No Helmet, No Ride – National Awareness Campaign on Motorcycle Helmet Use

Helmet, No Ride was jointly launched by the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation and the World Health Organization (WHO) in Nairobi. The campaign aims to raise awareness on the consequences of failing to wear a helmet and help boost helmet use among all motorcycle users (riders and their passengers), save lives and reduce the strain on the national health care system.

Road traffic injuries are a major public health problem. Approximately 1.3 million people lose their lives every year to this preventable problem. In Kenya, more than 3000 people die every year as a result of road traffic accidents. Of these approximately 7% are motorcycle riders – a five-fold increase over the last five years. Motorcycle registration in Kenya has increased almost 40-fold in the last decade accounting for 70% of all newly registered vehicles in 2011.

“Helmets reduce the risk of road traffic-related head injury by 70% and deaths by 40%. Wearing a helmet is the minimum one can do to protect oneself from injuries, deaths and potential fines, and to protect families from the pain and suffering of dealing with the loss of the family bread-winner,” said the Minister for Public Health and Sanitation Honorable Beth Mugo in a speech read on her behalf by the Head of Disease Prevention and Control, Dr. Willies Akhwale at the launch. The Minister urged all stakeholders including media to be aggressive in informing the public on the importance of helmet use while riding motor cycles.

“In districts such as Naivasha, about a quarter (26%) of road traffic crashes involve motorcyclists. Compared to car occupants, motorcycle riders and their passengers are relatively unprotected; as such motorcycles are one of the most dangerous forms of transportation. This campaign is therefore aimed at raising awareness and taking action on this important issue,” said the WHO Country Representative Dr Custodia Mandlhate.

The No Helmet, No Ride campaign includes a series of radio adverts billboards and posters designed to increase knowledge about the importance of wearing a helmet and change the attitude and behavior of motorcycle riders and their passengers. The campaign is to be complimented by strict enforcement of the traffic laws by the Police.

What’s Inside:

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- Intern Memoirs: “The Beginning Of The End?”
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- IOM Opens Pastoralist Dispensary in Turkana, Kenya
- Education for All Global Monitoring Report on Youth and Skills Launched in Kenya
- Kenya Bags Two At 2012 Online Volunteering Awards
- UNIC Nairobi hosts the media at an exclusive visit to the United Nations Office at Nairobi. (UNON)

Upcoming Events

18 December – International Migrants Day
19 December – United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation
27 Jan 2013 – International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust
Intern Memoirs: “The Beginning of The End?”

As I walked into the UN Headquarters in Africa (UNON), I could not help but feel intimidated and the 193 flags flying high did not make it any easier. It felt like all the nations were watching me, my every move. Firsts are always petrifying and being the first Intern under the Visitors’ Service was no exception. There is no precedent set, no example to follow. I had to get it right. Where do I start? What are the expectations? Will my performance be acceptable? How will I apply the knowledge I have acquired at the university? Too many questions ran through my mind, but I instantly felt at ease when I got to the United Nations Information Centre offices. I was properly oriented and felt part of the team.

“You’ve got to read, read, and read!!” Those were the first instructions that my supervisor, Ms. Marian Aggrey, Chief of the Visitors’ Service gave me as she handed me materials to go through. I never really understood what the fuss was all about. Then, I gave my first tour and visitors kept asking lots of questions. I finally got it! You need to have your facts right about the Organization you work for. That is the essence of Public Relations.

Four months down the line, and I have learnt a lot about the United Nations.

Being part of the Visitors’ Service has not only sharpened my cross-cultural communication, research and public speaking skills, but has also improved my journalistic ability to draft reports and take good photographs. I have been exposed to a wide range of global issues, thus appreciating the work of the Organization even more.

One of my most memorable experiences was doing practice talks with my supervisor. The pressure and anxiety I felt during the sessions was not exciting at all, but the pride I felt when I delivered my first briefing to a group of five people, made it all worth it. It may seem like a small group but in that particular moment, I felt a part of the United Nations family.

Furthermore, having visitors from all over the world helped me appreciate different cultures and indicated that the purpose of the United Nations under Article One of the Charter, which aims to develop friendly relations amongst nations, was actually being achieved.

Feedback is equally important for any individual or organization to assess their performance. Seeing visitors change their perspective about the UN and its work has given me great satisfaction. On one of the many tours, one 10 year-old girl came up to me and said: “I am so inspired and can’t wait to work for the United Nations!” Such enthusiasm always made me want to give more and more tours! In addition, emails from my supervisor that read “many thanks Joy” or “Good job!” made me realize the importance of motivation and appreciating of a job well done by other colleagues in a work environment.

However, with the Visitors Service being relatively new, my experience was not short of challenges. A lot of foundations had to be laid in terms of marketing, developing social media accounts and even getting speakers to brief the public about the work of the UN in Kenya. Nevertheless, these encounters helped me step up to the plate and stretch myself and help build a strong foundation for the Service. It is such joy, for instance to see the Service’s Facebook page, grow from zero to over 100 likes, knowing you were a part of that!

So, as I roll up my internship “mat”, I sure hope I set the bar up high for those who will follow suit. I would not want them to fit in my shoes but rather get a size bigger, to better inform the public about the work of the UN and to create a greater understanding of each individual’s role in promoting world peace.

Joy Furaha Kiwango providing a tour for Kenya Mission delegation © UNIC, 2012
Two years ago, Jennifer Namodi and her family were pastoralists in Turkana district in northwestern Kenya. She is now a farmer, growing sorghum, cowpeas and other drought tolerant crops at the Naurienpuu Food-for-Assets (FFA) site. Jennifer is one of the 1,100 beneficiaries who are members of the Naurienpuu FFA project which is a minor irrigation scheme that the community has developed with the assistance of the World food Programme (WFP).

Through FFA projects, communities build assets aimed at improving their food security. WFP provides food assistance to the beneficiaries as they build the assets.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has donated yet another 17 vehicles to the government of Kenya in a handover ceremony that took place at Harambee House Nairobi. The event was attended by government officials including top security officers and the Commissioner for Refugee Affairs. The UNHCR representative Mr. Elike Segbor handed over the Land Cruisers to an Assistant Minister in the Ministry of Internal Security and Provincial Administration on behalf of the Minister Hon. Ole Metito. The vehicles will be used by both the regular Police and the administration police for operations in and around refugee camps in Kakuma and Dadaab.

This year alone, UNHCR has donated 44 vehicles to the government. Previous donations took place in October and February when 7 and 20 vehicles were donated to the Ministries of State for Migration and Registration of Persons and Internal Security respectively. In this latest donation, Dadaab will get 10 vehicles and the remaining 7 will go to Kakuma.

Speaking during the Harambee House event, the Assistant Minister in the Ministry of Security, Hon. Simon Lesirma said that the vehicles would boost the services of both regular police and the Administration police in Dadaab and Kakuma. He thanked UNHCR and partners for showing concern over the security situation around refugee camps and for working closely with government. The minister asked UNHCR to support the proposed voluntary repatriation of refugees following the pacification of Somalia.

The UNHCR Representative Elike
UNV Holds 2nd Annual Students’ Symposium on Volunteerism

The second edition of the annual UNV Students’ Symposium on Volunteerism was held at the University of Nairobi on 22 November 2012. Hosted in partnership with the Organization of Student Volunteers from the University of Nairobi, the Symposium was held under the theme of *Student Volunteerism for Development & Peace.*

The Symposium brought together over 300 students from different universities in the country to share volunteer experiences and learn from each other. Institutions represented included the University of Nairobi, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology (JKUAT), KCA University, Daystar University, DALC Education, Moi University, Kenya University and Strathmore University, among others.

The students spent most of the afternoon sharing their varied and rich volunteer experiences, ranging from medical outreaches, clean-up activities, to writing, photography and even music. Their stories highlighted the diverse nature of volunteerism, and the clarion call for the afternoon came from one of the presentations, titled *My Little Thing,* urging everyone to use their ‘little thing’ to make a difference.

The presentations were followed by a panel discussion, with panelists including Dr. Ken Ouko, a renowned sociologist from the University of Nairobi, Johnson Ireri, a long-time volunteer programme developer and currently in charge of the University of Nairobi Alumni Association, as well as Segbor said the donation is part of the security partnership project signed between UNHCR and the Government in April last year. He asked the government to closely monitor the security situation around refugee camps. He thanked the people of Kenya for their generosity towards refugees.

Kenya currently hosts approximately 600,000 refugees in Dadaab and Kakuma. The Population in Dadaab currently stands at 451,421 refugees most of whom are from Somalia while Kakuma has 103,663 refugees.

Internal Security Assistant Minister Simon Lesirma flagging off vehicles donated to police by UNHCR at Harambee House. © Duke Mwancha-UNHCR / Uwezo Youth Trust 2012

UNDP Country Director Maria-Threase Keating makes keynote remarks at the opening of the Students’ Symposium On Volunteerism at the University of Nairobi. © UNV, 2012

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as Billy Kanyi, a student volunteer and chair of the Organization of Student Volunteers. The session was moderated by UNV’s George Oloo.

Speaking while officially launching the event, UNDP Country Director Maria-Threase Keating pointed out that young people have a critical role to play in development, and encouraged the students to take up available volunteer opportunities to make meaningful contribution to society. Ms. Keating shared her own inspiring volunteer experiences, including her stint as a UN Volunteer.

University of Nairobi’s Principal of the College of Humanities & Social Sciences, who represented the Vice Chancellor, pointed out that the university is fully committed to encouraging volunteering and volunteerism programmes for the students, and urged more support and uptake of such programmes.

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UNV Programme Officer Dmitry Frischin encouraged the students to take up online volunteering as well as look out for opportunities for national and international volunteering. He lauded the support given by the University, and pointed out that UNV is looking into expanding programmes with the University targeted towards encouraging youth volunteerism.

IOM Opens Pastoralist Dispensary in Turkana, Kenya

IOM has launched a dispensary that will serve the local pastoralist community living in Letea and Lokipoto areas of Turkana county, northwestern Kenya. Forced to walk for long distances in search of medical attention.

Located 30km from Kakuma town, the dispensary will provide health care services including child immunization, mother and child health, nutrition, and primary health care for the pastoralist community. The nearest medical facility previously serving the community was the Kakuma Mission Hospital.

IOM has fully equipped the dispensary and the Kenyan Ministry of Health has deployed two nurses to run it. The local community has also selected a committee to oversee the facility, which is expected to improve access to health care for the community and reduce child mortality rates.

The Kenyan Ministry of Health is now planning to train 50 health community workers who will embark on a door-to-door health awareness campaign to sensitize the local community on hygiene matters.

New Pastoralists Dispensary opened by IOM in Turkana © IOM, 2012
If it were his choice, Reuben Mwangi, a Telecommunications Engineering student at a middle-level college in Nairobi, would be studying the same course at a university. However, his parents could not afford to pay the parallel course fees which are much higher than the regular courses in public universities. Reuben attained a C+ which is below the minimum grade required to get admission into a public university.

His counterpart at a Youth Polytechnic in Nairobi decries the type of training equipment available at his institution. “We learn using old models of motor vehicle engines and when we go out there, we are expected to fix vehicles running on automated systems,” said the student.

These are just some of the concerns raised by young people during Youth Open Forums held at the University of Nairobi and Kisii University College in early November 2012 with the aim to engage students from universities, youth polytechnics, middle level colleges as well as employers and government officials on issues of skills mismatch, relevance and marginalization in Kenya. Other issues raised at the open forums were: inability of graduates to fit into the formal job market due to skills mismatch and irrelevance of certain courses, the absence of a regular mechanism to map out skills required by employers to inform course design, limited exposure to the industry during training especially among rural youth, lack of career guidance, and a system of education and training that does not promote entrepreneurship among learners.

The discussions were based on this year’s theme of UNESCO’s tenth Education for All Global Monitoring Report Youth and Skills: Putting Education to Work, which examines how skills development programmes can be improved to boost young people’s opportunities for decent jobs and better lives.

The Open Forums were a prelude to the Nairobi and Eastern Africa launch of the Report held in Nairobi on 14 November 2012 as a follow up to a similar one which took place at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France on 16 October 2012. It was organized by UNESCO Multi-Sectoral Office for Eastern Africa, in collaboration with the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. The event featured the official ceremony and later, a technical forum. All three events were organized purposely to focus on the issues discussed in the report as relates to Kenya and find ways of addressing the recommendations to improve the situation of youth in Kenya.

The ceremony was addressed by Hon. Prof. Ayiecho Olweny, Assistant Minister for Education; Prof. George Godia, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education; Prof. Harry Kaane, Education, Science and Technology Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology; Dr. Dinah Mwinzi, Director, Youth Training, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports; Dr. Abou Amani, Acting Director, UNESCO Multi-sectoral Office for Eastern Africa, and Dr. Pauline Rose, Director, EFA Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO Paris.

In his speech, Prof. Olweny noted that while the youth are expected to pursue further education and training to improve their chances for employment and higher income, many fail to transit to secondary schools for various reasons thus lacking the requisite numeracy and literacy skills. A significant others have totally failed to access formal schooling. “The provision of a second chance for the acquisition of foundation skills to work-based training for decent jobs is imperative,” said the Assistant Minister. He said Vision 2030 places special demands on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to address this need.

In her presentation on the findings of the 2012 Report, Dr. Pauline Rose noted that globally, progress towards achieving EFA goals was stagnating. This, combined with reduced aid towards education, has aggravated the huge skills deficit among young people. “Poor urban and rural youth, especially women, urgently need support to
acquire skills,” said Dr. Rose.

She raised concern that Kenya is listed as the ninth country in the world with the highest number of school drop-outs although the number of out of school children has reduced by half to one million since 1999. Also of concern is the gaining of literacy skills in Kenya. According to Dr. Rose “There is one in three young people who have come out of spending six years in school and can’t read or write a full sentence.”

In order to address skills deficit among youth, the Report recommends that governments must prioritize second-chance programmes in national plans, ensure education gives youth relevant skills for work, and target youth in poor rural and urban areas, especially women.

Following the launch ceremony and technical forum, a Communiqué and Framework for Priority Action was developed to address the issues raised by youth and other stakeholders. Some of the recommendations highlighted in the communiqué include the need to take advantage of the upcoming curriculum reform to orient the curriculum towards life-long learning, reinforce the gender responsiveness and inclusivity of the curriculum to enable it address the plight of marginalized women and those involved in alternative education pathways, and develop a labor market survey to generate data on the skill requirements in the formal and non-formal system.

The report can be downloaded from: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/reports/2012-skills/

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Kenya Bags Two at 2012 Online Volunteering Awards

For the second year running, a Kenyan has been named one of the winners for the 2012 Online Volunteering Award. Rita Sheryl, an MBA student at the University of Nairobi, was part of a team of online volunteers with the Association of African Entrepreneurs.

Using their writing and business expertise, the cross-national team of 29 online volunteers collaborated with the Association of African Entrepreneurs (AAE) to produce a 400 page compendium of information relevant to entrepreneurship in Africa, available for free download on the website of the Ghana-based NGO.

“The manual tells any aspirant entrepreneur everything he needs to know to undertake to an entrepreneurial venture in Africa”, says Cornelius Narrey from AAE. “The online volunteers worked tirelessly in recording and verifying information, and then putting it across to readers in a way that would be both interesting and utility-oriented. The level of commitment each volunteer exuded in the project is incomparable; each of them treated the project with professional zeal.”

Rita, who has been volunteering with AAE since 2010, contributed analytical research articles on the business environment of Rwanda, Egypt and Sudan. Rita opted to support AAE because “Empowering others to positively change their lives has always been my dream.”

The second winner from Kenya was the UNHCR Sub-Office in Nairobi, presenting for the first time a project by a Kenyan organization. Online volunteer Pat Redmond, an Australian freelance web developer, helped the UNHCR Regional Support Hub (RSH) in Nairobi develop a Regional Shelter Portal.

“Pat Redmond worked tirelessly for over 3 months, constantly adding suggestions and extensive improvements that were beyond the project brief and ultimately resulted in a tremendous effort from him”, says shelter expert Elizabeth Palmer in Nairobi. “In addition, the level of detail and quality of operation of the site are far more advanced than would have been possible without his input. There are technical capabilities that are now possible as a result of this input and the potential for expansion is also much greater due to his advice.”

You can vote for your favorite winner on www.onlinevolunteering.org.
UNIC Nairobi hosts the media at an exclusive visit to the United Nations Office at Nairobi. (UNON)

In an effort to further expand UN’s outreach activities, the United Nations Information Center at Nairobi recently invited journalists to the UN Headquarters at Nairobi. The journalists were welcomed by the Deputy Director Eshila Mavaranyika. They included, Catherine Kasavuli - Royal media services, Aura Ondeko – China Central TV, Guo Cong - Radio China, Alfred Kiti- Deutsche Welle(DW), Okwiri Ambooka – K24, Jamil Aqerrout - Maghreb Arab Presse, Kiarie David -Global Village Publishers and Francis Njuguna- Seed Magazine.

From an evaluation questionnaire most of the journalists requested for more engagement with UNIC and training of the role and work of the United Nations and its agencies. In addition, they also suggested that UN should train at least one journalist from each media house and create more interactive sessions and bring journalists closer to UN activities.

The programme began with a brief interaction of the two parties, followed by a tour of the United Nations conducted by UNON Visitors’ Service, where they visited the New Office Facility and the other special features at the complex. The positive feedback after the tour, was a testimony that the journalist appreciated the opportunity to visit UN and requested to spend more time in the next visit.

Over a working lunch the media representatives and UNIC staff discussed how to improve working relations. “It will be beneficial if UNIC can organize a seminar for the media to discuss and map out how best to raise awareness on UN issues,” said David Kiarie. All were in agreement with CCTV Ondeko Aura adding “Today’s visit was an eye opener for me. Being my first time of touring this complex has helped me appreciate the role of the UN and it will be easy convincing my colleagues to cover UN events in future.”

Ms. Maravanyika, on behalf of UNIC, committed to look into all the recommendations made by the media including the ones on the evaluation questionnaire. “Today has been a very fruitful day. Our working relationship with the media is of great importance in promoting the UN’s work to the public. Your ideas are valued,” she concluded.

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