



# PACIFIC



# UN Volunteers

inspiration in action

# NEWSLETTER



**Volume 1 Issue 5**  
**June 2014**

UNV FIJI MCO and UNV  
SAMOA MCO newsletter

**Coverage:**

Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Nauru, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa, and Niue

**Currently UN Volunteers are supporting:**

- UNDP
- UNESCO
- UNFPA
- UNHCHR
- UNICEF
- UNISDR
- UN Women
- OHCHR
- Govt. of Fiji
- Govt. of FSM,
- Govt. of Marshall Islands
- Govt. of Nauru
- Govt. of Samoa

## Can we afford not to facilitate volunteerism?

Imagine any of the Pacific countries during any month of the year. Imagine that each and every volunteer in that country goes on strike, simply refuses to engage for one month in any activities they normally engage in for few hours in a month or maybe number of times in a week.

How do you think that country would look like?

I imagine it as follows: thousands on children are not able to participate in sport activities as the clubs are cancelled; thousands of sick or elderly folks go unattended in the communities; re-building of communities after a cyclone goes into a standstill; practically all civil society organizations close the shop for a month, since volunteers who are the backbone of all their activities and services are not there to implement them. Midwives, volunteer fire fighters, volunteers running the blood donation, activists raising awareness about HIV/AIDS, climate change or gender equality - they all would just go home.

Volunteerism, in all its forms from community help to formally organized volunteer programmes, is an intimate part of the Pacific societies. However, too often it goes un-noticed without recognition it deserves. More should be done than simply acknowledge that volunteers help to keep our societies' wheels turning.

The emerging Post-2015 development agenda provides us all a historic opportunity to recognize volunteerism as an inherent component of the future global development framework. A truly "human-centred" development agenda should acknowledge the fact that to achieve sustainable economic, social, and environmental



progress, volunteering and civic participation are key ingredients of it, whatever the thematic focus—sustainable livelihoods, health, education, employment, environment, gender, or youth.

But volunteerism does not happen by itself: it needs nurturing, facilitation and structures that enables potential volunteers to find right opportunities to volunteer. If volunteerism is well supported and facilitated, and integrated into national practices and policies, it gives people and communities the opportunity to directly engage in their own development and to have an impact on the global goals and targets too.

This newsletter, which has plenty of stories from Samoa, showcases few valuable contribution volunteers bring to development in the Pacific Islands. After reading these, ask yourself if we can afford not to facilitate and to nurture volunteerism - whether local, national or international, - while working towards more sustainable, peaceful and well-being societies.

*Ulla Helena Gronlund*  
UNV Programme Officer  
Fiji MCO



### UNV in Fiji Parish

Name Position	UN agency Duty station	Nationality
<b>Ulla Gronlund</b> UNV Programme Officer	UNV Fiji	Finland
<b>Alesi Ali</b> UNV Programme Assistant	UNDP Fiji	Fiji
<b>Akapusi Tuifagalele</b> Regional Disaster Reduction Officer	UNISDR Fiji	Fiji
<b>Tomoko Kashiwazaki</b> Communications and Advocacy Specialist	UNV Fiji	Japan
<b>Lanieta Railiku Matanatabu</b> Project Facilitator Pacific Enable	UNICEF Fiji	Fiji
<b>Mary Treanor</b> Human Rights Coordinator	UNICEF, UNFPA, OHCHR, UN WOMEN Marshall Islands	USA
<b>Helga Bára Bragadóttir</b> Country Development Manager	UNWOMEN Nauru	Iceland
<b>Samuel Boadu</b> Civic Education Specialist	UNDP Solomon Islands	Ghana
<b>Robert Ninson</b> Expanded Programme on Immunization Officer	UNICEF Solomon Islands	Gambia
<b>Gabriela Nones</b> Civic Education and Advocacy Specialist	UNDP Tonga	Venezuela
<b>Addisu Eyader</b> Programme Specialist (Recovery & Reintegration)	UNICEF Solomon Islands	Ethiopia
<b>Hope Mary Nsangi</b> Coordinator for UPRR follow-up	OHCHR Vanuatu	Uganda
<b>Jin Wen Wen</b> Human Rights Officer	OHCHR Vanuatu	China
<b>Chiharu Ogawa</b> UNV Student Volunteer (Communication)	UNV Fiji	Japan

### UN Volunteers in the Fiji Parish since 1981:

- 608 UN Volunteers
- 34 National UN Volunteers, 572 International UN Volunteers
- Average profile: 38 years of age with 5-10 years of experience
- 35% women
- From 69 countries
- 78% from the South and the Pacific

### UNV in Samoa

<b>Jasmine Subaşat</b> UNV Programme Officer	UNV	Japan
<b>Solomon Tesema Schuni</b> EPI Officer	UNICEF	Ethiopia
<b>Yusuke Nii</b> Education officer	UNESCO	Japan
<b>Tatsuya Hayashi</b> Communication Assistant	UNDP	Japan
<b>Youjin Jung</b> Climate Change and Environment Officer	UNDP	South Korea
<b>Eyob Ghezai Tewelde</b> Strategic Planning and M&E Officer	UNDP	Eritrea



**UN**  
**Volunteers**

inspiration in action



## Stories from Samoa



### Samoa's Volunteerism in Place

#### What is volunteerism in Samoa?

Fa'a Samoa, or the Samoan Way, is a concept on which obligations that the Samoans are to comply with are based. This term is often used in Samoa, encompassing all socio-cultural and political life of the Samoans, and thus, influences the ways in which volunteerism occurs through institutions such as the church, government and non-governmental organisations.

Samoa is a place full of volunteer spirit, but 'volunteerism' is often unrecognized due to its English word which was 'imported' from the West. Due to a long history of US Peace Corps serving in Samoa, Samoa adopted the word 'Pisikoa' (the sound adapted from Peace Corps) to describe a foreign volunteer worker or volunteerism particularly in the villages\*. Now there are many volunteer sending organisations working throughout Samoa such as AYAD/VIDA (Australian), JICA (Japanese), and VSA (New Zealander) as well as the US Peace Corps so that the use of Pisikoa may have become obsolete in an urban setting. UNV has also served in Samoa since 1974, shortly after the UNV programme was established in 1970.

While the act of volunteerism is embedded in the Samoan society, the term 'volunteerism' has been associated rather with foreigners working in Samoa, than its actual concept of work that comes out of people's passion, willingness and altruism, resulting in 'volunteerism' often unrecognised. Within Samoan tradition "volunteerism" may take the form of tautua (service) and taulaga (sacrifice).

This is true to a story about Pastor (whose whole story is found in this newsletter), who has committed himself to fostering better communication by married couples in order to tackle gender-based violence. Until I discovered his work and commitment to this cause, he did not see his actions as volunteerism. His action is true tautua (service) and taulaga (sacrifice) of the Samoan tradition.

This example shows how volunteerism can be found everywhere through 'services' that have been

*Jasmine Subaşat is the UNV Programme Officer at Field Unit based in Samoa Multi-Country Office, originally from Japan. She had longed for making a difference in the field before leaving the UK where she worked and lived many years. Since her arrival at Samoa one year ago, she has been working on programme areas where she hopes to make a positive impact.*



provided to the school or the church. A survey conducted by Darren Hedley et al. (2008) reported that 74% of people who answered the survey were engaged in some form of service to the school and 95% to the church, contributing to development of their own communities.

#### How does the UN fit into volunteerism in Samoa?

While volunteer spirit is high in Samoa, it is mainly expressed through traditional forms of community help, and may be limited to areas such as elderly and child care within extended family. The growing cost of living in Samoa also affects the number of volunteers as volunteerism is essentially non-paid. Incentives such as meals and transportation are used by development agencies be it donors, the UN or NGOs to promote volunteer activities in the areas that are not consider to be traditional activity such as attending meetings or taking part in the implementation of development projects. When remuneration becomes an actual wage, it is no longer considered volunteerism.

Focus is now being placed on encouraging volunteerism among the youth, and possible areas for youth volunteer efforts have been identified within the UNDAF 2013-2017 for the Pacific and the 'The UNDP Strategy for Engagement on Youth Development in the Pacific'. This also has direct linkages to UNV's five priority areas that include 'Youth'.

\* Samoa is a small country in the South Pacific located to the south of Fiji with a population of a little more than 186,000 occupying its two main islands of Savai'i and Upolu. About 80% of the populations live in the villages.

*Jasmine Yoko Subaşat*



**Solomon Tesema Schuni**, an International UN Volunteer from Ethiopia is serving as EPI Officer in Samoa under UNICEF. He joined UNV after working with international organizations for 9 years since 2003, specifically on maternal, newborn and child survival programmes and projects. Prior to this, he worked for 17 years in the areas of health management.

## Immunization Hero in Samoa

Since his arrival at Apia in June 2012, Solomon Tesema Schuni (Ethiopia) has changed the landscape for the immunization of children in Samoa. Pacific Health News (2013) highlighted the expansion of the coverage of the National Health Services (NHS) of Samoa and the improvement in quality of service. Behind these dramatic changes, there was always Solomon Tesema Schuni, the UNV Expanded Programme for Immunization (EPI) Officer.

Due to the limited space in this Newsletter, it is impossible to cover all of the improvements Solomon has made in the immunization system of Samoa. Three of the selected key improvements he brought to the system were; 1) certification of 38 nurses as vaccinators 2) collaborated on the design and implementation of a new data management system and 3) widened EPI coverage and dropout rate reduction.

*'I focused on three basic principles', Solomon says, 'standardization, simplicity and integration. These ideas came to my mind after assessment made in July 2012 shortly after my arrival at Samoa. I came up with selective and targeted interventions in the areas of data management, capacity building and supportive supervision/mentorship.'*

Solomon has introduced the certification of vaccinators for the first time in Samoa and 38 enrolled nurses are now certified as trained vaccinators. Prior to this certification being available, nurses were not authorized to administer any drug including vaccines due to the Nursing Act.

Since Solomon has introduced the certification system and number of trained vaccinators has increased, the immunization coverage has dramatically widened and the process has also become faster.

He has also helped to establish a new data management system. The first step was setting up reliable statistical data for monitoring evidence-based decision making. Then the recording and reporting documents were standardized so that everyone would collect the same type of data and document the data in the same way. Solomon developed new simple and user-friendly data sheets, which made it easy for the users to analyze data and write monthly and quarterly report. And the last step Solomon took was to install the system of monitoring and self-assessment for National Health Services (NHS) for improvement in advocacy, capacity building and coaching work.

As a result of the new implemented systems, the actual EPI coverage has significantly increased and the number of dropouts fallen. Georgina Bonin, the UNDP Assistant Resident Representative experienced firsthand the changes from Solomon's work as she excitedly said, 'a nurse came to my house to give a vaccination to my daughter's baby. I knew this was all because of Solomon and I am so proud of him. I wanted to tell my daughter, this is our UN Volunteer Solomon's work!' Anyone from a household with a little baby should have experienced this kind of household visit vaccination, thanks to Solomon and UN Volunteers!

The government of Samoa is very happy with the results of the EPI database Solomon has developed and of course the results he produced in the EPI. The EPI data collected has been used for various purposes such as the Midterm Health Sector plan review and international workshops on health. His achievements have been talked about among the health sector not only in Samoa but also other countries. He now consults for different development partners within Samoa and abroad.

*'I am aware that all these improvements happened since my arrival', says Solomon. 'But there are some challenges remaining. We are here to strengthen the National Health Services' capacity but people rely on me too much now. They need to increase more human power for coordination. My contribution to Samoa should continue after the end of my assignment.'*



Solomon has noted several ongoing challenges which include the continued need to strengthen the capacity and self-reliance of the NHS staff. Computer literacy for service providers has also been identified as a gap that needs to be filled. These would be critical to the sustainability of these initiatives after he has completed his term.

In development, sustainability of initiatives has always been an issue. Numerous aspects of projects need to be improved to keep them going. In the EPI, the monitoring and evaluation (M & E) system and census data need to be kept current to support the M&E. These are challenging areas in which he continues to work tirelessly.

When he can leave such system functioning successfully without him, the power of volunteerism and development will have come together.

Solomon states, 'It is my strong belief that international volunteerism is one of the most powerful strategies to contribute to the global efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly in reducing maternal and child mortalities through provision of improved, high attainable and quality care on child and maternal health.'

*Solomon Tesema Schuni*

## Improving Literacy in a Multi-Lingual Country – Adult literacy project in PNG

As an Education Officer in UNESCO, Yusuke supports many education-related projects in the Pacific. One such project is called 'Accelerating National Efforts in Papua New Guinea to Achieve Education for All (EFA) through LIFE (Literacy Initiative For Empowerment). Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, this project focuses on priority areas in each country and tailors according to its needs. The adult literacy project in PNG seeks to address Millennium Development Goals; MDG 2 achieving universal primary education and MDG 3 promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. In a country with 800 local languages existing, PNG needed to apply an adult literacy project of a special kind. This is in addition to the serious issue of gender inequality present in the country.

Yusuke played a vital role in this project; reviewing and editing reports for the PNG government; building the report writing capacity of staff via providing helpful comments on the reports reviewed; and verifying the accuracy of the report content. He wrote the executive summary of the report which was generated for the project; 'Household Literacy Survey 2011 in Eastern Highlands Province and Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea'. This Household Literacy Survey 2011 was the final product in which the analysis of the survey was incorporated.

*Yusuke Nii is an International UN Volunteer from Japan attached to the UNESCO Sub-Regional Office in Samoa covering 17 countries including Papua New Guinea (PNG). He had amassed vast working experience in the Pacific as a JICA volunteer and NGO worker prior to taking the assignment with the UNV as an Education Officer.*



The massive survey conducted was the starting point of the project in identifying the needs around the literacy environment. This covered a number and type of reading materials (e.g. books and newspapers) households had. This information helped to describe the literacy environment around people's lives such as an opportunity to read store names, notice boards or SMS.

The survey was conducted in a careful manner through interviews conducted by a researcher with a thorough understanding of the local traditions and whose mother tongue was the same as the interviewees. Yusuke said, 'we need to be very careful because people tend to identify themselves with their own languages and a language is closely associated with her/his own tradition and culture. It is a very sensitive issue in PNG. It was similar in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu where many languages exist.'



The survey, as a result, has identified some correlations between the literacy environment and the levels of literacy. In other words, the number of reading materials at home seems to have an impact on each household member's level of literacy rather than the economic level of a household. Interestingly, instead of creating a direct connection between poverty and low literacy rate, the literacy level of a household could be determined by the number of reading materials available at home. Based on this finding, the Household Literacy Survey 2011 advised the PNG government to establish a literacy enabling environment, for example, by creating reading corners in

places such as schools and community centres and by building a library.

'This is only the starting point. It is up to the government how to improve the current literacy environment in the country. With little financial resources and human capacity, it will be a real challenge. And I would like to see more government staff understanding the importance of empowerment of the disadvantaged, people particularly women in which literacy plays an important role,' Yusuke says.

*Yusuke Nii*



*The Pastor Faetai Fata was born in Samoa and has been serving for Assemblies of God since 1997. He is a veterinarian by profession and he worked as a veterinarian for 16 years for the Samoan government. He says that becoming a pastor was a call. Although he still provides support to the government institution on veterinary services, he now provides marriage counseling to people since 1998.*

## Volunteerism in high spirits – Samoa's way to tackle domestic violence

The Pastor Faetai Fata looked at me with a little surprise when I mentioned 'volunteerism' while referring to his activities. For him his action has nothing to do with a foreign worker nor activities that foreigners are engaged in in Samoa; to him, as to most of the Samoan people, 'volunteerism' is associated with foreign worker coming to Samoa and engaging in 'development work.'

Samoa is a country with full of volunteer spirit. It is just that people's commitment and passion in helping others may not be expressed in the word of 'volunteerism' in a same way as in tautua (service) and taulaga (sacrifice). Such volunteerism is so 'natural' action for many Samoans that people do not see it as anything special and sometimes it may be the best to leave it that way. Here is the story of Reverend Faafetai Fata from Assembly of God (AOG).

Samoa is a place where almost everybody goes to church. In fact, the whole towns on Sundays become very quiet with all shops and restaurants closed and few car running on roads. Yet, the Pastor Faafetai was questioning why domestic violence still exists and he wanted to do something about this social issue that is not uncommon in the Samoan society. Inspired by similar courses run in New Zealand, he and his associate Pastor Warren Retzlaff organised his ideas, put them together and formulated a course for a married couple about 9 years ago.

The course consists of 10 sessions over 10 weeks. Each session is 2.5 hour-long and between 4 and 11 couples can attend the course at a time. He runs the course about twice or three times a year. He approaches a marriage from a perspective of the bible, and works a lot on communication between a wife and a husband, because he found most problems within marriages are a result of miscommunication. 'You know, there are two major hindrances in a marriage are "pride" and "selfishness"', the pastor says. His methods of counselling are to make people change themselves, not make them change others.

About 120 couples have participated in his course so far and it has been very successful. As a sign of its success, he states 99% of the couples are still together. This painstaking effort and commitment to reduce domestic violence and to create healthy couples have made a huge impact in the society. In fact, his practice has been spread through word of mouth and he has been invited by some NGOs to conduct his workshop in New Zealand too.



One of the moving stories Pstor tells is of a married couple who took his course a while ago. The husband is the former Minister of Aviation and comes from a traditional village in Samoa. In this village, a high chief like him does not have meals together with his wife. His wife would sit from a distance with a bowl of water with which he washes his hands after eating. In the break time during the course, the pastor Faafetai asks their husbands to serve a tea or coffee to their wives. As the husbands are unlikely to know how their wives want their tea or coffee to be, they always need to ask their wives.

The week one this high chief refused to serve a cup of coffee to his wife. The week two he was the last man who stood up and made one for his wife. The week three, however, he was the first man to stand up and make one for his wife!

The passion and enthusiasm in combating violence against women come from the true devotion of the pastor Faafetai Fata. His argument is firmly based in the Bible and its interpretation of it emphasizes that men are created not to use violence against their wives. The work of volunteers like his has been deeply embedded within the Samoan society for many years and will continue to exist.

*The Pastor Faetai Fata*

## Great support behind the scenes – Communications Assistant from Japan

Tatsuya's primary responsibilities are to update the UNDP website, PC/device management and troubleshooting of IT problems experienced by staff.

"I literally run around the office to fix computer problems every day. No one can work without the internet nowadays, so keeping them connected is an essential part of ICT unit's duty." Tatsuya'sa says.

Tatsuya empowers his fellow co-workers to address the problem the next time they experience a similar problem by explaining to them the reasons for the computer problem and easy steps to follow the next time around. "Sometimes I draw a picture or a chart to explain it. I believe it helps them to improve their knowledge of computers and productivity".

According to Tatsuya, computers in the office often give problems because of Samoa's extremely high humidity and temperature. He is now planning a learning session for the staff to inform them of the correct way to maintain the computers and basic troubleshooting.

A dynamic and adaptable individual; Tatsuya has exhibited an incredible willingness to assist in areas he is unfamiliar, resulting in fantastic outcomes. He has worked with the Samoan Government to create their website and short video for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Conference 2014, which is going to be held this September in Apia, Samoa. The video was for official launch of SIDS Conference 2014's logo and the official website was also supposed to be launched at the same time. Tatsuya was requested to support the Government

*Tatsuya Hayashi is a UN Youth Volunteer working as a Communications Assistant since September 2013. Tatsuya is an undergraduate student from Kwansai Gakuin University studying computer networks. In addition to his work experience at Teach for Japan as a sub-project manager, he also has volunteered at Missionaries of Charity, Kolkata, India.*



Samoa as there were no available IT staff to assist with the project and he stepped up to the challenge.

He says, "It was a big challenge to manage the project in limited time, precisely, in 4 days. Also, I actually didn't have enough experience of creating video. I am not a designer or creator, but I decided to do it, because there was no one who is available but me". "I often have to do tasks which are beyond my capacity, but I consider it helps me improve my capacity and try to enjoy the work", he commented.

After this 6 month assignment, Tatsuya is going to back to Japan and finish his bachelor's degree. Of his experience as a UN Youth Volunteer; he had this to say, "UNYV was a great opportunity to broaden my perspective. Working in a developing country with professionals from all over the world is not easy for such a college student like me, because of my lack of language skills and working experience. However, I really enjoy my job here in Samoa. It also gave me the motivation to keep studying Computer Science and development. I really appreciate having this opportunity. I hope more and more Japanese students will experience this programme and play a more active role in the world.

*Tatsuya Hayashi*



### Electoral expertise from Ghana to Solomon Islands Samuel is what South-South is all about

Samuel D. Boadu has been busy with elections since 1995. In almost 20 years with the Electoral Commission of Ghana, he has risen through the ranks to become deputy regional director.

Over the years he has seen the ins and outs of elections from training of officials and educating the public to demarcation on polling station, and to supervising local, national and presidential elections.

- I remember particular well the period in 2005 while I helped as a trainer to integrate Afghan Election Officials and permanent staff in Ghazni (Afghanistan). It was a high risk environment, but I respected them and they opened up to me for a good working relationship. I recall my driver on a particular road Mission, while being quiet on a journey, saying: 'Boss, don't be afraid, we will go and come back safely.'

For the last year Samuel has taken a time out from his regular career, and dedicated his extensive experience to the forthcoming elections in Solomon Islands as a UN Volunteer. As the UNV Civic/Voter Education Specialist for the Office of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission, he has been a personification on South South collaboration, bringing Ghanaian expertise to the Solomon Islands.

In the past month, Samuel has advised, coordinated and sensitizes stakeholders in the national level, and has accomplished through awareness creation and voter education to help smooth take off of the Biometric Voter Registration that opened in March.

- The most important lesson I have learnt here, is to respect all Volunteers, nationals and internationals, for mutual coexistence. It will enable you fully integrate in any environment you find yourself, irrespective of diverse cultures.

**DID YOU KNOW?** UNV programme mobilizes annually 7,000 UN Volunteers globally. 2/3 of them are international UN Volunteers, and 2/3 come and serve in the global South. That makes UNV programme one of the largest South-South movers of people, skills and experience in the world.

### UN coordination in Pacific's smallest country

The Pacific UN System has three main offices; Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Samoa. They are led by UN Resident Coordinators who are representatives of the UN Secretary General in country. The UN Office in Fiji covers 10 Pacific Island Countries (PICs); the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, the Samoa Office covers four and Papua New Guinea has its own office.

In addition to these offices there are a number of so-called UN Joint Presence Offices. This is a relatively new initiative that has commenced in the last decade. The original motivation to create UN Joint Presence offices in the Pacific came from a request that a number of Pacific Island Countries lodged with the UN Secretary-General to extend the UN's footprint and presence in the Pacific. Four UN agencies decided to respond jointly to the request, with possibly more joining later.



**Helga-Bara Bragadottir**, an international UN Volunteer, is the Country Development Manager at the UN Joint Presence Office in Nauru. She was brought up in Iceland, an island in the North Atlantic, and since then she has lived and worked in a number of countries. Prior to taking up the position in Nauru, she lived in Suva from 2006-2012 where she first worked for UNDP Multi Country Office and then the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

UN Joint Presence offices have been set up in eight countries; the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu on the basis of reciprocal hosting agreements among the four participating agencies, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, and UN Women. In each of the eight countries, one of the four agencies hosts the joint presence office, and represents all four agencies





The Nauru UN Joint Presence Office was established in 2010. In Nauru, it's UN Women hosts the office. The Country Development Manager oversees the joint presence and acts as a liaison officer for the UN. The Country Development Manager is the only staff of the Joint Presence office, whilst technical experts from the UN agencies visit Nauru regularly to work on specific projects. In addition to representing the four participating agencies, the UN Joint Presence Office extends support to the wider UN system and other individual UN agencies within its means. The main purpose of that is to facilitate a coordinated implementation of the overarching United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Nauru.

I came to Nauru in the middle of last year, and am currently on a one year assignment. The aim of my

assignment is to recruit and train up a Nauru national to take up the role of country development manager at the conclusion of my time in Nauru. My role is to manage the in-country coordination and facilitation of the UN support. The role entails supporting policy dialogue, provide program management and coordination, as well as facilitate technical input and advocacy on behalf of UN agencies. The work is anchored in day-to-day interaction with national counterparts, as well as the UN staff based outside of the country. As such, the UN Office creates an opportunity to build on and strengthening further collaboration of the UN agencies with the government of Nauru, and other stakeholders. It is both an honor and a privilege to be trusted with this important role of Country Development Manager.

*Helga-Bara Bragadottir*



*Chiharu Ogawa was a UN Youth Volunteer for six months in UNV field unit in Fiji, finishing her assignment in March. She volunteered as a Communication and Knowledge Management Officer. Chiharu is an undergraduate student from Toyo University in Japan, studying Regional Development Studies.*

## IVD Event celebrated Volunteers in Fiji

The International Volunteer Day (IVD) 2013 in Fiji was held on Thursday, December 5th. This is organized by National Volunteer Steering Committee (NVSC) every year. IVD is the event of celebrating and recognizing volunteerism in all its facets – but also pay special tribute to the contribution of youth volunteers in global peace and sustainable human development.

This year in Suva, the programme was divided into two parts: the Health Walk, and the Awards Night.

### Participants walked for Health and Volunteerism

The Health Walk took place in the lunch time, and was participated by the National Volunteer Steering Committee members, volunteers, partners and other

interested parties. Participants gathered at Suva Lawn Tennis Court, registered themselves and received IVD T-Shirt. They could also take a free basic health check-up to measure their height, weight and blood pressure and to donate blood. Basic health check-up and blood donation were supported by Fiji Ministry of Health and The Fiji National Blood Bank Services.

Participants warmed themselves up for the walk with Zumba. The walking route followed from Suva Bowling Club to the Chinese Embassy, with a distance of about 1.5 km. The water was served half way the route, before the participants turned back to the bowling club. After the walk, we did Zumba again to warm down and enjoyed a light meal. In the end, the gifts were given to the oldest and youngest male and female participants, and the first and the last registrants. Approximately 150 participants registered for the event including 40 females, 57 males and 34 children. Health Walk was a success.

### Congratulation Awards Winners!

The Awards Night took place at Holiday Inn Suva with approximately 130 participants from various sectors of the government, non-governmental organizations, corporate representatives and other key stakeholders. Vodafone Fiji Ltd, which was the main sponsor of the Awards Night, was represented by Mr. Pradeep Lal, the chief operation manager.



The programme consisted of the opening speech by the chairperson Mr. Neil Maharaj from NVSC, the keynote address by Mr. Lal, entertainment by a dance group, launch of the Volunteer Magazine published by NVSC, Volunteer of the Year Awards presentation, Vote of thanks by UNV Programme Officer Lioba VanDam, and the dinner.

The International, National, Youth and Youth plus volunteers were commended with volunteer of the Year Awards.

### Ms. Saleszni Chaudhary's speech Inspired Volunteers

Every year, Global UNV Online Award is announced. This award is given to UNV Online Volunteers who contributed their skills through the internet.

This time around, Fijian lady Ms. Saleszni Chaudhary got this award. She was one of the members of the Ann Foundation Team. Ann Foundation is a volunteer organization dedicated to educating and empowering economically and socially marginalized children and youth with disabilities through partnerships with local organizations and agencies. Online Volunteer members including Saleszni, have been developing and teaching daily online classes in various languages to children with visual or hearing disabilities across eight cities in India for Ann Foundation.

In her thank you speech, Saleszni encouraged everyone to volunteer: "One thing that I would like to share with everyone who is thinking of volunteering is "DO IT NOW! You will only know the pleasure of volunteering once you start" ".

## NEWSFLASH

### UN Youth Volunteer Programme launched

UNV has launched a new Youth Volunteers programme, which has been created to provide new opportunities for 18-29 year-olds to be integrated into the work of UN partners around the world as national or international volunteers.

The programme is a response to the Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, who called for the "creation of a UN youth volunteers programme under the umbrella of UN Volunteers" in his 2012 Five-Year Action Agenda.

To learn more how youth engage in global peace and sustainable human development through volunteerism, and bring their voice to the development discourse, visit [www.unv.org/youth](http://www.unv.org/youth).

### UNV signs MoU with UNFPA, UNEP and UN-Habitat

In recent weeks, UNV has signed three new global Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) with three UN agencies: UNFPA, UNEP and UN-Habitat.

All the agencies have already hosted UN Volunteers previously, and in the Pacific UNFPA particularly has been one of the most active agencies in mobilizing UN Volunteers to support its development interventions. With the signing of MoUs, all partners have expressed their recognition of volunteerism and voiced their keenness to involve young volunteers.

### 64226969 volunteer actions counted

In the wake of Rio+20 conference, UNV started counting volunteer actions around the world. Now over 65,000,000 volunteer actions have been recorded on our website [www.volunteeractioncounters.org](http://www.volunteeractioncounters.org). Visit and report yours too: it will help us to showcase the power of volunteerism and advocate for its recognition in the future development agenda.

### ILO calls volunteer work to be included into national statistics

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has officially adopted volunteering as a form of "work" that should be measured along with the other measures of employment regularly produced by national statistical agencies.

ILO identifies volunteering as a form of unpaid "work" that produces a good or a service for organizations or persons outside of the household on a non-compulsory basis. The term "work" does not imply that the activity is absent of its voluntary and altruistic nature. Rather, including volunteering as a subset of work means that the *tangible and invaluable contributions volunteering makes to individuals and society are being recognized as a force that should be tracked and measured so that it can be better supported and fostered.*

ILO has already endorsed a tool that can be used to gather internationally comparable data on volunteerism. Let's hope also the Pacific countries this will be used in the near future to collect much needed data on the value of volunteerism.