

UNV Newsletter

Vol - 2

Issue 5

September - December 2010

Very Happy, Peaceful, Safe and Prosperous New Year 2011

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Home Headlines

International Volunteers Day: Actualizing the MDGs

UNV India organised various events such as photo exhibitions, a media talk and discussion and essay and slogan writing contests to mark 5 December as International Volunteer Day (IVD).

The events brought together people from all walks of life including the Government, UN agencies, NGOs, media, corporate sector and civil society on a common platform and recognised freewill, commitment, solidarity and engagement expressed by tens of thousands of volunteers.



UNDP RR/UNRC Addressing

UNV India volunteers have mainstreamed marginalized groups and disadvantaged people through local government initiatives that address social exclusion in the planning processes. They have also mobilized civil society action for Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by organizing various events such as the Right to Information (RTI) campaign in Odisha. UNV Country Office Team in Delhi commemorated the IVD by organizing a photo exhibition on "Volunteering for the MDGs" on 4th December. It was inaugurated by Mr. Sam Sharpe, Head of DFID India, at the UNDP Office in Delhi. The event was organized jointly by Skillshare International, UNV and the UN Information Centre (UNIC). UNV India also partnered with a number of organizations including Times Foundation, National Foundation for Communal Harmony, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), VSO, IEEE, Joining Hand, WWF, WAYE, CYSD, Bakul Foundation, Tatapower, etc., for various events to mark the day across India. UNV India also contributed to the 'Share the Story Campaign' a 24-hour online film festival organized by UNV Headquarter. In Odisha UNV/UNDP partnered with CYSD and Bakul Foundation to mark the IVD. Organizing impressive events, it highlighted the role of volunteers to the achievement of MDGs within 2010.

UNV Senior Portfolio Manager Visits India

Mr. Ibrahim Hussein, Senior Portfolio Manager for South Asia and the Pacific Region visited India to meet with UNV volunteers, UNDP and project staff. On 20 November, a meeting with the Government, UN staff, media, civil society and project representatives was held at Gumla district of Jharkhand to discuss about UNV roles in capacity development for district planning. (...cont to page 3)



Mr. Ibrahim Hussein, UNV Senior Portfolio Manager, South Asia and Pacific Addressing Communities in Jharkhand

Volunteering for Inclusive Development: Actualising the Millennium Development Goals

WILPF, UNV India, National Foundation for Communal Harmony and the Times foundation collaborated to mark IVD by organizing a discussion on inclusive development towards actualizing the MDGs. Mrs. Sudha Pillai, Member Secretary of the Planning Commission delivered the keynote address while Ms. Radhika Kaul Batra from UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) delivered a special address on behalf of Mr. Patrice Coeur Bizot – United Nations Resident Coordinator. Other eminent speakers included:

Mr. Don Mohanlal, Nand & Jeet Khemka Foundation
 Mr. Sudarshan Iyengar, Vice Chancellor, Gujarat Vidyapith
 Mr. Sudhir K. Sinha, Country Head – CSR and R&R at ArcelorMittal
 Mr. Sandeep Silas, Social Activist

The focus of the discussion was how volunteerism contributes to inclusive development towards achieving the MDGs. The panel members expressed their views on volunteerism and its recognition by the Government and the society at large.



Panel Discussion on 13 Dec



Raising Question by Praveen from VSO



UNV volunteer Elisa – IVD Odisha

The panel discussed how to structure volunteerism to make it meaningful so that youth and people from all walks of lives extend their resources with freewill and commitment towards the noble cause of human development. The contribution of UNV volunteers was highlighted by the UN Resident Coordinator as under:

“As we celebrate India’s progress, we also commit to work with the Government to address critical challenges – to fight hunger; to save the 1.5 million children who die every year before their first birthday; to provide clean water and sanitation to over 80 million poor who live in cities and towns; to ensure that mothers do not die and that the most vulnerable and marginalised have equal access to services. We have only five years to keep the promises. If India does not achieve the MDGs, the world will not. The mobilization of volunteers from all walks of life will help us greatly towards inclusive development and actualizing the MDGs within five years.”



Photo Exhibit Inauguration



Ms. Chandni Joshi from Skillshare



Photo Exhibition on 4 December

IVD on 4-5 December in Delhi and Odisha

UNV, Skillshare International, DFID and UNIC partnered to organise a photo exhibition and a panel discussion at the UN House on 4 December focusing on volunteering for the MDGs. It was inaugurated by Mr. Sam Sharpe, Head of DFID-India. About 100 participants, particularly community volunteers actively participated in this event. Mrs. Chandni Joshi, Chair Skillshare International moderated the panel discussion.

Doordarshan, India's national television network broadcast a live discussion on 'volunteering for the MDGs' in its one hour discussion-oriented program, 'India Advantage'. The panel comprised of officials from UNV Headquarters in Bonn, senior Government officials, volunteers in the field, health practitioners and mediapersons. The UNV Programme Officer and other national UNV volunteers also participated in the discussion. The various events to make IVD were also covered by All India Radio (AIR) and other national media. Two National UNV volunteers namely, Mr. Yogendra Shukla and Mr. Chandan Behera organized IVD events on their own personal initiative. It has been highly appreciated. Mr. Behera organized plantation whereas Mr. Shukla inspired youths through an official communiqué.



UNV Programme Officer – Mr. Anoj Chhetri,
Addressing the Event

Essay and Slogan Contests on “Volunteering for the MDGs”

An online Essay and Slogan writing contest was organised in November by Joining Hands, supported by UNV India, the Times Foundation, IEEE, WILPF, VSO and WWF. More than 20 schools and 50 colleges in Delhi participated in this contest. The possibility of online submissions allowed youth from all over India to participate in the competition. The large scale participation is an indicator that the Indian youth are becoming more aware of the existing problems in their country and are reaching out to play a bigger role in addressing these problems.

The first prize winning slogan contributed by Vandasue Rodrigues reads: ***“Utopia many a man may prophecy, the catalyst, though, has got to be me”***.

The above slogan was conceived with the common man in mind. We all believe that an ideal and balanced environment can be created to bring about change. What we don't do, however, is be the person who takes the first step towards a more positive future. There is no 'someone' out there to take care of the future - our future is what we make of it ourselves, today! This attitude should drive every volunteer wanting to make a difference.



Participants and Winners for Essay and Slogan Writing Contest

The essay contests winners respectively for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places are Ms. Swati Rastogi, Mr. Himanshu Saxena, and Ms. Sasmita Patnaik. Similarly, the slogan contests winners for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places respectively are Ms. Vandasue Rodrigues, Ms. Asfia Jabeen and Mr. Ankit Gupta.

UNV Senior Portfolio Manager Visits India (...cont. from page 1)

The team visited two model villages: Jhargaon and Tilwari where people showed a great deal of hospitality, enthusiasm and commitment for causes of development. They observed community information centre and a community fish pond. Women's groups shared their initiatives to prohibit local alcohol production and consumption which had adversely affected their life and livelihoods. The overwhelming commitment and enthusiasm of local people and line departments including the banks and media left an indelible impression on the visiting team.

Stand Up and Take Action (SUTA): Make Noise for MDGs

Two national UNV volunteers namely, Mr. Ramakanta Satapathy and Ms. Srabani Das are working with the UN Millennium Campaign dedicated exclusively to promote accountability on the MDGs in Bihar and Odisha. Recently they facilitated a campaign called the “Stand Up and Take Action (SUTA): Make Noise for MDGs”. The Campaign was observed all over the world from 17-19 September 2010 on the eve of the UN MDG Review Summit (on completion of 10 years of the Millennium Declaration) held from 20-22 September 2010 in New York. UNV volunteers played an important role in making it a great success in India. UNV India also held a two day workshop for all UNV volunteers across India to meet and interact with each other and sensitize them on the MDGs and volunteerism as a powerful force for development.

The MDG events included public rallies, public hearings, signature campaigns, thumb impression campaigns, art competitions, media advocacy, etc. This year’s theme of ‘Making a noise for the MDGs’ was reflected in local events where civil society gathered in large numbers and used traditional musical instruments to highlight their concerns to the Government. Mr. Satapathy also facilitated the formation of an ‘INGOs Core Committee on MDGs’ in the state to facilitate mobilisation of resources and support from donor agencies by integrating MDGs in their ongoing programme strategy.

A mobile “Right to Information” caravan went around the city of Bhubaneswar in Odisha to raise awareness on the RTI Act. They joined hands in addressing issues related to health, education, livelihood, gender and environment. Information stalls were put up on each of the MDGs and development practitioners, thematic experts and government officials took part in the discussions.

On 18 September 2010, Mr. Naveen Pattnaik, Chief Minister of Odisha, participated in the Stand Against Poverty Campaign and appreciated the contributions made by all stakeholders and emphasized on the achievement of MDGs. The programme concluded with the “Make a Noise” event. The UNV volunteers working in Nagaland sensitized people about MDGs and the role of the Government and the community as a whole for achieving MDGs by displaying banners at strategic public places in the capital city and publishing articles in local newspapers.

Stand Up and Take Action



SUTA – Patna



SUTA - Patna



SUTA - Nagaland



SUTA - Orissa



SUTA - Patna

UNV PO Visits Nagaland: North East India

Shifting cultivation called *Jhum* practice in Nagaland has been one of the most suitable forms of agriculture for the agro-climatic conditions of the region, supporting rich crop genetic diversity. However, in recent years, a shortened *jhum* cycle is observed, leading to declined crop yields and accelerated degradation of the forest ecosystem. As a result, families who once had food security are now unable to meet their food requirements. The project will introduce participatory planning processes and will prioritize activities identified through the involvement of the entire community in the development of community resource management plans which reflect more productive and sustainable use of available resources. The overall goal is to maintain ecosystem services and meet livelihood needs.

On 23 September, a field visit was organized to interact with Self-Help-Groups (SHGs) and communities at Sankiton, Wokha villages at Wokha District. An interaction programme was also organized with civil society organizations and representatives of the Government. The ideas on volunteerism were discussed at length.



Post Harvest Technology at Wokha



UNV PO interacting with Self-Help-Group

Meet your New UNV Colleagues

Mr. Abhishek Khare	– Technical Support Officer	– CDLG (Madhya Pradesh)
Ms. Swapnal Rawat	– Technical Support Officer	– CDLG (Madhya Pradesh)
Mr. Sudhir Raj	– Technical Support Officer	– CDLG (Uttar Pradesh)
Ms. Moumita Sarkar	– Technical Support Officer	– CDLG (Chhattisgarh)
Mr. Abhay Kant Srivastava	– Technical Support Officer	– CDLG (Chhattisgarh)
Mr. S. Anand	– Technical Support Officer	– CDLG (Bihar)
Ms. Hamsa Vijayaraghavan	– Refugee Status Determination Specialist	– UNHCR (New Delhi)
Mr. Arkabrata Goswami	– Refugee Status Determination Specialist	– UNHCR (New Delhi)
Ms. Shilpa Grewal	– Protection Assistant	– UNHCR (New Delhi)
Ms. Rosy Sofia	– Voluntary Repatriation Facilitator	– UNHCR (Chennai)

Meet Your Colleagues

Neha Bhat: a Committed Young National UNV

Neha Bhat is working as a Refugee Status Determination Specialist with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in New Delhi as a United Nations Volunteer for the past ten months. Neha is a 2007 graduate from the prestigious National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata where she completed her B.A. LLB (Hons.) with the focus on Human Rights, Law and Social Sciences. Since her college days, she has also volunteered as UN Online Volunteer for a refugee rights organisation called RESPECT based in Canada. She comes to the United Nations Volunteer program with full-time work experience of close to three years as a Legal Officer with the Capital Markets regulator, the Securities and Exchange Board of India in Mumbai.



UNV volunteer
Neha Bhat

"I believe that only when well qualified professionals with extensive knowledge, good strong foundational understanding come and join initiatives like National UNV programs and other Volunteer programs like Teach India/Teach for India etc. would we be able to contribute significantly and effectively towards achievement of Millennium Development Goals. There is an immediate need to consolidate "skills set" of people who are willing to work and give their time to the field of social development and community service and volunteer programs are one of the best mechanisms available to harness such skills", says Neha.

Neha is multi-lingual and is able to speak 3 languages fluently, with a basic to intermediate ability to communicate in four other languages. Meeting people and interacting with them to understand social constructs, mores and cultures is a passion for her and she believes that her position with UNHCR facilitates this interest of her. Most recently, Neha was part of the Panel Discussion on the Doordarshan show, The India Advantage on the eve of International Volunteers Day on 4 December 2010.

Sushil Kumar Das: a Dedicated and Committed UNV Volunteer

Sushil Kumar Das is a committed and motivated volunteer, presently working with UNV India as a District Support Officer under the Capacity Development for District Planning Project based in District Gumla of Jharkhand state since June 2009. The district is comprised of 12 blocks in security sensitive areas. Committed by spirit of volunteerism Sushil has been associated with district administration for the improvement of health, education, livelihood and other basic amenities of the community. "This was my first experience as a UNV volunteer to associate with the Government agency" says Sushil with pride. He says that it was difficult to establish rapport initially with the district administration, but now he feels that he is popular in all line departments.



UNV volunteer Sushil
Kumar Das

Now Sushil is playing a catalyst role in the various activities of the district. He is also supporting the line department Heads in the preparation of the village development plan for the model villages along with the departmental annual plans. Now he has achieved a laboratory of the convergence of all line departments for the common goal of Total Village Development (TVD) of Village Jhargaon, replicating the learning in other villages such as Tilwari village. He has mobilized line departments for the convergence programme. He also mobilized community members especially the marginalized families in the process of village planning, implementing and monitoring the various developmental activities. People have involved themselves voluntarily in the process of village planning and implementation.

Sushil has a Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development with specialization of Project Planning from Xavier Institute of Social Service (XISS), Ranchi, Jharkhand. He also has a Diploma in Information Technology. Since the completion of his both diploma courses he has worked with four NGOs and one funding agency where he undertook social development work for the benefits of poorest of the poor peoples. He also mobilized many deprived families for the improvement of their health, education and livelihood status. He has also strengthened the capacity of many Community Based Organizations and stakeholders for their socio-economic development.

Sushil believes in volunteerism based on free will, motivation and solidarity. Sushil says that one, who works with free will, self motivation and solidarity on behalf of the deprived people without having financial or material gain for the peace and prosperity of the society, improves the quality of life of poor people. It also enhances self satisfaction and dignity. He says further that volunteerism provides self satisfaction and motivation.

Online volunteers Award

Home to one of the largest operations of the UNV Programme in the world, the Indian voluntary sector has taken the lead in supporting government and civil society initiatives aimed at achieving the MDGs and have now made its presence felt in the cyber world as well.

Six Indians are among the winners of the UNV Online Volunteering Award 2010 awarded for contributions towards achieving the MDGs. The awards are hosted by the German Positive Nett-Works Association, an online platform of exemplary change initiatives, solutions and tools to address development issues and were announced on the eve of the International Volunteers Day which is observed globally on 5 December each year. The winners are:

Ms. Ritika Verma, Ms. Priyanka Ohri, Ms. Samarpita Mukherjee Sharma, Ms. Akanksha Gulia and Mr. Tarun Chawla, members of a team of online volunteers, nominated by the German organization Positive Nett-Works for setting up the Indian edition of their online magazine Youth Leader.

Ms. Radha Taralekar, a doctor and member of a team of eight online volunteers, who shared their diverse medical expertise to help the Kitega Community Centre in Uganda, set up a scheme for low-cost health services and insurance.

Recognizing the importance of volunteerism, Mr. Patrice Coeur-Bizot, United Nations Resident Coordinator said: "India's voluntary sector has a formidable challenge and at the same time fantastic opportunities ahead. If India does not achieve the MDGs, the world will not. The mobilization of volunteers from all walks of life can help us accelerate progress towards achieving the MDGs before the 2015 deadline." Congratulating the winners of the awards, he added that the youth of India can and are playing a critical role.

UN Calendar

International Day of Commemoration in memory Of the victim of Holocaust	January 27
International Mother Language Day	February 21
International Women's Day	March 08

Upcoming Official Holidays

Republic Day	January 26
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"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."

Franklin D. Roosevelt

JANUARY 2011

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FEBRUARY 2011

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Tips from the UN Stress Counselor's Office

Too Busy?

These days I know many people who live in a rush they don't want and didn't create, or at least didn't mean to create. People busy themselves in many ways: preparing, shuffling papers, talking on phone/with people, dealing with other people's problems, etc. Nine out of ten times when I ask someone "how are you?" the response is "busy." "I am well, thank you" or "doing great" have been replaced! Being too busy, which may seem necessary and unavoidable, can become a habit so entrenched that it leads to procrastination/ cut short what really matters. It's a great defense against - pretty much anything; and explains the behavior of many people at work.

WHY we all fall into the trap of being overly busy?

- It brings in a sense of achievement and considered as adding value.
- People bother them less; lower the chances of others giving them additional work
- It serves as an excuse for poor performance
- We're afraid we'll be left out if we slow down.
- We avoid dealing with real big issues and parts of our life that are falling apart and need attention.
- We do not know how to be unoccupied- scared of having nothing to do.
- Most of us feel validated by a full schedule and its association with popularity and social standing (status symbol).
- People equate being busy with being important.



"Could you tell Mr. Branson, I'm still waiting to see him."

Problems with leading the "too busy" life are:

- It's not fun. When we are busy we are usually scattered, frenetic, stressed, anxious and certainly not connected with what's going on at the given moment.
- We are unable to set our own temperature and control our lives.
- It's not effective. It causes accidents/ errors and turns otherwise polite people rude. When we scramble away at trying to optimize for everything, it leads to optimizing nothing.
- People who are always busy are time poor. There's just too much demanding their attention - advances in technology, longer work days, escalating demands both at workplace and home. They get easily sidetracked and have trouble prioritizing.

Those of you, who walk around saying how busy you are, get a grip. After all our busy lives can be managed by following strategies that are pretty basic.

- ♣ **Do one thing at a time:** Multitasking is fun but it creates chaos. Eliminate unnecessary stuff and focus attention on doing what is most important. These way things will move along smoother and you also spare yourself the stress of having a bunch of half-completed items.

- ♣ Change your language: When someone asks, "How you are doing?"- refrain from telling how busy you are. Take a moment to reflect and see what the "busy" is covering up. Really, how are you? Say something more honest than you're busy (e.g., over scheduling veils your fear of underperformance).
- ♣ Don't over-schedule: This includes the number of commitments and how much time each commitment requires. Include time before (preparing for commitment) and after (time to take in the experience and process instead of rushing to the next thing). If you are too busy all the time, evaluate what's keeping you busy.
- ♣ Constantly ask yourself the foundational time management question. "Is this the most important thing I could/should be doing right now?"...and if it isn't.....STOP immediately.
- ♣ Slow down and practice being present: Stay present with your work, children, food, driving or whatever you do at a given moment. We can have fewer commitments and go about them in a "busy" way, or we can have more commitments, but feel less busy because of how we are inside.
- ♣ Reduce time spent being a consumer: How much time in your busy day is spent being a consumer? It is not just buying things that take time, but also fixing, cleaning, organizing and storing - mundane tasks which have no focus and often no end. Make sure things that you do are worth your energy and time. You can free up a lot of time by consuming less.
- ♣ Make space for new things: Leave openings in life for something new to enter. If you get to a point where there's spare time, resist the urge to instantly fill it. Risk being bored! In this space of just being we often have new insights and creative opportunities.
- ♣ Figure out what really matters: Find out if you really are busy or if you just haven't taken the time to figure out what really needs to get done. It's easy to get trapped in our own routines. Often we run around feeling overwhelmed because what needs to get done is larger in our heads than in reality.
- ♣ Get it done rather than striving for perfection: Perfectionism can be a huge hindrance and time waster. During crazy busy times, getting it done is more important than how well it gets done.
- ♣ Give yourself a break: Don't give yourself such a hard time. You CAN do it all – just not all at once! Identify the things that you can let go of.
- ♣ Fill in this sentence as quickly and specifically as you can: When I say I'm busy that means ----- . Now read what you just wrote. Does it really have any substance? Consider how being busy is helping you to reach your goals, achieve success or even put in a productive day at work. If you are so busy that you don't have a moment to think creatively, say hello to someone, meet someone new, then is it a successful life?



I hope you weren't too busy and could complete reading this E-bulletin!

This document has been prepared by the Stress Counselor at UNCT (India). It is meant for circulation amongst UN staff working in India. It can be copied, circulated or disseminated after obtaining approval of the UN Stress Counselor (India).

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