

LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT VOLUNTEERISM WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF PRIMARY PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.



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INTRODUCTION

Partners for Prevention (P4P) is a United Nations (UN) joint programme working to prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Asia and the Pacific. Based on the findings of the UN Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific¹ (2013), P4P promotes and supports violence prevention initiatives and policies. Combining the strengths of four UN agencies – UN Development Programme, UN Population Fund, UN Women and UN Volunteers (UNV) – with governments, civil society and support from the Australian government, P4P programmes aim to transform problematic social norms and practices to prevent violence before it occurs.² P4P's work supports the UN's Sustainable Development Goal to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls by 2030.

Evidence and experiences from P4P contributed toward increased understanding and strengthening of volunteerism within the context of primary prevention of violence against women and girls and promoting safe and vibrant relationships, homes and communities. Partnering with the United Nations Volunteers programme meant incorporating goals to mobilize volunteers and promote volunteerism to support VAWG primary prevention interventions in the P4P programme.

While the term 'prevention' is used to describe a wide range of activities and programming, the specific focus of primary prevention is to stop the occurrence of violence before it starts by addressing and transforming the underlying harmful social norms, practices and inequalities that drive VAWG perpetration.

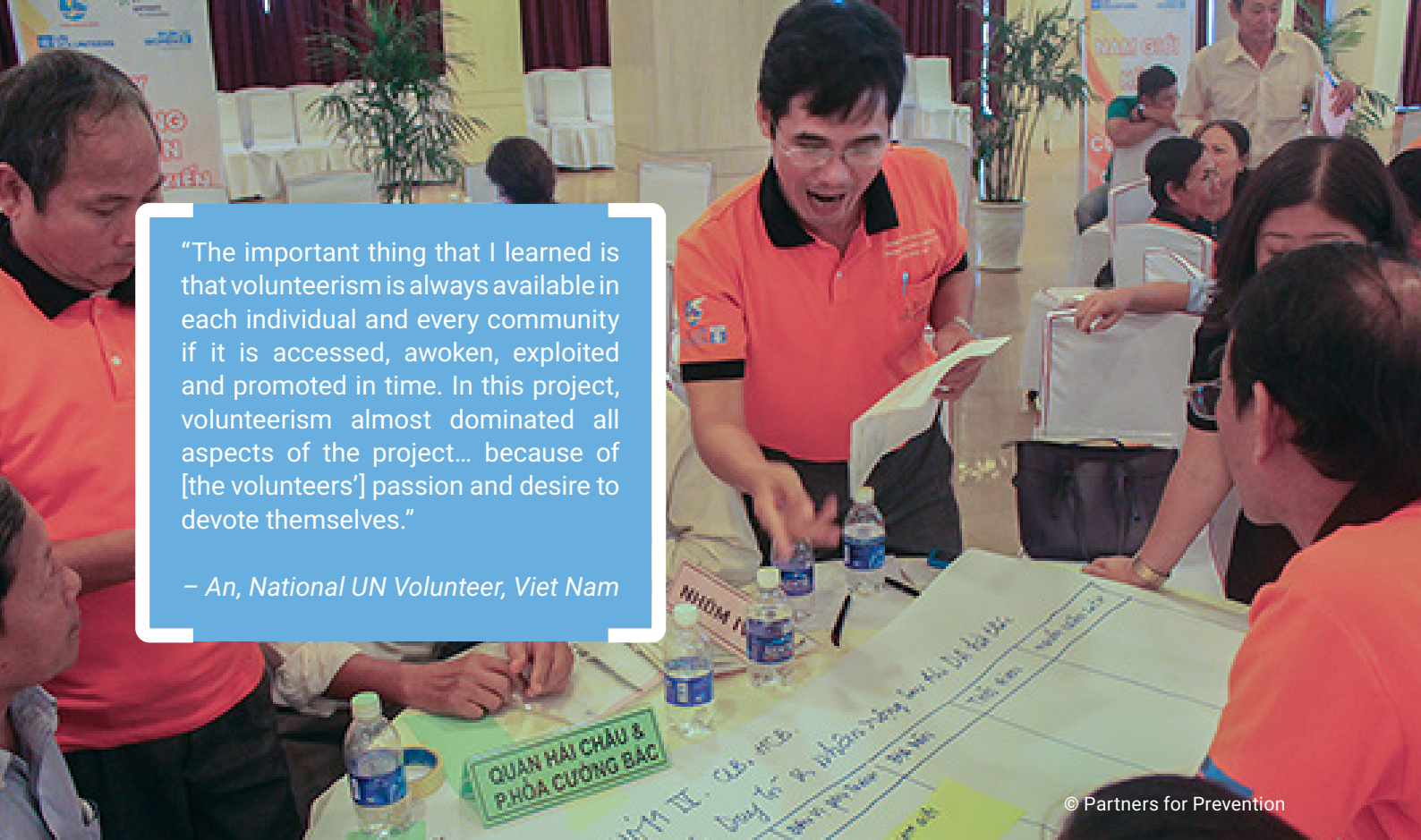
Volunteerism is social behaviour or activities undertaken of free will for the general public good and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor. Volunteering is also recognized to bring significant benefit to the volunteer as well as individuals and communities or organizations linked to the volunteerism activity.³ It encompasses both formal and informal activities, and local and international volunteers, and covers a broad range of issues. Most volunteers work within their own countries and contribute significantly to local communities by:

- Being able to access remote areas
- Building relationships of mutual trust that organizations are often unable to foster
- Empowering, supporting and developing a stable grassroots base for people to improve their lives
- Working with local authorities to hold those in power accountable and to represent voices that are often ignored – such as women and girls.

1 Fulu, E., Warner, X., Miedema, S., Jewkes, R., Roselli, T. & Lang, J. 2013. *Why do some men use violence against women and how can we prevent it? Quantitative findings from the United Nations multi-country study on men and violence in Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV. Available from <http://www.partners4prevention.org/sites/default/files/resources/p4p-report.pdf>

2 Gevers, A. & Taylor, K. *Partners for Prevention Intervention Outcomes Report*. Bangkok: UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV

3 UNV. 2017. *Literature Review for the State of the World's Volunteerism Report 2018: Building resilient communities in a turbulent world*. UNV.



“The important thing that I learned is that volunteerism is always available in each individual and every community if it is accessed, awoken, exploited and promoted in time. In this project, volunteerism almost dominated all aspects of the project... because of [the volunteers’] passion and desire to devote themselves.”

– An, National UN Volunteer, Viet Nam

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Description of the P4P II Projects

P4P II integrated research findings from Phase I with local knowledge and evidence, as well as international promising practices, into the design of primary prevention programmes at the community level that engage men, boys, women and girls. In Bangladesh, P4P provided capacity-building support for UN volunteers and for national stakeholders. In Cambodia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Viet Nam, pilot interventions were designed with a focus on VAWG primary prevention and the transformation of harmful masculinities through participatory methods and the capacity-building of local and regional organizations to sustain the results of the programme.

Bangladesh

Two projects were conducted in Bangladesh. UN Women in partnership with Hedda Produktion, Bangladesh National Women Lawyer’s Association, Bangladesh Gender Equality Advocates, and the University Grants Commission implemented a university-based intervention. This intervention included raising awareness, mobilization, engagement of youth groups, and promoting universities’ institutional capacity to address sexual harassment, reaching 28,000 students and 2,900 staff.

UNFPA in partnership with UN Women, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Education, Plan International Bangladesh, Concerned Women for Family Development, and BBC Media Action adapted Generation Breakthrough. This intervention engaged with adolescents, parents, teachers, sports instructors and community leaders at schools, madrasas and community clubs for adolescents. The intervention address VAWG, and sexual and reproductive health issues.

Cambodia

In Cambodia, the ‘Building our future: supporting healthy and happy relationships’ intervention was a joint effort of UNFPA Cambodia, UN Women, UNV and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA), with technical support from P4P. The pilot was implemented in five communes in Kampong Cham province in Cambodia and addresses key risk factors for VAWG working with 352 adolescents (ages 12–14) and 346 caregivers (e.g. parents, guardians, teachers and youth service providers). The intervention employs a participatory method to transform social norms and harmful masculinities, decrease harsh punishment and increase supportive parenting.

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Indonesia

‘Reimay (Reaching Papuan Prosperity)’ is a programme initiated by UNFPA, UN Women, UNV and the International Planned Parenthood Federation of Papua (PKBI), with technical support from P4P, in Papua Province, Indonesia. The pilot intervention engaged 260 adolescent boys and girls (ages 12–16) and 60 parents, religious leaders and other influential community members in participatory group sessions, to equip adolescents with gender-equitable attitudes and improve their relationship with their caregivers. The project builds on the existing ‘Violence Free Villages’ programme which has raised awareness of VAWG in communities and built the capacity of local authorities and civil society to respond to VAWG.

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Papua New Guinea

The *Planim Save, Kamap Strongpela* (Plant Knowledge, Grow Strong) intervention in South Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, was designed and implemented by UN Women, UNICEF and the Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation, with technical support from P4P. The project focuses on preventing VAWG and transforming negative gender norms, community peace-building and trauma-healing activities. The project uses a community conversation model that aims to increase awareness, information and conversation on VAWG, trauma and healing, peace-building, and positive relationship skills, working with 716 men and 814 women and reaching currently 2,800 people.

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Viet Nam

In Viet Nam, the ‘Male Advocate Programme’ was a project of UN Women, UNV, Da Nang’s Women’s Union and UNFPA, with technical support from P4P. The intervention is a year-long programme with 120 youths and older men to transform harmful masculinities and engage men to become male advocates in their communities for VAWG prevention through a volunteerism component. It aims to build gender-equitable attitudes, challenge harmful masculinities, build healthy relationship skills, develop an awareness of VAWG issues, and empower young men and older adult men to volunteer in their communities, to lead and engage in violence prevention.

WHAT DOES VOLUNTEERISM IN THE CONTEXT OF PRIMARY PREVENTION OF VAWG LOOK LIKE?

Volunteerism was harnessed in P4P interventions in various ways:

- International and national UN Volunteers were assigned to projects and often stationed in the field to liaise between implementing partners, UN agency country offices and P4P to support the VAWG prevention intervention implementation in various ways.
- Facilitators were often volunteers from the communities where VAWG prevention interventions were piloted.
- Several interventions promoted participants to engage in volunteering activities through formal, structured opportunities or by encouraging participants to define their own volunteerism projects for their own communities (described below).
- Several volunteerism efforts grew out of participants' experiences in VAWG prevention interventions such as helping elderly community members with their food gardens (Bougainville, Papua New Guinea) and sharing skills and ideas from the intervention with family and/or community members (Cambodia, Indonesia and Viet Nam).
- UN Online Volunteers provided technical assistance to P4P such as analysing survey data, developing a communications strategy and developing communication materials (newsletter, stories of success and promotional materials).
- Professional colleagues participated in informal volunteering activities, such as by providing thoughtful peer reviews of P4P knowledge products.

It is clear that volunteerism and volunteers played a key role at every level to drive the work of P4P forward. In particular, UN Volunteers played a key role in project coordination and operational or field management that allowed for closer, direct liaison between national and regional partners, as well as stakeholders on the ground. Both UN Volunteers and community facilitators were very motivated and became VAWG prevention and gender equality champions in communities, which greatly benefited the projects they were contributing to because of their deep commitment and positive role modeling in the community. Their commitment and contributions were invaluable.

Volunteerism activities in primary prevention interventions

Volunteerism activities were implemented within interventions for four main reasons:

- To sustain and expand the results and lessons learned from the intervention
- To raise awareness of VAWG prevention
- To promote a sense of ownership of transformation and VAWG prevention among participants
- To empower and inspire community members to take action in building safe, equitable and happy families and communities.



“I was amazed at the spirit of volunteerism of these facilitators. They invested their time and thought to make sure they gave their best as facilitators for the communities in addition to their main duties.”

– Grace, national UN Volunteer, Indonesia

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Interventions in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia and Viet Nam all provided opportunities for participants to plan and implement a volunteerism project.

Bangladesh volunteerism projects incorporated a play, Seven, which presents vignettes of VAWG and gender equality to generate discussion among students and communities, and student-led awareness-raising campaigns on university campuses including seminars, talk shows, cultural events, film festivals and debates. In addition, P4P provided capacity-building and seed funding to UN Volunteers associated with the Generation Breakthrough intervention to lead activities in their communities that raised awareness of and promoted participation in adolescent clubs.

In Cambodia, volunteerism included drawing pictures, writing song lyrics, and a writing competition and these finished pieces were then shared with the community.



In this picture, Sara Kaigere describes how parents and children in the household should treat each other: parents shouldn't yell at each other when they are angry and shouldn't be violent towards their children if there is something they do not want their child to do. It is important to spend time with family and to be willing to listen to each other.

In Indonesia, activities included youth radio shows, a VAWG awareness booth at an annual cultural festival, soccer tournaments and film showings.

In Vietnam, community-based events included quizzes, role-play dramas, and discussions of video clips relevant to VAWG prevention themes.



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WHY DO PEOPLE ENGAGE IN VOLUNTEERISM?

Throughout the project we engaged with various community and UN volunteers to understand their motivations for being involved in various forms of volunteerism linked to the P4P interventions. Many people said they were volunteers because they see the importance of their involvement in contributing to positive transformation and change – in this case, preventing VAWG and promoting safe, equitable and happy relationships, families and communities.

“The programme emphasized primary prevention ... I just wanted to be a normal volunteer like others and contribute my efforts, ability and time for the good of my community and society. Such contributions are naturally related to my passions, interests, abilities and experiences.”

– An, national UN Volunteer, Vietnam



“I came back to volunteerism because I see the importance in volunteerism itself... Through volunteerism, people can contribute to sustainable development because a volunteer’s work is driven by a strong commitment to make change, not money.”

– Mana, national UN Volunteer, Cambodia

Personal experiences and a desire to help others in similar situations was a reason for some to get involved. Tackling sexual harassment and abuse as a form of VAWG and effecting fundamental societal as well as individual change was what motivated Sumaya to volunteer:

“University is a different world. I encountered unpleasant experiences both on and off my campus just because I am a woman. When these events happened, nobody around came forward to help us. I am devoting my time and passion to this programme because I want to see my campus safe. I want girls to rise together, let their voices be heard and get justice.”

– Sumaya, student volunteer, Bangladesh

It was not only negative experiences that drove the desire to be a volunteer in VAWG prevention volunteerism activities but also to share positive experiences which are fundamental to the transformation of social norms:

“I grew up watching my childhood friends struggling with domestic violence and that this was acceptable. Luckily, I was one of those kids raised in a democratic, loving and caring family. My childhood experience turned out to be my best strength to work with the communities.”

– Grace, national UN Volunteer, Indonesia

WHAT IMPACT DOES VOLUNTEERISM HAVE ON PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT?

Through the P4P experiences and feedback from community and UN volunteers, it became clear that volunteerism impacted not only on communities but also personally on volunteers in positive ways. Here we share some insights into these impacts.

Personal growth and development

Volunteerism led to increased growth and development at the individual level. Through ongoing capacity building (e.g. training and refresher workshops and mentoring), local volunteer facilitators demonstrated improved abilities to lead participatory community sessions with creativity, honesty, confidence, patience, understanding and good public speaking skills. Volunteers used innovative

measures, such as utilizing local resources and contributions, to produce events and ensure the sustainability of the intervention with a limited budget. UN Volunteers and volunteer facilitators became role models in their communities and realized they needed to embrace the new skills and ideas themselves as part of effecting change in their communities.

Volunteers showed increased self-confidence, self-efficacy and a deeper understanding of gender equality and preventing VAWG within their community. Many found their involvement in volunteerism to be personally meaningful and fulfilling in that they could use the skills within their own lives and families and they were proud of making a positive contribution to their communities. Some UN Volunteers described how their own relationships had improved after their involvement in P4P projects because they could apply what they had learned from the project. Through continuous feedback collected from community and UN volunteers, it was evident that volunteerism fostered skills development, was personally valuable, and resulted in general enthusiasm among the volunteers to make a long-term commitment to volunteerism in the community.

“I trained myself before I trained others. Through this experience I can whisper to others that my life was meaningful.”

– *Facilitator, Indonesia*

“[T]he programme also made me contemplate my own daily interactions with people and how sociocultural norms shape our way of thinking. It gives me a deeper understanding of violence against women and girls, gender equality, and positive parenting skills which I can apply at home and share with other people around me.”

– *Mana, national UN Volunteer, Cambodia*

“My assignment allowed me to develop my capacity in managing and advocating [for] the project. I was also able to understand more on the UN system and was given the opportunity to undertake online courses that improved my skills. I was trusted to take part in making decisions for the project, bridging the message and sharing experiences with the implementing partners, and learned from them. The assignment has given me the opportunity to develop professionally. It has been an amazing journey.”

– *Grace, national UN Volunteer, Indonesia*



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Community development

Volunteerism promoted a sense of ownership at the individual and community level of social norm transformation and VAWG prevention for three primary reasons. First, facilitators were volunteers from the community; second, intervention participants themselves designed and implemented community volunteerism projects; and, third, they also shared what they learned more informally within their families and peer groups. Thus, the volunteerism was rooted in the community itself because individuals and communities embraced, led and integrated VAWG prevention and social norm change into their daily lives rather than relegating these concepts, skills, and discussions on these topics to workshops lead by external facilitators.

Because community members received extensive capacity-building in evidence-based VAWG prevention and social norm transformation strategies, they are able to continue to use their skills to sustain VAWG prevention and equality-building initiatives in the community. Thus, the community can continue to benefit from and build on the achievements of the pilot intervention projects.

The experience in the P4P projects has inspired some volunteers to further their existing volunteerism contributions to their community, particularly in promoting awareness on VAWG. Those with a strong belief in contributing to social change and who witnessed real change were even more motivated to continue their volunteering activities.

“Since joining the Male Advocate Club, I have become more aware of inequalities between men and women. I understand how to treat my female family members, friends and colleagues with respect. I have shared what I learned from the club with my family and friends. I have even given suggestions to my father on how to treat my mother better.”

– Male participant, Viet Nam



“I will definitely continue advocating to prevent sexual harassment after the programme ends! I have already started working with JUSTICIA, a group of pro-gender lawyers preventing sexual harassment on our campus and in our community. This work experience nicely brings together my passion for a safer campus and my academic background in law.”

– Sumaya, student volunteer, Bangladesh

Through her work as a volunteer facilitator working with adolescent girls and boys in Cambodia, Sophea is determined to continue to prevent other women from experiencing the violence that she experienced:

“I want to completely eliminate violence against women in my village,”
– Sophea, facilitator, Cambodia

Another facilitator in Cambodia shared his commitment to continue leading small-scale sessions with adolescents in his commune by using available resources in the community. In Viet Nam, key stakeholders at different levels planned to expand the Male Advocate Clubs to other project communes or integrate the content into existing clubs using the facilitator manual and lessons learned from the intervention.

The other critical factor in this programme is that all the intervention participants were also volunteers and included members from the same community. This helped establish a reciprocal approach which benefited both facilitators and participants and encouraged an organic process of continued volunteerism. Through their participation in the intervention and its activities, they inspired others in the community who then became volunteers themselves. The result was a strengthened collective community of action able to address social issues such as VAWG.

WHAT ARE THE LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VOLUNTEERISM IN VAWG PREVENTION PROGRAMMING?

In this section the key lessons learned are shared and recommendations are made based on P4P experiences of working with different kinds of volunteers and volunteerism efforts in VAWG prevention in countries in the Asia and the Pacific region.⁴

Invest in volunteerism and volunteers

While volunteerism may be seen as a cost-saving mechanism or volunteers may be seen as temporary team members, it is essential to invest in them in order to reap the benefits that volunteers and volunteerism can bring to a project. In the P4P projects, we found volunteers often needed capacity development and training in key areas such as technical understanding of primary prevention of VAWG and gender equality programming; participatory workshop facilitation skills; and monitoring, evaluation and reporting skills for VAWG prevention programming. When P4P provided opportunities

⁴ Lessons learned reports are available from: Cambodia, Indonesia, and Vietnam, <http://partners4prevention.org/resource/vietnam-lessons-learned-report-english>;

for training, mentoring or coaching to develop the volunteers' capacities, projects were rewarded with more commitment and very valuable inputs from various volunteers. In addition, it was noted that volunteerism efforts need investment in terms of encouraging and coaching communities to develop and implement their ideas and, in some cases, seed funding for community volunteerism activities. By making this investment in volunteerism, it generated a reciprocal investment by volunteers in the work and projects they were part of.

Promote a sense of belonging with volunteers

Volunteerism is by definition a social behaviour and thus will not thrive in isolation. Volunteers should be considered part of the project team and included in team meetings, mailing lists and team-building activities. Ensuring volunteers have an adequate space to work and the necessary equipment or materials to fulfill their roles is essential. One particularly successful way P4P promoted a sense of belonging and inclusive way of working was to engage volunteers to provide input on documents and reports, invite senior volunteers to write reports, lead processes to revise manuals at the end of the intervention, and provide input to operations or implementation strategy. In addition, P4P gave volunteers the platform to lead initiatives they identified, such as capacity-development activities with facilitators or additional volunteerism activities in communities. Giving volunteers opportunities to contribute to decision-making and project products made them feel part of the team, increased their investment in the project, and further built their capacities.

For UN Volunteers, it was important that host agencies acknowledge, respect and engage with them as part of the team. To promote a sense of belonging, P4P facilitated networking between volunteers and especially UN Volunteers based in the different countries. This proved to be a successful feature of the P4P programme. This allowed UN Volunteers to have a special network just for people in similar roles with many opportunities to share innovations and learning from each project. This contributed to their ongoing capacity development through sharing lessons learned across countries and also provided them with a supportive, empathic network. Such South–South exchanges are valuable in sustaining and growing evidence-based VAWG prevention programming within this regional context; they have been successful and promoted in other regions.⁵

Provide regular support, ensure safety and maintain a reasonable workload for volunteers

The demands of working on VAWG issues have been well-documented with vicarious trauma being a significant concern.⁶ It is important to continuously monitor volunteers' welfare and safety throughout the project with regular supportive supervision and 'check ins'. In addition to the topic of VAWG being particularly sensitive and emotionally demanding, the conditions in the work environment can also be stressful. For example, some project locations had particularly difficult transport conditions with poor roads and long distances between sites, significant safety concerns particularly after dark, and unreliable power supply or communication networks, resulting in poor phone, cellphone, or internet connectivity. These challenges cannot always be avoided because they are the conditions of the

5 Dartnall, E., & Gevers, A. 2017. Harnessing the power of South-South partnerships to build capacity for the prevention of sexual and intimate partner violence. *African Safety Promotion*, 15(1), 8–15.

6 <http://www.svri.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2016-06-02/SVRIVTguidelines.pdf>

location; however, agencies should consider how to reduce the stress and risk caused by these conditions, such as having 'safety first' protocols when designing the implementation schedule or providing a vehicle for transport.

The network of volunteers involved in the projects proved to be an important source of support and problem-solving for the volunteers when faced with problems or when they needed additional support.

Many volunteers demonstrated high levels of commitment and dedication to the projects. This made them vulnerable to being overworked or becoming burnt out. To keep expectations clear for all involved and to minimize the risk of assigning too much work to volunteers, P4P found it useful to have very clear terms of references (TORs) with the UN Volunteers. Some projects applied these to the volunteer facilitators too. It was helpful to foster close working relationships and teams so volunteers felt they could ask for help or to negotiate realistic timeframes for their work. These TORs also introduced a clear accountability mechanism, communicating to volunteers the importance of their role and their position on the team, and also informed capacity-development planning.

Recognize and celebrate contributions and achievements of volunteers and volunteerism

A key to keeping volunteers motivated and to inspire continued volunteerism is to acknowledge and celebrate all contributions and achievements they have made. These acknowledgements and celebrations should not only be at the end of a project or project phase, but throughout the project to reinforce and show appreciation of the value that volunteers and volunteerism add to VAWG prevention programmes. Recognition can be made in formal and informal ways ranging from government to agency awards or certificates during a ceremony, highlighting their work in project or agency newsletters and in social media stories⁷ to showing appreciation of them during staff meetings or training sessions. The importance of acknowledgement and celebration of volunteers' contributions was highlighted during workshops and feedback sessions where UN Volunteers and volunteer facilitators noted how this positive reinforcement and public acknowledgement was very motivating. It helped them know they were making a difference and also that their efforts were greatly appreciated. In January 2017, the Government of Da Nang City formally recognized Phan An, a UN Volunteer based in Viet Nam, for his participation and volunteerism in the P4P programme.

Develop a mutually beneficial programme for volunteers

It is important to ensure volunteers are benefiting from their experience, just as their contributions are benefiting the project. If there is no reciprocity between the project and the volunteers, their role is unlikely to be fulfilling or valuable. This can result in a volunteer who does not fully commit to the project or leaves the project. Benefits to volunteers can range from the work being

7 Stories of volunteerism can be accessed for Bangladesh, <http://partners4prevention.org/news/sumaya-bangladesh-raises-awareness-about-violence-prevention-her-campus>; Cambodia, <http://partners4prevention.org/news/promoting-volunteerism-prevent-violence-against-women-and-girls-cambodia>; Indonesia, <http://partners4prevention.org/news/fighting-violence-against-women-girls-through-community-engagement-indonesia>; and Vietnam, <http://partners4prevention.org/news/volunteerism-vehicle-preventing-violence-0>

personally meaningful and fulfilling to unique opportunities for capacity development and career development. P4P maintained ongoing discussions with volunteers to understand how to structure their work in the most rewarding ways and ensuring that investment is made in their ongoing capacity development and career coaching, integrating them into a team, providing regular support, and continuously recognizing their contributions and highlighting their achievements.



Male advocates club, Viet Nam © Partners for Prevention

WHAT'S NEXT FOR VOLUNTEERISM IN VAWG PREVENTION?

It is clear that volunteerism and volunteers can make valuable contributions to sustainable VAWG prevention in communities. However, in order to reap these benefits, it is important to manage and actively support volunteers throughout the project and acknowledge the important role that they play.

It would be valuable to conduct formal research on the role of volunteerism in the context of VAWG to further understand and quantify the specific contributions to achieving VAWG prevention programming goals and, most importantly, sustaining them. Long-term follow-up studies would be particularly useful to see the extended impact.

Integrating volunteerism in VAWG prevention interventions was a relatively new area during the P4P projects. Given the promise that it has shown, it would be strategic to continue to innovate ways to build volunteerism and integrate it into VAWG prevention, especially in ways that would become self-sustaining. Project implementers and communities should be encouraged to document the various forms of volunteerism that are formally promoted and those which organically grow out of community engagement in VAWG prevention. Volunteerism deserves more attention and direct development during the design, planning and implementation of VAWG prevention work.

ADDITIONAL REPORTS ON VOLUNTEERISM AND VAWG

- State of the World's Volunteerism Reports
 - Universal Values for Global Well-being (2011): <https://www.unv.org/publications/2011-state-world%E2%80%99s-volunteerism-report-universal-values-global-well-being>
 - Transforming Governance (2015): <https://www.unv.org/swvr/2015-state-worlds-volunteerism-report-swvr-transforming-governance>
- Contributions of Volunteerism to the prevention of Gender-Based Violence in Aceh: <http://>

www.partners4prevention.org/resource/contributions-volunteerism-prevention-gender-based-violence-aceh-english-version

- Ending Violence Against Women: A Guide to Working with Volunteers: <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/03/ending-violence-against-women-a-guide-to-working-with-volunteers>
- Making a Difference: An Assessment of Volunteer Interventions Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Cambodia: <http://www.partners4prevention.org/resource/making-difference-assessment-volunteer-interventions-addressing-gbv-cambodia>

