



## United Nations Volunteers in Guinea Bissau Briefing Note - July 2008

### Volunteerism in Guinea Bissau

Volunteerism in Guinea Bissau is rooted in local traditions of mutual aid and solidarity mainly in rural areas. Today, volunteerism in itself happens much more in the urban areas, often within youth associations or NGOs. However, the level of awareness about volunteering both within National Volunteer Involving Organizations and among volunteers themselves would still need to be increased as well as their level of systematic organization in order to maximize their potential.

The UNV Programme was implemented in 1985 and since then more than 150 UNV Volunteers have contributed to Guinea Bissau's development. The UNV Programme has developed good partnerships with civil society organizations and the government in Guinea-Bissau. The activities cover a broad range of fields such as decentralization and local development, health, capacity development, food security, communication and aid coordination.

The Government has supported three Resolutions of the UN General Assembly on volunteerism. Although no National IYV (International Year of Volunteerism) Committee was established, the IVD (International Volunteer Day) is celebrated every year together with a group of National Volunteer Involving Organizations for Development. In 2007, UNV facilitated the first "Workshop to think about Volunteerism". A Volunteer Committee was created, composed by NGOs, Youth Networks and governmental institutions, and has already organised a Training Course on Volunteerism, done research on the state of volunteerism in Guinea-Bissau and together with other partners, organised IVD 2007. Currently, UNV is developing a project to promote volunteerism and enhance civil society organisations capacities to achieve MDGs, under UNDP CPAP goals.



Photographs from IVD activities 2007

## Facts and figures

### - Present

UNV volunteers deployed in XYZ country in 2006/ current	national		international		Total
	female	male	female	male	
UNDP CO	-	-	4	-	4
UNDP projects	-	1	-	3	4
Special Operations	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	1	2	-	3
Sub Total	-	2	6	3	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>9</b>		
<b>Bissau Guinean serving as international UNV volunteers in 2006 (past year)</b>	6 Bissau Guineans serving as international UNV volunteers in 6 countries: Rwanda, Burundi, Central African Republic, Zaire, East Timor and Haiti				

- 17 Corporate Private Sector Volunteers (20 missions) have served in Guinea Bissau, since January 2006, in areas such as water, energy and waste management, tourism, transformation and commercialization of local products, training in formulating, monitoring and evaluation of projects for local NGOs, training for local community radio on management and technical capacities, needs assessment study on adult education and vocational training in the Bijagós Islands, etc.

### Financial overview/financial contributions from UNV to the country

UNV is contributing **355 444 USD** to the co-funded project «Promotion of local participation and volunteerism in waste management in Gabú» (Special Voluntary Fund). UNV is also supporting the UNDP Country Office through one UNV PO and one COA.

## UNV's Distinctive Contributions in Guinea-Bissau

### 1 - Access to services and service delivery

In Bissau, one International Volunteer is contributing to Development Aid Coordination in Guinea Bissau. One UNV Volunteer, Head of regional WFP Sub-Office at Bafata, is contributing to the rehabilitation of rice fields through the program "Food for Work" and the distribution of food at the School canteens.

### 2 - Inclusion and participation

Since September 2005, UNV is implementing the project "Promotion of Local Participation and volunteerism in waste management" which is co-funded by UNV (SVF) and UNDP. In Gabu city, 3 UNV Volunteers (two International and one National), together with 90 local volunteers, 16 neighborhood's committees, traditional, religious and local governmental institutions are aiming to set up a sustainable community-based waste management system. Through the implementation of a systematic coordination mechanism between public institutions and civil society, it is also fostering the ongoing decentralization process. This UNV-executed project is based on a participatory approach, and is piloting the Do No Harm approach in the region which is helping the community to analyze the "connecting" and "dividing" factors within their community in order to prevent conflicts. One International UNV is working at the UNDP Project to Support Regional and Local Development, supporting Guinea Bissau decentralization process.

### 3 - Community mobilization through voluntary action

The mobilization of local volunteers through the above mentioned project "Promotion of Local Participation and volunteerism in waste management" is the main strategy of the project in order to raise awareness and promote community participation. Another International UNV, specialist on nutrition, working at WFP, is developing a pilot project which aim is to develop in the communities and families the capacity of monitoring the nutritional state and take WFP food directly to the communities.

## **Contribution to UNDP Practice Areas**

The UNDAF 2008-2012 focuses on the three following areas of cooperation:

### **1. Governance**

The UNV-project in Gabú as integral part of the UNDP/UNCDF programme on local governance is supporting the ongoing decentralization process in Guinea-Bissau. A participatory approach, combined with national UN Volunteers, has facilitated strong local ownership of the project and there is a will to replicate the approach in others sectors of the region and other areas of local governance. Aquassistance, French NGO of SUEZ group, is providing voluntary technical assistance to the project.

### **2. Economic growth and poverty reduction**

The International UNV Volunteer working at WFP, mentioned above, contribute to the rehabilitation of rice fields through the program "Food for Work", contributing for communities to have a way of leaving.

### **3. Social protection and human development**

The other International UNV Volunteer, specialist on nutrition, mentioned above, is contribution to the health and food security of communities through the nutrition project.

## **Partnership with other UN Agencies and other development stakeholders**

The UNV Programme in Guinea Bissau has worked in close cooperation with WFP, through the placement of International UN Volunteers in this agency.

UNV has also established an important partnership with the Spanish NGO, "Medicus Mundi", funding a National UNV Volunteer supporting the national NGO "Para-ka-ten", on health project and organizational capacity building.

The UNV Programme also plays an important role as interface between UNDP and national civil society organizations and in this context the UNV Programme Officer was nominated as UNDP focal point for Civil Society. The UNV Programme organizes and participates in "FOCOS" (Forum of knowledge and opportunities), a monthly coordination meeting for NGOs at PLACON-GB (National Platform for National and International NGOs).

## **Projects in pipeline**

The UNV Programme in Guinea Bissau in collaboration with a broad range of local partners has started developing a project for the promotion of volunteerism in the country. A consultation mission, co financed by UNV (PRODEFA) and UNDP funds, is taking place to analyse the situation of volunteerism in Guinea Bissau, the needs for capacity development within PLACON GB, NGOs and Network Associations and to develop a project proposal including ways to strengthen volunteerism' contribution to the MDGs in Guinea Bissau, through the enhancement of the capacities of civil society. This project is be fully integrated into UNDP's CPAP 2008-20012, responding to the CPAP target the "capacities development of the NGO Platform (PLACON-GB), NGOs and the associative networks in the follow-up of the MDG assured by using the approach of volunteerism". It will be co-financed by UNDP and UNV.

UNV also developed the Project "Volunteerism in the prevention of natural disasters in vulnerable Communities in Guinea Bissau", in partnership with National Red Cross. This project was submitted to an AECI (Spanish Cooperation) Residual Fund, and so far, it is one of the short listed proposals.

## **UNV Country Office Team in Guinea Bissau**

Ms. Ana Teresa Forjaz (POR), UNV Programme Officer (PO).  
Ms. Fanta Robalo (GUI), UNV Country Office Assistant (COA).