



UN Volunteer Primitivo (Tom) Tengco from the Philippines (left) is a UNV Agriculture Development Specialist and Team Leader of the UNV Asia Youth Volunteer Exchange Programme in Zambia. Much of the technical support he provides in the rural Choma District involves imparting practices and recommendations to improve local farmers' use and supply of water. (UNV/Carol Atwell, 2011)

ENGLISH

Overview

➤ UNV in Action: Environment and Climate Change

Climate change is caused by human action – and can consequently only be addressed by changing human behaviour, especially with regard to consumption and production patterns. The environment movement is rooted in volunteer action. In most cases, volunteers are among the first on site to respond to the aftermath of environmental disasters.

➤ UNV works to protect the environment and mitigate the negative effects of climate change. Volunteerism plays an important role in catalysing and promoting environmental action and disaster risk reduction. Partnering with governments, development actors and civil society, UNV manages a talented cadre of committed volunteers working around the globe. These volunteers are in a unique position to mobilize communities from the national to grassroots levels.

“Human activities are the dominant cause of climate change. We cannot blame nature... I firmly believe that every one of us can step up and become leaders in combating climate change, promoting sustainable development and building lives of dignity for all.”

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Big Idea 2014: The Year for Climate Action

➤ From 2008-2012, about 3 per cent of UN Volunteers contributed annually UN Volunteers contributed to assignments in the area of environment and sustainable development covering a range of fields and projects. UN Volunteers support responses to climate change impacts, help local communities with environmental management, encourage community-to-community learning and raise awareness. UN Volunteers add particular value to the environment and climate change programmes of development partners by incorporating the important elements of community-based voluntary action, self-help and replication.



UN
Volunteers

inspiration in action



In Guatemala, national UN Volunteer, Freddy Soto, monitors progress in growing potatoes in the Community-Based Adaptation programme nursery of the Pin Pin village, Tacaná, San Marcos. (Daniele Volpe, 2012)

“Glengoffe is a wonderful community to work with as the spirit of volunteerism is second to none. Through their own actions, they are taking gigantic steps in preparing their community for the future impacts of climate change.”

Michelle Curling-Ludford, a national UN Volunteer in Jamaica who motivates local volunteers in this farming community to embrace agricultural techniques that reduce the risk of landslides and flooding and lessen the impact of extreme drought on crop production

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION THROUGH PEOPLE-CENTRED APPROACHES

UNV tackles climate change adaptation by embracing people-centred approaches. This involves mobilizing community voluntary action to conduct environmental risk assessments and enlisting local people themselves to design and implement adaptation activities. UNV assists partners to address food security issues of populations vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters.

Small communities are frequently the most severely affected, yet the least prepared to handle the effects of climate change. To address this, UNV has been a partner in the UNDP Global Environment Facility (GEF) Community-Based Adaptation project since 2009. The project aims to build the resilience of communities and the ecosystems on which they depend. UN Volunteers’ involvement has been instrumental in piloting this five-year initiative in countries worldwide.

Within the project, UNV strives to enhance community mobilization, facilitate volunteer contributions and

ensure inclusive participation. The project is generating invaluable knowledge and lessons for replication. It is also facilitating capacity building of partner NGOs and local community-based organizations.

UN Volunteers drive pilot projects by mobilizing communities to act, introducing new skills, supporting local volunteers in their work and ensuring that participation is inclusive.

Here are samples of the work of UN Volunteers work:

➤ *In Jamaica, UNV helped manage and coordinate the Glengoffe Climate Change Adaptation Project, which is introducing agricultural-related activities that reduce the risks of landslides and flooding, while lessening the impact of extreme drought on crop production. UN Volunteers integrated ways to address climate change risks into community management of natural resources. They trained project volunteers in financial reporting and inclusive participation and conducted project monitoring.*

➤ UN Volunteers worked alongside local indigenous communities in Guatemala to identify how climate change had impacted their lives. Together they developed various ways to adapt to these changes, such as improved farming techniques and methods to conserve the soil and promote reforestation.

➤ In Morocco, where there has been an increased frequency and intensity of rainstorms and drought, UN Volunteers worked with nine natural resource-dependent communities. Over 1,000 community volunteers, including more than 200 women and 200 youth, contributed to project activities, providing their time, labour, knowledge and leadership.

ACCESS TO ENERGY AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO LOCALIZED CLIMATE CHANGE

UNV helps communities improve their access to energy and at the same time fosters micro-level climate change mitigation measures. This includes enabling poor and marginalized communities to access renewable energy, advocating the use of fuel-efficient cooking stoves and promoting good waste management practices.

➤ UN Volunteers in Namibia teamed up with a non-governmental organization called Creative Entrepreneurs Solutions to distribute easy-to-use, environmentally-friendly stoves. Designed

by university students in Finland and tested by women in Namibia, the EzyStove, reduces fuel wood consumption by two thirds and reduces wood smoke emissions by 60 to 80 per cent. The stove has been widely adopted by communities in both rural and urban areas.

➤ In Nepal, UNV joined UNDP and the Public-Private Partnerships for Urban Environment to support a similar improved cooking stove initiative. As in Namibia, old methods of cooking were contributing to unsustainable fuel consumption, deforestation and air pollution. In a pilot project, fuel-efficient stoves were allocated in the Dhulikhel municipality to 52 households, reaching 250 people. UN Volunteers supplied technical support, encouraged local engagement on the project and raised awareness around the issue of environmentally-sound cooking methods.

“Climate change is both the result of and a threat to current development patterns. To tackle climate change, the whole world must develop differently. That requires engaged citizens and bold leadership, willing and able to take on entrenched interests and leave behind failed models... Engaged citizens, armed with an understanding of the costs of climate change, can press leaders to act.”

Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator, “Why Tackling Climate Change Matters for Development”, Stanford

Local volunteers building a ‘gabion’ which helps protect the village Douar El Moudaa in Morocco from spring floods and erosion. With UNV support, volunteers built a water tower, a reservoir, 11 dams and irrigation canals to bring water to the village and the fields. (Bruno Deceukelier/UNDP-GEF CBA, 2011)



UN Volunteer Assistant Project Manager for Natural Sciences, Kim Eunah (right) works with the Research Institute of Forest Ecology, Environment and Protection in the Chinese Academy of Forestry, in cooperation with UNESCO, International Union of Forest Research Organization and Food and Agriculture Organization, to promote the development of integrated management of forest and water for overcoming the existing sectoral views on forest/water management in complex landscapes. (UNV/Peter Harris, 2008)

“UN Volunteers mobilized communities in seven disaster prone districts to plant over 70,000 trees. Rainwater harvesting dams were constructed and river gauge stations were established to prevent flooding.”

UNV Executive Coordinator Richard Dictus describing the work of UN Volunteers in Malawi

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

➤ Land degradation and desertification are increasingly affecting many areas of the world. UNV partnered with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification for three projects that applied integrated environment and natural resource management through youth volunteerism in Ethiopia (2006-2010), Zambia (2006-2010) and Zimbabwe (2007-2012). In Zimbabwe, young volunteers were trained on the benefits of environmental protection, and then guided to develop their own innovative, replicable, environmentally-friendly and sustainable income-generating projects. In Ethiopia and Zambia, UN Volunteers supported awareness-raising campaigns on the effects of land degradation and desertification and produced training material on forestry, agriculture and industrial arts.

➤ In El Salvador, UNV partnered with the Living Schools project, a South-South initiative between El Salvador and Brazil. Communities in these two

countries exchanged knowledge and experiences on disaster and risk management and food security for families. UN Volunteers helped them to conduct workshops and simulate evacuations for students and their families and to design disaster preparedness plans at schools.

➤ Through a conservation project in Cambodia, UNV encouraged communities around Lake Tonle Sap to actively participate in biodiversity-friendly livelihood practices. Local culture was taken into account by involving monks in the project and exploring linkages between Buddhism and preservation of the natural environment.

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that promotes volunteerism to support peace and development worldwide. Volunteerism can transform the pace and nature of development and it benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer. UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for volunteerism globally, encouraging partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing volunteers.

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

For more information about UNV, please visit www.unv.org