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14  FOR A LIFE OF DIGNITY FOR ALL

Sophie Tentrop
“Volunteerism is universal and strengthens social inclusion, solidarity and ownership. It is a global phenomenon that transcends boundaries, religions and cultural divides; It goes by different names and finds different applications in different contexts. It is an expression of civic engagement, and of individuals’ involvement in their communities (be it local, national or international).”

UNV position statement on the Post 2015 Development Agenda

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Programme is the UN organisation that contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling development challenges, and it can transform the pace and nature of development. Volunteerism benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, and by purposefully creating opportunities for participation.

Through UNV, every year, about 7,500 qualified and experienced women and men of around 160 nationalities serve as UN Volunteers in some 130 countries. They are professionals who play key roles in contributing to peace and by having an impact on development results. UNV is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

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Foreword by the UN Resident Coordinator

Dear Reader,

I am pleased to introduce to you this edition of the UNV Newsletter and the great achievements and relentless efforts of our national and international UN Volunteers. There is no doubt that UNVs have been critical catalysts in advancing progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as many of our Volunteers are in the unique position to positively influence the way people relate to their communities. As we are reaching the target date of the MDGs this year, UNVs will be critical actors within the UN System to create new spaces of interaction between governments and constituents. Therefore, we will continue to strengthen Volunteerism in Uganda as a means to give voice to people and to work towards a truly transformative Post 2015 development agenda with a life of dignity for all.

Throughout the extensive Post 2015 consultation process, we learned that there is an increasing demand for civic participation in national planning processes. During this unprecedented bottom up process of designing the new development agenda, UN Volunteers successfully advocated for the recognition of Volunteerism as an intrinsic component of the Post 2015 development agenda.

As a result of the persistent advocacy of UNV, Volunteerism has been recognized by the UN Secretary General in his Post 2015 Synthesis Report as a complimentary means of implementing the new development agenda. In addition to the Post 2015 process, this year holds several important transformation processes for us and I would like to point out the finalization and adoption of the new UN Development Assistance Framework (2016-2020) and Uganda’s second National Development Plan.

As you read through the articles of this Newsletter, you will see not only the creativity and commitment of our UN Volunteers, but also the passion towards making a tangible difference.

Sincerely,

Ahrunna Eziakonwa-Onochie
Resident Coordinator,
United Nations Uganda
Foreword by the UNDP Country Director

It takes a lot of heart and selflessness to help others. Yet, there is no greater reward than volunteering to make a difference – however small – in the lives of people and communities, and supporting their aspirations to build a better world for all.

Having served UNV previously as Chief of Africa Section in Bonn Germany, I bear first hand witness to the enormous benefits of volunteerism, and feel privileged to be part of a team that is contributing to human development, peace and security, environmental sustainability and the protection of human rights and human dignity through their voluntary effort.

UN Volunteers are an important and integral part of UNDP’s day to day programmes and operations. More importantly, they are helping to fill a critical skills gap by providing vital support to government and other partners to be able to successfully implement our programmes and interventions in order to achieve sustainable development in Uganda.

Their work on the ground, as well as their technical expertise in policy, has been instrumental in the success of UNDP’s downstream and upstream work across our three programme areas – Sustainable Development, Democratic Governance, Climate and Disaster Resilience – and has contributed greatly to fulfilling our mandate of eliminating poverty, exclusion and inequality.

The UNV programme in Uganda, which is traditionally administered by UNDP on behalf of the UN, has continued to expand every year. Currently, there are over 50 qualified men and women serving in Uganda as UN volunteers, 53% of them Nationals. About 44 Ugandan Nationals are also serving as volunteers in other countries in fields as diverse as agriculture, health and nutrition, education, vocational training, ICT, poverty reduction, energy and environmental conservation, governance, crisis prevention and recovery, reproductive health and population, HIV/AIDS, protection affairs, human rights, gender mainstreaming, youth and community services.

In 2014, UNDP as co-chair of the UN in Uganda Youth Engagement and Employment (YEE) convergence group, supported the formulation of a proposal for a UN Graduate Volunteer Programme for Uganda, which is still awaiting approval from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

The programme, conceived as a complementary to the larger UN Volunteers programme, is aimed at enabling more youth obtain mentoring and professional on-the-job experience, through volunteerism. As we wait for government approval, we pledge to continue to support the work of UN volunteers working in Uganda and abroad, as well as efforts to inspire others to join them in empowering the lives of the people of Uganda and building resilience. I commend their efforts and thank them sincerely for their unselfish sacrifice and commitment to the greater good.

As you read this newsletter, I hope you will be inspired by their stories of hope, hard work, innovation, perseverance and resilience in expanding the reach and impact of UNDP’s work as well as the UN’s.

Almaz Gebre
Country Director,
United Nations Development Programme
Foreword by the
UNV Programme Officer

Dear Colleagues,

I am very pleased to present this newsletter on the stories of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) as they make significant and growing contribution to the UN system in Uganda. It reflects the inspiration and actions of our partners and talented UN Volunteers on the ground.

Having joined UNV in early March 2014 as Programme Officer, I feel privileged to lead the UNV Country Programme with such an inspiring mandate, strong and supportive partners and dedicated volunteers. Together, we feel we can contribute to human development, peace and security and environmental sustainability through voluntary efforts. The activities which UNV undertakes and supports in Uganda provide telling examples of how to realize the values of the United Nations through direct actions, by promoting the principles of free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity.

This newsletter illustrates the excellent work of the UN Volunteers in Uganda and the achievements of our partners and wider communities. These stories help to mobilize, provide inspiration to the government of Uganda, UN agencies and civil society organizations to engage volunteers and to make greater use of their services. That is why the UN system draws on the spirit of volunteerism to expand the reach to its activities. Volunteerism is a powerful force that enables everyone, including marginalized and disadvantaged people, to contribute to development in Uganda and around the world.

UNV Programme is building on this positive energy by fostering recognition and support for volunteerism as a development asset and as an important contributing force towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In 2014, UNV Uganda deployed more than 50 UN Volunteers to work in Uganda. To achieve this, the UNV Programme partnered with the Government of Uganda through its Ministries and with UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, OHCHR, UNFPA, UN WOMEN, UNAIDS, WFP, FAO, the Resident Coordinators Office (RCO), and United Nations Office for Drugs Control (UNODC) as well as UN Habitat.

Finally, I would like to commend the excellent commitment, solidarity and cooperation of the competent, experienced and highly dedicated UN Volunteers in Uganda who in 2014, together with our partners in the true spirit of UN Delivering as One contributed to peace and development. Special thanks to UN Agencies for their technical and additional financial support towards the 2014 UNV Regional Retreat. I’m so grateful to the Government of Uganda through its district authorities in Mbarara, Kyangwali, Kyegegwa, Isinjiro, Hoima, Isinjiro, Mukono, Kampala, Adjumani, Moroto and Gulu for their daily support to UN Volunteers activities. Your actions are our inspiration, and this newsletter illustrates our inspiration in action.

Christian Lunda Mwamanga
Programme Officer,
United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Volunteers Uganda
Volunteerism has an important role to play in harnessing the potential of young people, whilst fostering their inclusion in the global peace and sustainable human development processes. For young people, engaging in voluntary work can be an opportunity to change the world for the better while learning new skills, gaining knowledge, learning about new cultures and better understanding the realities of international development and peacebuilding.

Under its new UN Youth Volunteer modality, UNV has created new opportunities for 18-29 year-olds to be integrated into the work of UN entities around the world. The programme enables UN agencies to respond to the needs of young people by empowering them as volunteers on 6-24 month assignments, while at the same time tapping into their creativity, energy, and idealism.

UN Youth Volunteers bring creativity, passion, and energy to the projects and programmes of UN agencies, working in such fields as basic social services, primary healthcare, disaster risk reduction, peacebuilding, and youth empowerment, among others. Volunteer assignments are challenging but rewarding, and a specific programme for training and mentoring of UN Youth Volunteers provides opportunities to develop personal and professional skills.

For more information please contact Christian Mwamanga, UNV Programme Officer Uganda at christian.mwamanga@undp.org or visit www.unv.org.

“Youth are a transformative force... The time has come to integrate youth voices more meaningfully into decision-making processes at all levels”

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on International Youth Day 2012
Creating Visibility for the ‘Let Girls Be Girls’ Campaign

Els Dehantschutter
Els is a Belgium UNV at the UNFPA Uganda Country Office.

As a UNV Communications Specialist for UNFPA Uganda (the United Nations Population Fund), I am in charge of developing visibility materials to promote the ICPD (International Conference on Population and Development) agenda. One of the projects I would like to highlight is the national campaign to prevent teenage pregnancy by the Ministry of Health and UNFPA. The approach is to mobilize policy makers, community leaders and the general public to take action to prevent teenage pregnancy. This is in the context of UNFPA’s broader mandate of delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every child birth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled.

Because the campaign is national and seeks to reach several target groups, different advocacy and BCC (Behavior Change Communication) materials needed to be developed. Fact sheets, fans and booklets were printed for policy makers, stakeholders and journalists; t-shirts, folders, posters and armbands for young people and their parents. To ensure we address young people with clear messages they can relate to, students were involved in the process through youth clubs. They were asked to write messages to their peers on preventing teenage pregnancy and to test the messages written by the UNFPA communication team. I was pleasantly surprised by the many creative slogans and messages we received. After a comical meeting where we selected the best messages, we chose ‘first things first: books before babies!’ and printed it on armbands and t-shirts. This message, together with the catchy campaign slogan ‘let girls be girls!’ is spreading and becoming frequently used.

To reach as many people as possible with the campaign, all stakeholders were brought on board. Journalists were trained to write about the issue of teenage pregnancy and partners were asked to send op-eds to the media. Young people were brought together in a debate to ensure their voices were heard and they were included in the decisions that affect them. Local leaders were asked to commit to preventing teenage pregnancy during national celebrations. Stakeholders and UN agencies with common goals were involved to join the campaign and to work together.

The campaign was launched in July 2014 and the results are showing: Teenage pregnancy is the talk of the town! The campaign has stirred up significant press coverage and dialogue in various public forums. In parliament, speakers raised the issue and several powerful figures such as the First Lady and US Ambassador Scott H. DeLisi have all spoken out about the campaign and the need to take action.

In my capacity as a UNV, I continue to support the campaign by designing different materials, writing messages and supporting UNFPA’s implementing partners with their BCC (Behavior Change Communication). To this end, we can stop teenage pregnancy in Uganda and ensure that every girl and boy finishes school to fulfill their dreams.

*Picture above: The most popular design I created was for the ‘Let girls be girls’ t-shirt. In this picture, girls and boys are proudly wearing the shirt during a Youth Debate in Kampala. The back of the t-shirt reads: ‘First things first: Books before babies’. Copyright Els Dehantschutter, UNFPA*
Volunteerism in Eastern Uganda enhances Community Resilience

Sidney Tupper

Sidney is a Canadian UNV in UNDPs Crisis Prevention and Recovery Unit, working in the Office of the Prime Minister. He provides technical assistance in the Department of Disaster Preparedness, Management and Relief.

The Eastern region of Uganda increasingly experiences extreme climatic conditions. Based on their growing vulnerability to heavy rains and droughts, the Teso and Elgon sub-regions were selected by UNDP as pilot areas to Strengthen National Capacities for Disaster Risk Management and Resilience Building. Through a participatory planning approach, the Community Risk Reduction and Climate Adaptation Planning and Implementation Project encourages voluntary action within communities to increase the level of disaster preparedness of the participating groups. In a series of workshops, the volunteers learned to consensually prioritize local disaster risks and how to mitigate them. For the Teso and Elgon sub-regions, the discussions around disaster risk reduction were guided by local government and the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR). The goal was to address flooding, water logging, water scarcity, erosion and landslide risks by developing small projects that are executed by community members in cooperation with the local private sector.

The biggest challenges that the participating communities addressed were floods during the wet season, droughts during the dry season and limited livelihood opportunities in general. In order to mitigate extreme weather conditions, participants chose to repair two breached earthen dams, to capture rain water at flood evacuation centres and to plant income-generating tree lots. As a result, school children are now able to cross the river safely and the community stays connected to other communities during the wet season. In addition, the repaired dam reduces the risk for flash floods, while providing water to livestock during the dry season. Fish farming in the water reservoir became a new option for income generation and the increased wetland area has a positive effect on the biodiversity. By capturing the rain water, water-borne diseases have less chances to spread with floods, and the flood evacuation areas provide water to primary schools during the dry season. As a result of the tree planting efforts, more than 30,000 fruit-bearing (mango, pawpaw, lemon, orange, coffee) and timber-
producing (teak, eucalyptus, pine, pondo) seedlings were planted and once they fruit, these trees will provide an additional income for community members.

The second pilot took place in the mountainous Elgon sub-region, which rises to more than 4000m. After years of de-forestation, the slopes have become prone to erosion which exacerbates the disastrous effects of heavy rains and floods. Without sufficient plant and tree coverage, the soil becomes increasingly destabilized, making landslides and destructive floods a common occurrence during the wet season. This does not only cause streams in the lowlands to congest with silt, but also results in waterlogged areas where cultivation becomes impossible. With these challenges at hand, the participating highland community identified landslides, floods and limited livelihood opportunities as the key issues they want to resolve. Through our support, they were able to mobilize enough volunteers to stabilize slopes and stream banks and to create a hazard early warning system. The lowland community on the other hand decided to address the waterlogging by desilting a major drainage channel. Through voluntary action, these communities were able to plant more than 30,000 fruit-bearing (mango, pawpaw, lemon, orange, coffee) and timber-producing (teak, eucalyptus, pine, pondo) tree seedlings in the highlands, to stabilize slopes and river banks, to create coffee garden shade and to generate additional income sources. In result there will be less siting of rivers by landslides, and less river bank erosion, which reduces overall costs and risk of floods. The community furthermore implemented a solar electric powered megaphone system that alerts people of coming flash floods and landslides, based on community monitoring of hazard indicators. In the lowlands, volunteers managed to dredge 13 km of water channel to relieve waterlogging and in return, farmers are now able to plant maize on previously uncultivable land. For the poorer members of the lowland community, ‘Money-For-Work’ projects were established to further stabilize the channel banks with grass and eucalyptus.

“Volunteers have a critical role to play in creating awareness about the sustainable management of natural resources that can prevent and mitigate the impact of disasters. Likewise, communities with more trust, civic engagement and stronger networks have a better chance of recovering after a disaster.”

2011 State of the World’s Volunteerism Report
VOLUNTEERING WITH UN WOMEN IN UGANDA

Susanne Newton
Susanne is a Communications Officer and Australian Red Cross International Volunteer with UN Women.

So by the end of August, the already bursting-at-the-seams Uganda office had two new volunteers through the Australian Red Cross international volunteer program.

I now work as a Communications Officer for the UN Women Uganda country office, as well as remotely for the UN Women Eastern and Southern Regional Office.

For me, the move to Uganda took a period of adjustment as I’d expected to be in Nairobi for a full year, but it has turned out to be a real blessing in disguise. The regional office in Nairobi covers 17 country offices, and working there, I felt quite removed from the work UN Women was doing on the ground and I never quite found my place in that office. Moving to Kampala, I found a vibrant, growing office with multiple events going on at the same time and plenty of work to do.

Since arriving, I’ve worked on Graça Machal’s visit to Uganda, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign, Beijing+20 events and much more – it’s never quiet!

I love living in Kampala and working at the UN Women office here. I’m so lucky to have found my place in a city I wasn’t expecting to be living and working in.

The growing UN Women country office in Uganda has a number of UNVs and other volunteers in the team from Uganda and abroad. This includes Edna Akulli, a Ugandan Gender Economic Programme Officer, Heleen Annemans from Belgium, who works on women’s leadership, interagency coordination and communications, and Thaddeus Sserukeera from Uganda, who works on monitoring and evaluation. Volunteers play an integral role in the UN Women Uganda team.

Alexandra Tindale and I had both been volunteering in Nairobi, Kenya through Australian government international volunteer programs when in July, the Australian government made the decision to withdraw all their volunteers from Nairobi and the Kenyan coast due to security concerns.

Picture to the left: UN Uganda staff including UN Women Volunteers Edna Akulli (second from left), Heleen Annemans (second from right) and Susanne Newton (right) contributing to the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign. Picture to the right: Susanne (left) and Heleen (right).
OF FLYING BULLETS, BOMB BLASTS AND HUMANITARIAN TRAGEDIES

Stephen Mwaura

Stephen is a UNV with UNHCR, where he currently serves as Health Coordinator for South Western Uganda. He has been volunteering with the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) since 2008. For this Newsletter, Steven is sharing five of his most intensive experiences.

March 2011 Mandera, Northern Kenya - Flying bullets

UNHCR Nairobi received a report of a refugee influx in the remote Somali-Kenya border town of Mandera. I was among the selected few who were sent to respond to the emergency. The climate was hostile with hot dust storms. The scarce water and lack of accommodation further complicated an already complex situation. Warlords in unruly Somalia had caused mainly women and children to flee to Kenya. For the first time in my life, apart from action films and Hindu festival fireworks, I heard live gunfire. Every afternoon, the warlords across the border would announce their might by firing in the air. This made me uneasy, but it was no comparison to counting the new graves for the daily mortality report. One day, a bullet from the Somali side hit the ground just a few meters from where I was. How we ran for our dear lives is a story for another day.
July 2009 Peshawar, North Western Frontier Province of Pakistan - Death of close colleagues by bomb blast and gunshot

Fourteen UN staff were residing in one of the guarded hotels in Peshawar Town in Pakistan. A colleague from Eastern Europe had a premonition of death and had demanded to return to his country the next day. It was never to be. That night, together with fourteen UN staff, he was blown up by a suicide bomber. We were evacuated to Islamabad for our safety. Hardly a week passed until a field assistant and personal friend of mine was shot point blank, while his guard was seriously injured in a botched abduction mission. I cried the whole day. For an African man to cry openly is rare but the pain was too much.

June 2011 Zwedru Grand Gede, Liberia - Walking 3 hours in thick jungle

A cholera outbreak had been reported in a remote location along the Ivory Coast - Liberia border. As part of the Emergency Response Team in charge of Public Health, I set out to the location. At a certain point in the journey, the route became impassable by car or motorcycle, so I decided to leave the vehicle and to walk with a guide and a staff member from the Ministry. The guide took us deeper and deeper into the thick forest until we arrived and organized the response. Although I grew up in Kinale Forest in the expansive Aberdare Ranges, I had never seen such a thick forest. It reminded me of the early European explorers. In hindsight I realize that we were exposed to attacks from animals and fighters but I felt it was my duty to stop the spread of cholera as early as possible. I believe I managed.

February 2012 Rwamwanja, South Western Uganda - Crude weapon attack and death of a government staff

I was a member of a joint multifunctional team charged with the responsibility of assessing a new location for settling refugees from the DRC. Unknown to us, the local population was against settling refugees there. In a flash, they descended on the team with stones, whips and other crude weapons. A government official was killed. A UNHCR colleague who was seriously injured remarked that the last time he was caned was during primary school. Although the experience was frightening, we went back but this time with a heavy escort.

March 2014 Lake Albert, Mid West Uganda/ DRC Border – More than 200 refugees died in a boat disaster

I was charged with the responsibility to coordinate the recovery of bodies, carry out post mortem examinations and repatriate bodies to the Eastern part of the DRC. Due to remoteness of the location and the low capacity of the Bundibugyo Hospital, I participated in the post mortem examination of more than one hundred decomposing bodies in two days. I also organized burials and the erection of a monument for twenty-two badly decomposed victims inside Uganda. To this day I have flashbacks of the mountain of bodies.
How to give Youth and Women a Voice?

Edna Akullq

Edna is a national UN Volunteer and she supports UN Women in Kampala as a Gender and Economic Programme Officer.

Youth in Uganda have historically played a significant role in shaping the social, political and economic policy landscape. Uganda has the world’s youngest population with at least 78% below the age of 30, accounting to 11 million of the citizenry. Looking at these numbers, it is crucial to empower young people all over Uganda to actively participate in policy making.

As a Gender and Economic Programme officer with UN WOMEN and under the UN Joint Programme on Gender Equality, I do so by supporting the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics. Here, I coordinated a government delegation to participate in a learning visit on gender and economic policy management in Rwanda. One of the outcomes was that the Ministry now considers gender specific issues in its budget framework papers. As a result of our close collaboration and consistent follow ups, the budget call for 2014/15 now includes gender specific budget lines. In addition to my direct engagement with the Government of Uganda, I represent UN Women in the UN Youth Engagement and Employment convergence group. For me, it is needless to say that it has been a great volunteering experience to be able to facilitate skills development and employment of youth and vulnerable groups in the country.

Uganda has the world’s youngest population with at least 78% below the age of 30, accounting to 11 million of the citizenry.
THE FIRST UNV REGIONAL RETREAT
VOLUNTEERS FROM KENYA, UGANDA AND SOMALIA COME TOGETHER TO EXCHANGE THINKING AND EXPERIENCES

Dmitry Frischin and Kelvin Keya, UNV Kenya

The first UNV Kenya, Somalia and Uganda Regional Retreat was held from 5th to 8th of November, 2014 in Lukenya, just outside Nairobi. At the retreat, more than 150 UN Volunteers came together to exchange their experiences, knowledge and to strengthen the UNV network. The event was officially opened by the UNV Regional Manager for Africa, Dr. Tapiwa Kamuruku, and graced by the Country Director of UNDP Kenya, Ms. Maria-Threse Keating, as well as the UNDP Somalia Deputy Country Director (Programmes), Mr. David Akopyan.

The overarching theme of the retreat was “Vision, Voice, and Volunteerism”, reflecting the following: Vision – Inclusive Participation in Peace and Development; Voice – Knowledge Sharing and Networking; Volunteerism – Voluntary Service to Nations and Communities.

The event provided a unique opportunity for interactive networking and knowledge sharing. In many discussions and plenaries, UNVs were able to deliberate on how the volunteering experience can be improved through host agencies and UNVs themselves. In the spirit of promoting peace and development, the organizers recognized Volunteers with outstanding results in this area through an Award ceremony. To motivate and inspire the UN Volunteers, Ms. Maria-Threse Keating, Dr. Tapiwa Kamuruku and Mr. David Akopyan shared their personal volunteer experiences and career development journeys. Ms. Rosemary Kalapurakal, UNV Deputy Executive Coordinator briefed all participants about the new UNV Strategic Framework for 2014 – 2017.

Dr. Tapiwa planting a tree to mark International Volunteer Day.

The UN Volunteers were also introduced to online volunteering (www.onlinevolunteering.org), by Ms. Annika Diederich, who encouraged volunteers to share the opportunities connected...
to online volunteering with colleagues and friends.

Led by the UNV Regional Manager for Africa, UNDP Somalia Deputy Country Director (Programmes) and UNDP Kenya Country Director, UNVs planted trees at the Maanzoni Lodge to symbolize the solidarity and inspiration of the volunteer family all over the world and to mark the 15th anniversary of International Volunteer Day.

The retreat ended with an Award ceremony, where the winners of this year were appreciated for their outstanding service and contribution to volunteerism for peace and development.

**UNV AWARDS:**

These UNVs received an Award for their outstanding service and contribution to peace and development in Uganda.

- Els Dehantschutter, UNFPA
- Goodman Kazoora, UN Habitat
- Sophie Tentrop, RCO
- Samuel Matovu, UNICEF
- Edna Akullq, UN Women
- Sakura Kunimura, UNHCR

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**Have you heard about ONLINE VOLUNTEERING?**

The UNV Online Volunteering service connects volunteers who want to contribute their skills online to organizations working for sustainable human development.

Check out the UNV website for more information on how to find volunteers and to learn how to become an online volunteer yourself.

[www.onlinevolunteering.org](http://www.onlinevolunteering.org)
FOR A LIFE OF DIGNITY FOR ALL
The Post 2015 Process in Uganda

Sophie Tentrop

Sophie is a UN Youth Volunteer and she serves as a Coordination- and Post 2015 officer in the Resident Coordinator’s Office. Within RCO, she supports the UNCT in the advocacy for localizing the Post 2015 development agenda in Uganda.

In 2015, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are officially coming to an end. Learning from the great contribution of the MDGs to the global effort in reducing hunger and poverty, the UN Secretary General has initiated an unprecedented bottom up process to develop an inclusive and people centered development agenda ‘beyond 2015’. This ‘Post 2015’ process can roughly be described in 3 ‘rounds’. From 2012-2013, Uganda participated in the ‘first round of consultations’ together with 87 other countries. As a global initiative by the UN Secretary General, these consultations involved millions of people around the world. This bottom up and inclusive process established the foundation for a truly transformative global development agenda that incorporates what people all over the world want, leaving no one behind.

As citizens of many other countries, Ugandans are particularly concerned with issues around quality of services, especially health and education, with good governance and fighting corruption, with environmental protection, adequate representation of vulnerable groups, especially women and children and the high rate of youth unemployment.

Here in Uganda, the ‘first round of consultations’ on the Post 2015 agenda also fed into Uganda’s position on sustainable development at the Rio+20 Summit and the development of Uganda’s long-term development plan Vision 2040.

After establishing ‘what’ matters most to people all around the world, a ‘second round of consultations’ was launched in selected countries in April 2014, to discuss ‘how’ this can be achieved. Although Uganda did not officially participate in this second round of consultations, it became so-to-say a ‘self-starter’. Why is that?

First of all, Uganda has been given the prestigious responsibility to preside over the 69th Session of
the UN General Assembly. H.E. Sam Kutesa from Uganda has become one of the key figures in the Post 2015 process, as the new Agenda will be set by UN member states in this very session. Of course the global attention generates a lot of interest within Uganda’s Government, Parliament and Civil Society to show global leadership.

Secondly, 2014 was the year of developing NDPIII, Uganda’s second National Development Plan. Learning from the lack of integration of the MDGs into national planning, the National Planning Authority (NPA) expressed their interest early on to integrate the Post 2015 agenda in the NDPIII design. Through the UN’s advocacy and technical support, the National Planning Authority committed to becoming one of the first countries in the world to align national development planning with the upcoming Post 2015 Agenda.

Thirdly, people in Uganda have expressed their demand to participate in the national development process and the momentum to localize the proposed Sustainable Development Goals is steadily growing. Through the Post 2015 process, all people in Uganda now have an official mandate to engage in the localization process of the new Agenda and to enable its successful implementation on the national and local level.

A key highlight in 2014 was the National Consultative Forum on the Post 2015
Through the UN’s advocacy and technical support, the National Planning Authority committed to becoming one of the first countries in the world to align national development planning with the upcoming Post 2015 Agenda.

The process to develop a universal development agenda ‘beyond 2015’ (when the Millennium Development Goals expire) was initiated at the MDG Summit in 2010. Since then, the UN Development Group and numerous Civil Society partners conducted unprecedented consultations around the world. More than 7 million people were involved in the discussion on what matters for the new agenda and how it can be implemented. In December 2014, the UN Secretary General submitted his Synthesis Report to the UN General Assembly, which consolidates all outcomes of the global consultations processes.

In this Report, the SG proposes to frame the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, brought forward by the Open Working Group, under the following six essential elements: Dignity to end poverty and fight inequality; Prosperity to grow a strong, inclusive and transformative economy; Justice to promote safe and peaceful societies and strong institutions; Partnership to catalyze global solidarity for sustainable development; Planet to protect our ecosystems for all societies and our children; and People to ensure healthy lives, knowledge, and the inclusion of women and children.
Volunteers are essential for the Post 2015 Development Agenda

Kyaidhi Priscillah, Uganda Youth Civil Society Coalition.

The Special Advisor to the UNSG on the Post 2015 Agenda Ms. Amina Mohammed and the UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa Onochie met with young women from Uganda’s Youth and Civil Society Coalition at the National Consultative Forum on the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

We as the Uganda Youth Civil Society Coalition were invited to the National Consultative Forum on the Post 2015 Development Agenda on August 8th, 2014 at the Prime Minister’s Office, to represent young Volunteers in Uganda. At this High Level Forum, we were able to learn about the global process from H.E. Amina Mohammed, who is the Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General on the Post 2015 Development Agenda. In addition to H.E., we were able to see H.E. Sam Kutesa, who is currently the President over the UN General Assembly. During the Forum, we learned about the different perspectives on the Post 2015 process and the role Uganda plays in it from Hon. Mary Okurut, Minister of Finance, Dr. Kisambaa Mugerwa, Chairman of the National Planning Authority, Members of Parliament, Civil Society representatives and many others. To share our experiences as young Volunteers in front of such High Level Panellists was a great challenge and we felt very privileged to be part of a process that will change the world.

Our absolute highlight of the event was our encounter with Her Excellency Amina Mohammed and the UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onochie. They invited me and a few other members of the Uganda Youth Civil Society Coalition to discuss issues around the Post 2015 agenda later that day at Serena Hotel.

What we seem all to remember fondly from this meeting is the humility these two ladies showed us and how grounded they are, even after attaining such success in their lives. It was incredibly inspiring to all of us to discuss common challenges as girls and women. That made us realise that as African women we have many places in the world and that there is nothing as fulfilling as fighting for a better world in whatever capacity we have.
YOUNG PEOPLE IN KARAMOJA VOTE FOR THE FUTURE THEY WANT

Sophie Tentrop

250 Youth in the Karamoja region of Uganda give their vote for the My World Survey

The Karamoja region of Uganda is home to approximately 1.3 million people, most of them pastoralists or agro-pastoralists. This means that their livelihood is based on small-scale agriculture and or cattle herding, which involves moving from place to place. Uganda has one of the most youthful populations in the world and is yet at the same time facing the highest youth unemployment rate in Africa (60%-80%).

I took the International Youth Day Celebration on 12th of August in Moroto, the capital of Karamoja, as an opportunity to get young people in the remotest part of Uganda excited for the Post 2015 agenda. After 10 hours on bumpy roads, we reached Moroto, which is surrounded by beautiful savanna plains and mountains. Together with the Youth Coalition of Uganda, an umbrella association for youth organizations, we swarmed out. Whereas I gathered votes at the annual meeting of the Uganda Youth Council meeting and a VSO Vocational training center, other fellow volunteers were able to visit communities and households.

Armed with my poll box, paper votes and pens, I attracted the attention of many students from the vocational training center and members of the Youth Council. As soon as I started explaining what the My World survey is about, and that everyone here gets to vote on what matters most to them, I could hardly pass out the pens and papers fast enough. Students began discussing the 16 items while filling out the survey on the hood of a car or just the wall post. But I also received critical questions: “Why does this matter to us?” and “What will this survey change for me?”. This was a great entry point to discuss the positive effects that volunteering does not only have for yourself but also for your community. I was lucky to have the Youth Coalition volunteers with me. Serving as a great example themselves, they discussed why volunteering matters for Uganda and the region, how everyone can get engaged and what the potential benefits are. As Female Genital Mutilation is a big issue in Karamoja, they used their time in the communities to discuss these practices with women, to speak about their options for education and how to take action for the development of their communities.
How Alfred and Ruth got access to Health Services in Kataza

Samuel Matovu

Samuel Matovu is a National UNV and he serves as a Programme Officer for UNICEF.

Family Health Day took place on a Sunday at Kiswa Baptist Church in Kataza. The people in this community suffer from poor living conditions and the access to basic services is far from sufficient.

The event was attended by many mothers who brought in their children. One of them was Ruth Nakate, a road-side cleaner with Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA). She was accompanied by her husband Alfred Twinomujuni, a hawker.

The adolescent couple had a 3-year old daughter and they reported many difficulties in accessing services from the nearby Health centre IV. Many times they said, the facility was overwhelmed by patients, thereby limiting the availability of healthcare services to the families. Therefore, the couple commended the initiative of their Pastor Wilson Tamale, and his effort to bring health services to their church.

Family Health Days build on the concept of Child Health Days. They provide an expanded set of services that increase coverage of life-saving care and they are usually conducted at places of worship, especially mosques and churches.

Alfred and Ruth heard about the Family Health Day at their church through an announcement by their pastor and door-to-door social mobilisation by Uganda Red Cross Society Volunteers.

Typically, mothers and their children access services at their respective places of worship, before or after the service. After checking the child’s and mother’s health card, the health workers record the child’s weight, and assess her or his nutritional status. Thereafter, immunisation, deworming, antenatal care, HIV/AIDS testing and counselling, blood sugar-, and blood pressure testing can be provided in addition to a number of other services.

Alfred and Ruth are now regular attendants of Family Health Days, which are held quarterly every January, April, July and October.

"Alfred and Ruth heard about the Family Health Day at their church through an announcement by their pastor and door-to-door social mobilisation by Uganda Red Cross Society volunteers."
WOMEN IN UGANDAN POLITICS: ON THEIR WAY, BUT NOT THERE YET

Heleen Annemans

Heleen is an International Youth Volunteer from Belgium. She serves as a Programme Officer for UN Women on Women Leadership, Inter-Agency Coordination and Communications.

Over the last decades women have gained increasing access to the political arena in Uganda. But even though the numbers have gone up, women still face many barriers to becoming fully equal players in the political field. UN Women Uganda recently conducted a study on the limitations and opportunities women face when entering the political life.

Promising Figures

In Uganda 35% of the Members of Parliament are women. The Speaker of the House, the second most important person in Ugandan politics, Honourable Rebecca Kadaga, is a woman. Several key ministries such as Finance, Planning and Economic Development; Trade and Industry; Education and Sports and Gender, Labour and Social Development are headed by women. Uganda’s constitution contains several provisions such as affirmative action in both politics and education to ensure women’s rights, equal access and gender equality. So why should we still advocate for the rights of women in political leadership? The figures sound splendid, women seem well represented. But behind the numbers lies another reality.

The Barriers

Women who want to enter Ugandan politics face a great number of challenges.

UN Women Uganda recently commissioned a study, led by Professor Josephine Ahikire from Makerere University, to identify the barriers and opportunities for both aspiring and long-standing female Members of Parliament and local councillors. The results were eye-opening.

One of the main challenges for female councillors is the geographical area they have to represent. Since only one third of the councillors have to be women, the districts were re-divided so they all have a female representative. This leads to a situation where women councillors have to cover much wider territories than their directly elected (and mostly male) counterparts. This is both a physical and financial burden many cannot carry. For one third of the seats, only women can be elected, the other two thirds are free to all. However, mostly men get elected for these seats since all constituencies have a female representative.

Besides this, women who dare take on a leadership position often face both physical and psychological harassment. A large number of female MPs reported having been approached or forced into sexual contacts with their male counterparts. In order to get support for their ideas or to get a more prominent position within the party, women are often asked for sexual favours. If they refuse, it might be the end of their political career. But even when it does not go as far as
real physical contact, female leaders have to put up with sexist comments, jokes and statements in- and outside the political arena. Women who ran for local councillor positions stated that the campaigns are often dirty, exposing their private life and are full of lies.

Also, the financial burden of campaigning and travelling back and forth to their constituencies is seen by many as an important barrier to start the political adventure.

The Opportunities

However, besides all these challenges, women definitely have a number of opportunities to grasp. While affirmative action can be a hindrance for women to win the directly elected seats, since many do not want to be represented by two women, it also offers them the opportunity of a physical presence both in parliament and in local councils. It is up to women to act on this occasion and to show people their expertise and competence.

Secondly, in the current period the general public seems rather receptive to the idea of female leaders. Over the last months several articles appeared in the newspapers calling for a female president. During her visit to Uganda last October, Graca Machel, a leading African woman, also spoke out for a female president. It is yet to be seen whether these calls will be picked up further during the run towards the 2016 elections.

Lastly, the strength of the women’s movement can help women to advance their efforts. If it was not for collective action of women, the affirmative action policy would never have seen the light of day. If women unite and support a common agenda, the future for women in politics can get much brighter. Many women in Uganda have set the example. They can serve as mentors for a new generation to come.

What shall we do?

In order to overcome the barriers and to grasp the existing opportunities, many strategies can be chosen. The first and foremost important issue to address is a change of mind within society. There is no logical reason why a woman could not be as good a leader as a man. Women should get the chance to represent their people. Secondly, civic education should be made more gender sensitive and should inform the people about the fact that women are also allowed to run for the directly elected seat. Thirdly and lastly, women have to show themselves and fight for good positions within their parties. Not only on paper but also in reality.

2016 and beyond

In 2016 new elections will take place in Uganda. If all barriers and opportunities mentioned above are addressed, a difference can be made. Let us all work together to step up and push the percentage of 35% of female MPs towards 50%, both in 2016 and beyond.
US-UGANDAN DIASPORA SUPPORTS YOUNG MEN TO MAKE BRICKS IN LAKE VICTORIA

Hadijah Nabbale

Hadijah is a National UNV with the UNDP Governance Unit in Kampala, where she serves as a Programme Officer, working with Ugandan Diaspora Communities. To document the success of investments by Ugandans who live abroad, Hadijah visited a brick building project in Lake Victoria.

Right photo: Hadijah sailing on Lake Victoria

I hit the road to Entebbe on a Friday morning to meet with a group of young people who produce bricks on a small island in the midst of Lake Victoria. Patiently, I drove through the crazy Kampala traffic. At a place called Abaita Ababiri, I met with Ssemugenyi Louis and Ebuku Joseph, two young men who seemed both happy and nervous to see me. I introduced myself as the UN Volunteer who wanted to document their innovation. In my experience, being a UNV makes it a lot easier to relate to young people and vice versa. As we reached the landing site at Lake Victoria, Louis and Joseph led me to the shore and we boarded a wooden engine-boat. I thought it would be a good idea to ask for a life jacket, but everyone looked at me in awe as though I had asked them for a million dollars. Obviously, there were no such safety provisions and the captain just said ‘lady get on board or else we leave you’. The boat was full with people without life jackets and after I contemplated the risks and gains, I decided to get on board. It was my very first time to sail in such a vessel. I was risking my life to document the achievements of these young people and I could only trust God that I would get back safely. Luckily, the sail went smoothly and I was thankful to reach the Buwala landing site.

Once we got off the boat, we visited the Athi building site, which consists of about 10 acres of land. Here, these young people produce the interlocking bricks that I came here to see. The site did not have more than a few brick buildings,
and the area is located about 2km away from a serene community surrounded by a small forest.

The young men working here are supported by Dr. Margeret Lubega, a Ugandan pediatrician who lives in the US-Ugandan diaspora. She is the one who acquired the land and who bought the machines to manufacture these bricks. Dr. Lubega was inspired to invest in her home country through various UNDP initiatives, such as the project on “Capacity Building for Strengthening Diaspora Resource Mobilization and Utilization”.

Said project aims at creating an enabling environment for diaspora contributions that will lead to growth and socio-economic transformation. The project is anchored within Uganda’s long term development plan Vision 2040 and its objective to transition from a low-income into a middle-income economy.

With the support of Dr. Lubega, these 9 young men are able to run the machines for brick manufacturing just outside of their community in Buwala.

The main ingredient is local soil which is tested for a certain balance of clay and sand, before it is blended with cement and water in a concrete-mixing machine. Once it is mixed, the workers pour the mass into molds and let it settle to dry. Interlocking bricks are environmentally friendly, since they do not require firewood like other clay bricks that have to be baked in an oven at high temperatures. Another advantage is the price: these bricks are cheaper than conventional bricks, because no mortar is required in the building process as they interlock with each other.

This project employs young people and provides them with their daily basic needs, but there are challenges as well. People in Uganda are still...
accustomed to using locally burned bricks and mortar, and a market for this new type of bricks had to be created.

As I sailed back to the Kitooro landing site, I thought about the amazing chance that these young people are getting through the Ugandan Diaspora. I am convinced that such Diaspora investments have a positive effect on Uganda’s socio-economic development and that we should continue to support and encourage them.

The group of boys who run Athi Building Products Ltd standing under their own constructed shelter

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The young men working here are supported by Dr. Margeret Lubega, a Ugandan pediatrician who lives in the US-Ugandan diaspora. She is the one who acquired the land and who bought the machines to manufacture these bricks. Dr. Lubega was inspired to invest in her home country through various UNDP initiatives, such as the project on “Capacity Building for Strengthening Diaspora Resource Mobilization and Utilization”

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According to the 2013 MDG Report, Uganda has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, estimated at 438 deaths per 100,000 live births. The number of women who die during pregnancy and childbirth-related complications is estimated at 16 mothers daily. To address this unacceptably low progression in attaining the fifth Millennium Development Goal, the Government of Uganda in 2013 committed to accelerate the progress to achieve the MDGs by taking affirmative action. In support of this initiative, the UN adopted three strategic priorities (Convergence Areas) under its Northern Uganda Implementation Plan (NUIP) to include: Gender Equality, Women’s Empowerment and Gender-Based Violence (GBV); Maternal and New-Born health (MNH); and Youth Engagement and Employment (YEE).

The MNH Convergence Group in the Acholi/ West Nile Region, including Gulu, Kisoro, Arua and Yumbe districts, decided to enhance greater community response to Maternal and New-Born Health issues by building a sustainable partnership with the Media to respond to the high MNH related death rate and medical complications in Northern Uganda. The MNH Convergence Group in Gulu mobilized & engaged local media institutions and journalists in trainings to enhance documentation, reporting and advocacy. The training focused on the interaction between MNH technicians and the media and it facilitated dialogue on how to reduce the risk for mothers and their babies during childbirth by improving maternal health and child care in hospitals/ health facilities and post natal care by health workers and communities through professional and effective advocacy.

Facilitated by the UN Area Coordination System, the Convergence Group established the basis for the engagement. To do so, a concept perception survey was conducted among 17 selected media institutions to establish the relevance and to assess its role in advancing Maternal and Newborn Health in Gulu and Arua districts. The outcome was overwhelming as all 17 institutions thought it was a good idea and that they could be a part of the initiative.

According to the 2013 MDG Report, Uganda has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, estimated at 438 deaths per 100,000 live births.
Based upon the overwhelming outcome from this initial media engagement, a concept note was prepared and the Resident Coordinator’s Office (RCO) in Kampala decided to fund the initiative in the tune of UGX10,000,000.00 (US$3,703) under its coordination budget.

A key activity was the training of 16 media institutions, including 43 journalists, who took part in two different 2-day trainings. The resource personnel came from the members of the MNH Convergence Group and local district leaders, UNICEF WHO, UNFPA, UN-Women, the Resident Coordinators Office, Communication for Development Foundation Uganda (CDFU), the District Health Office and the UN Inter-agency Communications Group.

The 16 media institutions developed appropriate radio programmes with Ministry of Health approved MNH messages and they targeted approximately 1,000,000 listeners in the four districts of Gulu, Kitgum, Arua and Yumbe over a period of 4 months (Sept-Dec 2014). Combined, the media institutions produced 104 hours of radio programming aired in Northern Uganda. And by the end of the year expectations were exceeded by far, with more than 4 million people reached.

The MNH media training is an excellent example for the DaO principle of Communicating as One, through standardized messaging and a common UN position. Through the UN’s coherent engagements and increasing dialogues (at Convergence level facilitated by the UN Area Coordinators) with the Local Government district leaders around key development challenges, communities are beginning to see One UN rather than individual agencies, as it was the case in the past.

Delivering as One particularly paid off in terms of cost-benefit-analysis. With an approximate input of UGX 10,000,000 (US$3,703) as direct training cost, the media institutions have produced 104 hours of media coverage which is worth UGX 72,800,000 or US$26,963; multiplying the investment cost by 7 times.
Promoting the Ideals of the UN through Volunteerism-United Nations Association Uganda (UNAU)

Linda A. Asaba

Linda is a Programme Officer at United Nations Association Uganda and a valuable member of the UN Communication Group.

UNAU’s work is solely carried out by volunteers to promote the ideals of the United Nations in Uganda. Hereby we have a specific focus on young people in over 20 Universities and High Schools all over Uganda. The work of UNAU focuses on empowering youth in the area of climate change and environmental protection, peace and security, youth empowerment and entrepreneurship as well as human rights. UNAU stands in a long tradition to volunteer for the UN in Uganda. One highlight in our support to the UN Uganda in 2014 was certainly the celebration of UN Day and the Youth Innovator’s Hangout in October at Sheraton Gardens.

As the deadline of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approaches, momentum is building in Uganda and around the world to define the Post 2015 development agenda. UNAU has actively been part of the Post 2015 process in Uganda, whereby we are mainly focusing on the inclusion of young voices in the new development agenda. Youth make up more than half of the world’s population and it is extremely relevant to consider the needs and aspirations of young people in the Post 2015 agenda.

To elevate the voice of Uganda’s youth in the Post 2015 process, UNAU has carried out consultations in different educational institutions. Through the support of the Convergence Group on Youth Engagement and Employment (YEE), we were able to participate in the Post 2015 Youth Summit in New York. One of UNAU’s key activities in the Post 2015 process is our Freedom from Violence Project, which involves the media, youth CSOs and academia to advocate for sustainable peace in the Post 2015 development agenda.

For further information, please contact Linda Asaba at linda@unauganda.org.

#peacepost2015
In Memoriam
Stella Atwine

“Stella’s friendliness and humility touched many of her co-workers and she left an incredible mark on the minds of her friends and colleagues.”

Stella Atwine’s sudden passing made October 17th one of the hardest days for the UN family in 2014. Stella was an important part of the United Nations Volunteers team in Uganda in her position as a UNV Programme Assistant. Since joining the team in May 2013, Stella was acknowledged as a solid and committed professional. With her extensive experience in development work and her personal style, she was highly respected for her exemplary, dedicated service. Stella’s friendliness and humility touched many of her co-workers and she left an incredible mark on the minds of her friends and colleagues. The United Nations lost a good friend and a valuable team member. We will continue to remember Stella with fondness and pride.

Stella held a B.A. in Adult and Community Education from Makerere University and a Post-graduate Diploma in Project Planning and Management from Gulu University. Stella was a great team-player and the UNV family will remember her by her selfless contribution towards rehabilitation, peace and development in Uganda.

Stella’s young daughters, Samantha and Paula, are very much in our thoughts and hearts. We trust that the memories of Stella will long outshine the suffering that the UNV family endured.
After the UNV Programme Officer sent a message to inform the UNV family of the sudden death of Stella, UNV Office in Uganda received many messages of condolences and sympathy from her colleagues including UNV Programme Assistants from Brazil, Samoa, Ghana, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Kyrgyzstan, India, Nepal, Jerusalem, Lesotho, Togo, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Senegal, Haiti and Mauritania. These are just few to mention. Let us remember what colleagues said about Stella:

From Cooper Mykers, UNV Programme Officer, Lesotho:

"I can only express my deep sympathy to all of us on this irreplaceable loss of a colleague.

From Tania Haque, UNV Programme Assistant, Bangladesh:

"...I am deeply downhearted to know about the untimely demise of our friend Stella! She was such a sweet colleague. I can remember her smile and jovial nature. It is a great loss to our UNV family."

From Yolène Boisrolin Boyer, UNV Programme Assistant, Haiti:

"I was paralyzed while seeing all those e-mails “In memoriam – Ms Stella Atwine”! Stella was a wonderful and calm person and my condolences go to her family. May God protect her children. RIP Stella"

From Ramatoulaye Fall, UNV Programme Assistant, Senegal:

"I extend my heartfelt condolences and I pray to God to provide solace to the departed soul and to give courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss"

From Markara Nuoan, UNV Programme Assistant, Cambodia:

"We heard the news and we shared the sadness …This is really the hardest time for family and friends; I would like to send my deepest condolence to all and wish time would cure this sadness...."

From Tatiana Prokhorova, UNV Programme Officer, Nepal:

"I am terribly shocked with the news, I remember her very well as if we met just yesterday. I will light a candle for her next time I am in church and may her soul rest in peace. My sincerest condolences to her friends, family and of course little daughters.... God bless them"
Christmas Party Pictures