



**UN**  
**Volunteers**

inspiration in action

Quarterly Newsletter  
March 2016

# UNV Flash

Côte d'Ivoire



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# EDITORIAL

Dear Volunteers, partners and colleagues,

It is a great honour for me to introduce this fifth edition of "UNV Flash".

I would first of all like to wish each and every one of you a happy and peaceful year in 2016, with good health and success in all the projects you undertake throughout the year.

While reading these lines, I would like you to join me in saying Akwaba! to Alden Hodzic from Croatia, who has just joined our UNV integrated program team as the person in charge of Administration and Recruitment, replacing Monica Nowosad, who has moved on to other responsibilities.

The year 2015, and more especially its last quarter, will certainly have been one of the richest in terms of activities. One month after my arrival in Côte d'Ivoire, from 10 to 13 November 2015, I was lucky enough to take part in the UNV Capacity development retreat focused on Results-Based Management (RBM), Gender and Advocacy for Volunteering. Let me assure you that I really appreciated the commitment shown by each participant in the wealth of exchanges that took place.

One other outstanding activity at the end of 2015 was International Volunteers Day (IVD 2015), celebrated on 5 and 8 December, in Abidjan and Korhogo respectively.

This is my opportunity to thank Her Excellency, the United Nations Secretary General's Special Representative in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as all our colleagues, partners and volunteers for their participation in the IVD 2015.

The "Clean Sweep" operation for the voluntary collection of rubbish in the "Bromacoté" district of Adjamé was a great success and demonstrated once again the value volunteering can add to the development of a community or a locality.

During the field visits that the Joint Unit made, which took us from Abidjan to Korhogo, and from Oumé to Toulepleu via San Pedro, Tabou and Guiglo, I was amazed by what the UN Volunteers had achieved and by the impact of their work on improving the living conditions of Ivoirian communities.

In this issue, you will learn about the work Volunteers are doing in the areas of Human Rights and Engineering, in Abidjan and Daloa respectively; the history of the Democratic Republic of Congo; not forgetting your cultural agenda in Bouaké and Abidjan.

In these early days of 2016, I invite each of you Volunteers in Côte d'Ivoire to continue raising awareness, particularly with the younger girls and boys, of the values that volunteering can bring to their community.

**Thank you,**

*Victor Kitembo Idumba*

UN Volunteer, UNV Programme Officer,  
Abidjan



# About us

## UNV programme :

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide.

Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling development challenges, and it can transform the pace and nature of development. Volunteerism benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, and by purposefully creating opportunities for participation.

UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for recognition of volunteers, working with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing an increasing number and diversity of volunteers, including experienced UN Volunteers, throughout the world. UNV embraces volunteerism as universal and inclusive, and recognizes volunteerism in its diversity as well as the values that sustain it : free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity.

[www.unv.org](http://www.unv.org)

## Online Volunteering :

The Online Volunteering service is one of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme's corporate tools to mobilize volunteers for development.

The Online Volunteering service connects volunteers with organizations working for sustainable human development. Volunteers contribute their skills online to help organizations address development challenges.

### **Online volunteers are...**

professionals, students, homemakers, retirees, people with disabilities and expatriates from across the globe who support organizations over the Internet. They are people who commit their time and skills over the Internet, freely and without financial considerations, for the benefit of society. What they have in common is a strong commitment to making a real difference to development.

[www.onlinevolunteering.org](http://www.onlinevolunteering.org)



# UN Volunteers in the field...

## 3 UN Volunteers in the Engineering section in Daloa...

In this section, I am pleased to introduce you to three of the UN Volunteers serving in Engineering section and based in Daloa. Ibrahim Abdelrahman

Adam and James Origa are both Water & Sanitation technicians from Sudan and Kenya respectively, and Federica Cecchet is a construction

engineer, from Italy. Each of them has specific responsibilities within the engineering unit and all three have gladly taken us on a tour of their daily work routine!



*Federica and Ibrahim took us on a visit of the warehouse (UNV programme, 2016)*

He supervises over 30 staff including water treatment plant operators, plumbers and electricians. One of Ibrahim's first achievements at UNOCI was repairing the waste water treatment plant in AK Camp and turning it from

James is also a water and sanitation technician. Before joining UNOCI, James worked for humanitarian agencies in his home country, Kenya. The desire to serve outside home and take on new challenges was a strong motivation for James to become a UN Volunteer. He supervises 27 sites across UNOCI's Sector West area and is on call 24/7 to respond to UN personnel in case of concerns related to water and sanitation.



*James shows us the water and sanitation facilities around the UN base (UN programme, 2016)*

Ibrahim is a Water Treatment Specialist who previously served in UNAMID in charge of medical waste incineration, waste disposal and other environment-related issues. Previously a local staff at UNAMID, and a civil servant in the water department of Darfur Regional Authority, Ibrahim wished to expand his horizons and serve abroad to discover a new country and different cultures. Today, Ibrahim's daily work routine involves installing and maintaining water and wastewater treatments plants and coordinating water and drainage related engineering works.

manual to automatic, while he was still in his check-in phase! Ibrahim also went on to conduct trainings for 32 individual contractors on waste management operations with zero environment pollution.



*James shows us the water and sanitation facilities around the UN base (UN programme, 2016)*



*James shows us the water and sanitation facilities around the UN base (UN programme, 2016)*



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*Federica with the constructors (UNV programme, 2016)*

Federica is the Building Management supervisor in Daloa. She is involved in all construction and maintenance work across Sector West. Currently, Federica is very active in the assessment of camps from which military contingents are currently withdrawing. During her visits, some of Federica's activities are to assess the condition of these camps and while her watsan colleagues for instance evaluate costs of maintenance against costs

of retrieval of water and sanitation plants. This assessment also involves planning camp hand-over to national authorities. Federica supervises about 40 workers including carpenters, prefab assemblers, and welders, and signs all material release! Her first impression since joining

UNOCI was that UN Volunteers have a lot of responsibilities, which she highly appreciates! Previously, "Fede" worked in the private sector for tele-radio communication companies and engineering studios in her home country, Italy. Fede has immediately adapted

to the life in Daloa, a small city in the west of Côte d'Ivoire. For example, most people here, including the UN Volunteers, don't have hot water in their homes. Fede immediately created a very simple water heating system in order to take a warm shower in her garden!



*Federica supervises the workers (UNV programme, 2016)*



*Federica introduces the UNV Programme Manager to the Gym (UNV programme, 2016)*

*Samira Keita*

UN Volunteer, Sector West Coordination Officer  
Daloa



# UN Volunteer story... Jade:

## a Human Rights Officer working with children under order of temporary confinement



Jade Tessier

As a UN Volunteer Human Rights Officer in Abidjan, I work with the Protection and Documentation Unit. Amongst others, our daily work consists in compiling and analyzing information coming from the Human Rights Division's field offices in order to prepare analytical reports on the human rights situation which

prevails in Côte d'Ivoire. As part of the Protection and Documentation Unit, I am currently supporting the Child Protection Unit with a view to drafting a report on the rights of children under order of temporary confinement at the Centre d'Observation pour Mineurs (COM) in Abidjan.

Together with the head of the Child Protection Unit and the UNV Child Protection Officer, we met with children under order of temporary confinement, the COM director and educators. Up to now, more than 50 children participated in the data collection activity. The information gathering focuses on the respect of children's rights according to national laws and regulations, as inspired by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ratified by Côte d'Ivoire in 1991 and the relevant international guidelines. The COM building is located within the premises of the Maison d'Arrêt et de Correction d'Abidjan (MACA) where adults are imprisoned. Children are subjected to hard living conditions in the COM. The food is insufficient, poor in quality and in variety, they do not have enough clothes and they are provided with very few

hygiene products, no running water, no shower are provided to the children. I was impressed by the ability to 'bounce back' some children have. One of them started learning how to carve wood with an adult prisoner at the MACA, who collaborates with the COM and is in charge of the organization of a carpentry workshop. He makes strong wood furniture and managed to sell them outside the MACA. During his eight months' confinement at the COM, he made 12,000 CFA francs which are kept by the educators until his release. He is to be released soon and plans to start working as a carpenter with his uncle in Daloa. I believe our work as Human Rights Officers will contribute to improving the living conditions of children through alerting authorities on their obligation to comply with national and international regulations on children confinement. However,

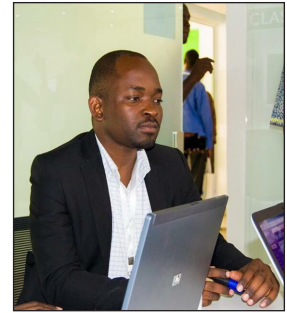
what is preoccupying is both the situation of many children who have been abandoned by their families and the lack of actors bringing direct assistance to the children under temporary confinement, in terms of clothing, food and hygiene products. In the months preceding the NGOs withdrawal, poor management and corruption cases motivated the NGOs' resolution to stop supporting until the COM director was transferred in January 2016. Therefore, out of fear that their support was not directly benefiting the children under temporary confinement at the COM, NGOs decided to disrupt their assistance, until the time State engaged in serious reform of the institution. In certain instances, NGOs could not consistently assure their assistance to the children as donors discontinued or reduced their grants and financial support for juvenile justice.

*Jade Tessier*

UN Volunteer, Human Rights Officer  
Abidjan



# The country I come from: DRC



Did you know that 16% of UN Volunteers in Côte d'Ivoire come from the DRC? In this issue our focus is on Dr. Congo (read Doctor Congo), as people from some neighboring countries like to call it. "DRC" stands for Democratic Republic of the Congo. Formerly known as "Zaire" from 1971 to 1997, the country has been renamed as DR Congo, and is also known as RDC, Congo-Kinshasa, or simply Congo. It is located in the Central African region, neighboring nine countries, including Angola, Congo-



Brazzaville, the Central African Republic, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia.

You have probably heard about the fact that Congo is the 'Heart of Africa' – as you can see it from the map. You may have also heard about the fact that Congo is the foundation of African music, but there is so much more you can learn about this beautiful country. In this issue, I want to share with you some facts that might inspire you to visit it someday.

## Geography

Congo is the second largest country in Africa, with a population estimated to 70,000,000 people. Its size approximates 2,345,000

km<sup>2</sup>. It's a massive country, the size of Western Europe. Congo has the biggest rainforest in Africa and the second biggest in the

world after the Amazon. Congo has also the highest frequency of thunderstorms in the world as a result of its equatorial location.

## Culture

There are nearly 250 ethnic languages spoken in Congo, and officially four national languages, namely Swahili, Lingala, Kikongo and Tshiluba. It would be pointless to write

this article without mentioning Congolese music, one of its biggest exports. There are many styles of music in DRC, while the principal are Congolese Rumba, Soukous and Ndombolo, all

accompanied by particular dances. In Congo, we have music and dance in the blood. It's either you dance or sing, and some people are even blessed to have both talents.

## Congo in the World's History

Apart from the fact that Congo was the world's largest supply of rubber in the 1800s under Belgian king Leopold II, have you ever heard about "Little Boy" and "Fat Man"? Okay, let me put you in context.

1945. The world is facing one of its deadliest wars. Millions of people have died. Superpowers, like the U.S., have tried to reach an agreement to end the war to no avail, because Japan has refused to surrender.

U.S. President Harry Truman threatens Japan with atomic attacks, but Japan still resists. On 6 August 1945, a U.S. plane drops the more than 9,000-pound Uranium-235 bomb, also known as the "Little





Boy”, in the Japanese city of Hiroshima, destroying almost 90% of the city and killing nearly 80,000 people. Three days later, another plane drops a 10,000-pound plutonium bomb also known as “Fat Man” in the city of Nagasaki, which resulted in Emperor Hirohito announcing

his country's surrender in a radio broadcast on 15 August 1945. On 24 October 1945, two months after Japan's surrender, the United Nations officially comes into existence. Now you are probably wondering where Congo fits in this whole World War II story, as well the

genesis of the United Nations. Although the media does not always mention it, the Uranium that was used to make “Little Boy” in the Manhattan Project came from the Shinkolobwe Mine in Katanga province located in...you've guessed it, Congo.

## Congo in the World's Information Technology Industry

Congo is a country full of untapped natural resources, including minerals. In fact, Congo is potentially one of the richest countries on earth in natural resources. Its soil has the potential to develop agriculture and feed the whole Africa. Furthermore, there is a great connection between the minerals of Congo and your cell phone, because the world's

technology industry depends at a great extent on the minerals from Congo. The laptop or mobile phone you're using right now as you read this article consists of elements of cobalt and coltan (Columbite-Tantalite), which most probably come from Congo. A recent investigation by Amnesty International indicates that “more than half of the world's supply of cobalt comes

from the DRC”. Cobalt ends up in smartphones, batteries, cars and computers sold to millions of people by brands including Apple, Microsoft and Vodafone. On the other hand, coltan is used in high density capacitors used in cameras, mobile phones and other compact electronic devices. So next time you want to buy a fancy smartphone or a laptop, think about Congo!

## Congo in Sports

Congo has hosted “The Rumble in the Jungle” in 1974, one of the world's biggest historic boxing events, between Mohammed Ali and George

Foreman. It is also the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to participate in the FIFA world cup in 1974. Congo recently won the 2016 African Nations

Football Championship, beating Mali with a score of 3-0. Former NBA basketball player Mutombo Dikembe is originally from Congo.

## Opportunities in Congo

This is just the tip of the iceberg about DRC, a tiny part of the whole picture. As you can imagine, Congo has countless opportunities. If you want to learn more about the country,

especially if you are adventurous like me, you can book a flight to major cities like Kinshasa, Lubumbashi or Goma, but you should be warned that the current political situation is relatively

unstable with the upcoming 2016 elections. Visa fees can also be relatively high. Alternatively, you might need to contact me for thought-provoking discussions over lunch or coffee breaks!

## Places to visit while in Congo

### Zongo Falls

*Zongo waterfalls  
(Prasadkrishnapn, 2015)*

Imagine the majestic Congo River falling 65 meters high with a shattering noise, and

the magic environment echoing your voice in combination with the waterfall sound as you



shout “Zongo”! The wonderful Zongo Falls are located at 130 km from Kinshasa, in Bas-Congo. It

is one of the top destinations, if you want to spend a weekend out of the busy and crowded Kinshasa,

or if you have a honeymoon plan in an exotic place at the heart of Africa.

## Virunga National Park

Have you ever seen gorillas ‘live’? Their natural habitat is

the Virunga National Park. The Virunga National Park is located

in Goma, Eastern Congo. Great place to visit!

## Nyiragongo Volcano

The Nyiragongo Volcano, one of the most active in Africa, is located in Goma, in Eastern Congo. It has an elevation of 3,470 m (11,382 ft) in the Virunga Mountains associated with the Albertine Rift.



*An aerial view of the towering volcanic peak of Mount Nyiragongo (MONUSCO, Neil Wetmore, 2014).*



*The Nyiragongo Volcano, one of the most active in Africa (United States Geological Survey, 1994)*

Nyiragongo Lava Lake. The Nyiragongo has a continuously boiling lava lake easily visible from the edge of the crater, Virunga National Park (Cai Tjeenk Willink, 2011)

## Common expressions and quotes

Here are a few expressions and quotes in Lingala that you can hear if you happen to travel to Kinshasa or any other city in Congo:

- Mbotel!: Hello!
- Sango nini?: How are you?
- Naz’o kende musala: I’m going to work
- “Kongo, Eloko ya Makasi”: Congolese citation in Lingala, meaning “Congo, a strong [thing] country”.

### Sources

*CNN.com: Travel: “10 things to know before visiting Democratic Republic of Congo”*  
<http://edition.cnn.com/2013/06/06/travel/10-things-about-congo/>

*Jean-Marc Mercy,*

UN Volunteer, Human Resources Specialist,  
Abidjan



## Cultural Agenda

### MASA Festival, 5 to 12 March 2016

The Market for African Performing Arts (known as MASA from its French name) is a cultural programme for developing African performing arts. Its main aims are to back the conception and elaboration of high-quality productions, to

help creative directors and their productions circulate around Africa and in the wider world, to train performers and those running the production line for shows, and to develop the performing arts sector (that is, music, theatre and

dance) relating to the African continent. From 5 to 12 March 2016, this 9th edition of MASA will bring together some 2,000 professionals from abroad, including 753 performers, as a focus for African and worldwide cultural events and festivals.

#### On the menu:

- An opening ceremony at the Palais de la Culture in Abidjan, on Saturday 5 March, and a closing ceremony at the same venue on Saturday 12 March, each attracting 15,000 spectators
- A comedy night and a story-telling night
- An exhibition on Great Black Music
- An exhibit showing MASA's history
- A craft village with some 100 stalls
- A street food village with 30 ethnic restaurants
- An International Women's Day concert and catwalk show
- A special day for Young Spectators
- A Jazz evening.

For more details, go to the MASA website:

[www.masa.ci](http://www.masa.ci)



*MASA festival, 2016*

### Bouaké's Carnival Fair and Forum, 2016 Edition, 8 to 17 April 2016

The first Bouaké Carnival Fair took place in 1960. The last time it happened, in 2015, it was renamed « the Bouaké Carnival Fair and Forum » and it brought together over 200 performers and 100,000

visitors, with invited guests in the form of Brazilian Samba schools, Moroccan groups and performers from other West African communities.

The 2016 edition will take place from 8 to 17 April, and include,

amongst other things: the opening ceremony, parades, food-tasting, sports activities, a Carnival Queen contest, and a closing ceremony in which the giant figure of Carnival is burned.



- **Friday, 8 April:**

- **Morning:** Official opening ceremony (Boulevard de l'Université, opposite the stadium), followed by the inauguration of a photo exhibit entitled: "BOUAKE HIER A AUJOURD'HUI" (at the Jacques Aka Cultural Centre);

- **Afternoon:** Opening of the Festival of Arts and Cultures, at the Carnival Palace (demonstration of traditional dances)

- **Saturday 9 April:**

Concert with DJ CHE GUEVARA;

- **Sunday 10 April (4.30 – 8p.m.):**

Break out events at Dar Es Salaam, featuring: OFI, sympa, wôyô;

- **Monday 11 April:**

'Laughter night" and Concert with ANTOINETTE KONAN;

- **Wednesday 13 April:**

Breakout events in the "Zone" area, with OFI, Balafon, wôyô... ;

- **Thursday 14 April:**

Concert with AFOU KEITA;

- **Friday 15 April:**

Concert with AFOU KEITA;

- **Saturday 16 April:**

- Day for professionals (all-day session) (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, BOUAKE Branch)
- Discovering BOUAKE and its Region (excursion –tourist circuit);

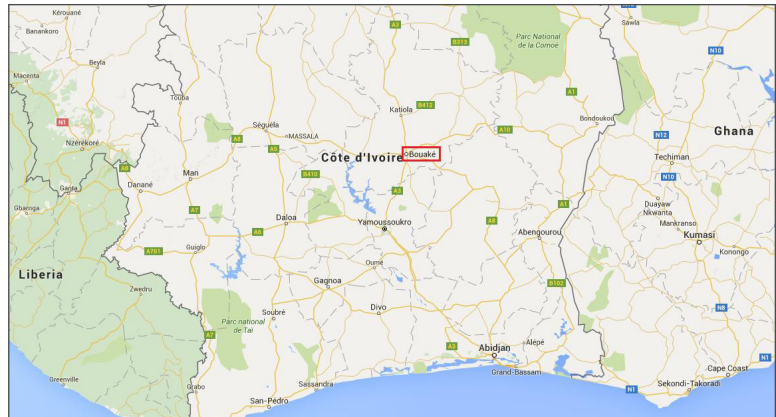
- Masked Ball and competition for the best disguise (evening show at the Carnival Palace) with OFI BOUAKE;

- **Sunday 17 April:**

Parade and Closing ceremony of the 2016 Bouaké Carnival Fair and Forum

**NB: from friday 8 to sunday 17 april: all-night events from 7 p.m. till dawn at the street-food fair, and a cookery competition (bouake fairground, situated between the two stadiums).**

for more information go to <http://www.mairiebouake.ci/>



Map of Cote d'Ivoire with Bouake location



Bouaké Carnival (Mairie de Bouaké, 2015)

*Etiam Fiagan,*

UN Volunteer, Human Resources Officer,  
Abidjan



## Aknowledgements

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Volontaires des Nations Unies en Côte d'Ivoire



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Côte d'Ivoire