteers from more than 150 volunteer organizations to support communities in need. During the 2013 Blood Donation Festival in Hanoi, VVIRC attracted an unprecedented 10,000 blood donors.

The Vietnamese Government has stressed the importance of an inclusive agenda that includes youth in its Social Economic Development Plan. Volunteerism, among other mechanisms, can help bridge the urban-rural gap and contribute to community-led, equitable development by

creating opportunities for participation and inclusion of youth.

VDVN aims to develop and expand the network of international voluntary cooperation and strengthen the operational capacity of volunteer involving organizations (VIOs) in Viet Nam. In its first phase (2009 – 2012), the project set up the *Vietnamese Volunteer Information Resource Centre (VVIRC)*, which has offices in the north, centre, and south of Viet Nam and a website which links youth volunteers to volunteering opportunities. In addition, the project strengthened the capacity of institutions engaged with youth volunteers, created a public information strategy, and policy recommendations for drafting government regulations on volunteerism. The project mobilized five national UN Volunteers and over 200 volunteers from the community.

UNV played a critical role in developing the capacity of VVIRC staff, developing communication infrastructures to better match needs of organizations and skills of volunteers,

In Viet Nam, UNV IT Specialist Tran Tien Cong (Second from right) and UNV Support Specialist Le Ha Long (right) engage with the Viet Nam Volunteer Information Resource Centre volunteers on the steps of the Viet Nam Youth Union office in Hanoi. Five UN Volunteers supported the centre, training about 150 people and establishing a trainer-of-trainers network with 70 members.

Photo: Harald Franzen/
UNV, 2013

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF VOLUNTEERISM FOR DEVELOPMENT IN VIET NAM WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF VIET NAM AND UNV.





The National Conference
on Volunteerism for
Development, Viet Nam.
Photo: UNV, 2010

and consolidating the relationship with national and international partners. In addition, it was able to share the lessons learned from volunteer infrastructure development projects which it has supported in 20 countries, thereby helping VDVN to improve its own volunteer infrastructure and develop a strong and open volunteer network.

The WIRC's establishment and its consolidated web presence (especially on social media) are highly successful components of the project. Offering Vietnamese youth unprecedented access to volunteering opportunities both nationally and internationally, the centre helps to fight youth vulnerability and exclusion. *Programme Green Dream 2010*, for instance, an initiative of Viet Nam Handicap International and Hue's Medicine University, mobilized young volunteers through WIRC to raise awareness about disabilities on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Another initiative, the *Skills – Excursions Club* was established to develop the skills and experience of young people through volunteer excursions in the southern provinces.

Another successful achievement is the establishment of a series of volunteer-related networks, including a network of trainers on volunteerism and volunteer management at the central and regional level, WIRC networks of VIOs in Hanoi, and a network of social support for organisations providing services to the homeless and disabled. In addition to these networks, the project organized three *Volunteer Voice* forums, constituting a platform for 100 representatives from the volunteer community and the first-ever opportunity in Viet Nam to share experiences and challenges and forge links with like-minded organisations.

From 2011 onward the project introduced a volunteer awards, the first of its kind in Viet Nam, to honour individuals and organisations making an outstanding contribution to volunteerism. The awards have the dual impact of raising awareness of the VDVN project and promoting volunteerism, while also building the profile of award-winning organisations, enabling them to improve their chances of finding sponsorship and funding.

In order to consolidate, expand and guarantee sustainability of youth volunteering activities in Viet Nam, UNV committed and approved additional funding and technical assistance for the project's second phase, running from 2013 to 2015. During the opening ceremony, Phan Van Mai, Permanent Secretary of the Ho Chi Minh Youth Union (HCYU), thanked UNV for its strategic assistance, technical expertise and for the great achievements of the project.

The second phase of the project will focus on the capacity development of WIRC staff, developing communication infrastructures to better match needs of organizations and skills of volunteers, and consolidating the relationship with national and international partners.

VOLUNTEER STORIES

UN Youth Volunteer Margaret Hmangte provides speech therapy to 10-year-old Paumuanlian in Manipur, India
Photo: UNV, 2014



INDIA

In Churachandpur, a remote tribal district of Manipur, India, services for persons with disabilities are limited. Few trained rehabilitation professionals or centres exist, especially in rural areas, and this places an especially heavy burden on disabled children most in need of support. Four national UN Youth Volunteers are helping to bridge this gap by collaborating with the local community to run a school—the Malsawm Initiative (TMI)—for children with special needs. The volunteers are training teachers and parents in caring for children with special needs, and educating local organizations and the public about the role of the community in supporting them. Inspired by their work, community members have volunteered their services and time and as a result 25 children with disabilities now have access to education and professional support. According to Pauzagin Tonsing of the Malsawm Initiative,

“To our amazement, ever since the UN Volunteers have been with us, parental and community response has progressed positively and now we frequently have parents seeking for admission for their children.”



UN Volunteer Liu Hui was selected from a list of 30 nominees for the annual ‘Beijing Top Ten Volunteer’ award.
Photo: UNV, 2010

CHINA

One of the great qualities of UN Youth Volunteers is their flexibility, and nowhere is this more evident than in the case of Liu Hui, a young UN Volunteer originally serving with the Beijing Youth League on the joint UNV and UNDP project, *Strengthening Volunteerism for Development through the Beijing Olympics*. During her volunteer experience, a disastrous earthquake hit the Sichuan Province of China, and Liu Hui was immediately asked to support a relief mission which included 25 doctors and medical staff.

Ms. Hui dealt with communications around the disaster and acted as a volunteer field interpreter for the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). According to Ms. Hui:

"Guaranteeing homeless people's health is one of the most important aspects of the aid operation, as well as providing other basic support. According to today's plan, the IFRC and the Chinese Red Cross are to visit the most severe disaster area at Mian Yang municipality in the mid-north of Sichuan province to make a medical assessment of the refugee camps."

GUATEMALA

Karina Garcia is an 18-year-old from Totonicapán, Guatemala. She belongs to a rural indigenous community where most of the population faces social, economic and political problems. "As an indigenous female child I am discriminated three times over – for being indigenous, young, and a woman," says Karina. Undeterred, she joined the Guatemalan Parliament for Children and Adolescents at the age of 13 as part of a group fighting for the rights of indigenous children and adolescents. At the age of 15, she attended the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at the United Nations in New York to highlight problems particular to youth of indigenous communities in Guatemala. In 2012, she and 20 other youth volunteers launched a project to

encourage intergenerational dialogue on social issues, educating thousands of young people and their parents about domestic violence and sex education.

For Karina, her experiences as a volunteer gave her the strength to continue fighting for a better world, while helping her to become a person who believes that solutions can always be found. Volunteerism helped her leap over the barriers thrown up by marginalization, poverty and discrimination.

UZBEKISTAN

The joint United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme *Social Innovation and Volunteerism in Uzbekistan Project* seeks to harness the social innovation of young people to tackle development challenges. Madina Alimova, a volunteer English teacher at a children's home, is one of the young people empowered by the programme. Driven by a desire to contribute something to society and share her knowledge with younger generations, she overcame her initial fears about teaching in front of a large group and now uses games and innovative audiovisual materials to capture her pupils' interest and help them learn grammar and new words faster and more easily.

"Volunteerism is giving me the opportunity to do what I really love. I sincerely believe that these English lessons will be useful for my pupils not only to obtain better marks, but also for better access to educational resources later in life," says Madina. "I hope that in the future English will help them to get a good education and employment."

MOZAMBIQUE

In Mozambique, 19-year-old Raquelina Cuna has been volunteering for the past five years. She is working to sensitize her community with regards to HIV/AIDS prevention and provide home-based care for people with

HIV/AIDS. Her motivation comes from her personal experience of having an aunt who died from AIDS: "I was very young and I had seen her suffering and isolation from family members and she reached a point when she could not do simple things by herself, like going to the hospital or preparing food... and she had no one around to help her." Now, Raquelina is taking action herself to ensure that people who are in the same situation do not have to face their challenges alone.

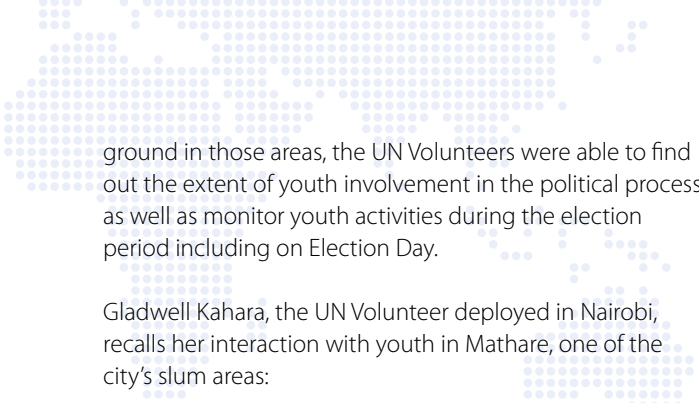
KENYA

The 2013 Kenya General Elections held on March 4th provided UNDP and UNV with an excellent opportunity to enhance youth participation in volunteerism through the *Get Informed, Get Involved* project. Implemented by Youth Agenda with support from UNDP, UNV and the Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund, *Get Informed, Get Involved* brought seven UN Youth Volunteers on board to engage with youth in Nairobi, Eldoret, Nakuru and Kisumu as well as Kilifi, Mombasa and Trans-Nzoia counties. By coordinating with youth organizations and contacts working on the

A customer holds an 'eco-bag', created by a group of young volunteers as part of the Social Innovation and Volunteerism in Uzbekistan Project.

Photo: UNV, 2013





ground in those areas, the UN Volunteers were able to find out the extent of youth involvement in the political process, as well as monitor youth activities during the election period including on Election Day.

Gladwell Kahara, the UN Volunteer deployed in Nairobi, recalls her interaction with youth in Mathare, one of the city's slum areas:

"This was my first time to go into Mathare slums and despite the poor living conditions of these young people, I was so humbled by their zeal and positivity. I was in a group full of brilliant and talented youth and I must say that I was very impressed by their intelligence and their motivation to see a peaceful and developed Mathare and Kenya as a whole. It was also inspiring and encouraging to see these young people so passionate about preaching peace and fighting against tribalism in Kenya."

TUNISIA

In Tunisia, a UN Youth Volunteer is taking remarkable steps to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. Giulia David, 25, works for the inclusion of children with disabilities in the public education system in Tunisia, and is fighting to raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities, especially the right to education. She is also helping to build the

capacity of teachers, training them to use best practices for including pupils with disabilities. According to Giulia,

"In Tunisia there are a lot of challenges to face in order to break the existing stereotypes and to ensure that persons with disabilities fully enjoy their rights. Thankfully I see that the situation is evolving thanks to the action of civil society and persons with disabilities themselves. This gives me the motivation to continue on my work."

BANGLADESH

In 2014, the United Nations launched the My World Survey to capture the needs and aspirations of people throughout the world, setting the priorities of the Post-2015 Millennium Development Goals according to what matters most to people. In Bangladesh, Merel Fuchs, a UN Youth Volunteer funded by the Government of Germany, is facilitating national consultations, rolling out the survey across the country and capturing the voices of over 4,200 young people. Based on the priorities identified, she organized, in partnership with local volunteer-involving organizations, several youth workshops to debate ways for concrete engagement to address these priorities. The workshops, organized in Jessore, Chittagong and Dhaka, encouraged youth to be part of the global conversation and acknowledged their status as agents of change in their communities.





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