



CARE STAFF PROFILES

WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY 2014



CARE STAFF PROFILES

Dear reader,

It is with great pride and humility that I share with you this extraordinary publication. It gives an intimate insight into the daily work and lives of our colleagues who come from many different countries such as Benin, Jordan, South Sudan, Yemen or others and who fulfil a variety of roles. Yet they are united in the devotion of their time, energy and passion to a cause to which they are fully committed.

For many, working as a humanitarian professional is more than just a job. It's a mission. As you can read in the following pages, seeing refugees becoming empowered, transforming lives and evoking smiles on the faces of children through our assistance are recurring themes which motivates most of our colleagues.

However rewarding, being a humanitarian is extremely challenging. Many colleagues live under harsh conditions; they work in refugee camps or in areas destroyed by natural disasters. Often, if not on a daily basis, humanitarians are witness to people's suffering, they listen to the traumatic stories of those who have been affected, they empathize with those they assist. Many have to leave families and friends behind, working far away from their homes. They have to rely on technology to keep in touch with their loved ones. As one colleague says, due to his work he has become an 'internet parent'.

Quite often humanitarians themselves are in the crossfire. The year 2013 was a dangerous one: an estimated 152 aid workers were killed and more were attacked than ever before. Many of our colleagues express the inability to reach affected people due to instability and insecurity is one of the greatest challenges they face. This, combined with the lack of funds particularly to crises that evolve beyond the focus of global media, are what keep our colleagues awake at night.

Compassion. Initiative. Empathy. Optimism. Equality. Selflessness. These are some of the words with which our colleagues describe what humanitarianism means to them. I would also like to add two more: respect and humility. This is what I feel towards each and every one of them. I am humbled by their dedicated efforts and commitments working under often dreadful circumstances with great impact.

This publication is dedicated to all humanitarians who work or have worked for CARE; for those who have made a difference in people's lives around the world. For CARE colleagues who put their own well-being and sometimes that of their families on the back burner while instead prioritizing helping people in need.

Barbara Jackson, Humanitarian Director,
CARE International

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Huguette Sekpe

Emergency Response Team Focal Point; Team Leader/Food Security, Nutrition and Adaptation to Climate Change Program

Location: BENIN

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Assistance/Life.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

I'm a nutritionist and I like children. When I started working with CARE Benin in 2008, Benin experienced its first emergency due to floods. At that period, no other aid organization had intervened. Considering its humanitarian mandate, CARE Benin started to assist. I was a Team Leader for this response. It was the first time where I worked in the humanitarian sector. I was passionate to save the lives, to help the others to improve their life conditions. Thus, I became a humanitarian worker.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

I started to do this job in 2008. The most satisfying part of my work was when I accompanied flood affected families to be relocated to new and better living areas – this had improved forever their life.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

Some of the most challenging parts of my work are raising funds for people to recover after an emergency and sustaining the achievements after emergencies.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

I am the focal point for the Emergency Response Team of CARE Benin/Togo. CARE has just finished responding to successive floods in northern Benin in the years 2012 and 2013. We were a team of ten people including local partner's staff and 50 community health workers. I was the team leader. CARE's supported people with water and sanitation, food and shelter. I am also the Team Leader for the Program of Food Security, Nutrition and Adaptation to climate change. I oversee a team of 17 staff who work to improve life conditions of vulnerable people, especially women and children.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

The most memorable moment I have experienced during my work is the day when I visited the flood affected areas in southern Benin in 2010. I saw the impact of the disaster and the extent of the damage. Only the roofs of the houses were visible. Everything was washed away: animals, crops.

Huguette Sekpe, Emergency Response Team Focal Point; Team Leader/Food Security, Nutrition and Adaptation to Climate Change Program, BENIN





Valentina Hvale Pelizzer, Emergency Response Coordinator, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Valentina Hvale Pelizzer

Emergency Response Coordinator

Location: Sarajevo, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

I am a “returnee” to this job; I became a humanitarian worker in 1994 because I wanted to do something for and with Balkan women. I couldn't stop talking, following the horrific images of the Balkan Wars and some friends of mine introduced me to an Italian NGO. It changed my life and gave me the possibility to get hands on and to work side by side with refugees and displaced people from the region, mainly women and children, but not only.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

Being part of the solution! Emergencies are a response to a brutal break of the ordinary life whether because of a natural disaster or a human generated one. Being able to identify needs and respond to them even if it only covers a small part, makes me feel useful; and I adore working with people, listening and talking to them is an incredible intense and unique emotional process and exchange.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

Selection, defining priorities when there are so many is very difficult, but also defining who will be receiving aid. It is a natural component of the work and a responsibility. It is probably the most stressful part of the job because no one likes to say “no”.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

I am responsible for coordinating CARE's response to the floods that have hit the Balkans this May, in particular in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. At the moment we do different kinds of distributions to help people to save or restore parts of what they have lost. It goes from providing fodder to cows, pigs, sheep, chickens to kitchen and household items like beds, mattresses or fridges. People have lost everything. It is a disaster for rural households depending on agricultural income to gain nothing until next July. And I won't even talk about families whose houses have been seriously damaged or destroyed completely because of the floods and landslides.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

I thought I would never come back to emergency relief, but I had to get involved. I live in Bosnia since 1999 and the Balkans is my home. This June we distributed fodder to 10 elderly and women-headed families from Bijeljina identified by one of CARE's

partner organizations called LARA foundation. When they realised the entity of the support, they were surprised and very happy. We had informed them in advance of the distribution, but it seemed that they were not convinced until they saw the items. More recently, I was moved that we could support families who found shelter in an old primary school in Samac, one of the most flood affected areas. After two month without fresh food, they are finally getting support from a group of six local volunteers who will provide cooked meals on a daily basis. I want to thank Gorsko Oko, a local partner organization of CARE from a small town called Kladanj, who volunteers to help people in need since the very beginning of the floods.

Jean Louis Mbusa

Governance Advisor

Location: Goma, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Protection of human rights.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker?

I decided to become a humanitarian worker because I wanted to help the poorest people; this value matches perfectly with my convictions.

Since my youth until now as a member of the Church, we defend and promote universal human values. We bring food and others items to prisoners, sick people and occasionally also to the displaced who live with host families. Personally, I accommodated two displaced families at home for more than three months until they could return to their home. When I help people, I know it's not a favour I give them but they have rights who are universal.

Initially I became a humanitarian worker for having a work place but also for enjoying the fulfillment of helping the most vulnerable people. I was a volunteer for more than five years in a local association. We were responsible for distributing firewood and teaching the Rwandan refugees in a camp how to build and improve the kitchens ovens that use less wood. I have been working with CARE International since 2007.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

The most rewarding part of my work is my capacity to ensure a dignified life to my family. I am a father of

five children and all are in school. I have my mother and my mother in-law who are both widows and fled war. I keep two nephews who also fled the abuses and the risk of being forcibly recruited into armed groups in their home villages. Thanks to this humanitarian work, I manage to feed, clothe and educate all of them. Through this work I also bought a plot of land where I have been building a house for nearly eight years. And so far it is not completely finished. This work allowed me to meet many people with different background and cultures which is an incredible social wealth.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

While we are supposed to provide a comprehensive response to the needs of affected populations, one of the most important challenges is our inability to respond to all specific needs of each vulnerable person. For example: while we provide food, there are some women who will expose their intimate problems and needs that we are not able to immediately meet. It hurts the heart to feel helpless in front of such misery.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

Currently I work with CARE DRC as a Governance Advisor for one of its projects called "Tufaidike wote" which means in English "Win-Win". This is a USAID-funded project executed in consortium with international agencies. I am the counselor for all the components of the project. A tool of accountability called "community score card" allows assessing and planning activities. This is an accountability framework that provides an opportunity for rights holders (beneficiaries) to express their level of satisfaction in comparison with their expectations.

In other words I help to identify the gaps between the expectations of the communities and the services they receive. In collaboration with the different stakeholders, I find solutions to improve them. The purpose of my work is not to judge or condemn but rather using the results of all analyses to produce an action plan.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

One day, my colleagues and I were attacked by an armed group while we went to a field mission in a rebel-controlled area. We were robbed of our phone



Jean Louis Mbusa, Governance Advisor, DR CONGO

and money and terrorized. For almost two months, I had nightmares when I pictured the scene. Another memorable moment is something really different I would like to share. Once I conducted a needs assessment in a new health area nearby Walikale-Pinga. On the road, an armed group stopped us and suddenly, one of the assailants recognized me because I took care of him as a refugee when he was in a refugee camp. He was a member of a Rwandan armed group. They left us free passage after his recognition. Few days before, I had an accident and was injured in the left eye. I stayed two days in the hospital because the wound was deep. He identified me (probably because of the injury in my face). I was very surprised about this – an unexpected encounter that may have saved my life.

Sandra Azmy

Initiatives Manager – Women’s Rights Program
Location: Cairo, EGYPT

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

CARE Egypt was approached by UNHCR to work with Syrian Refugees survivors of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). I was already involved in various CARE projects related to sexual violence and was extremely interested to work with Syrian refugees, who are extremely vulnerable and live in very tough circumstances here in Egypt.

What’s the most rewarding part of your work?

The most rewarding part is when you meet Syrians in Egypt and they tell you sentences such as:
Or a mother tells you, after enrolling in a program using art as a tool for therapy:
Or when you help a survivor of gender based violence and know that she or he is finally safe.



Sandra Azmy, Initiatives Manager -Women’s Rights Program, EGYPT

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

The most challenging part is knowing the type of suffering refugees face, especially women and children. It is also challenging when you feel that some of their needs are beyond your organization’s resources and capacities. So you have to advocate and look for solutions and alternatives.

“Their lives are very hard and the aid organizations are doing their best. But often it’s just not enough.”

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

I am managing a project aimed at working with Syrian refugee survivors of SGBV. We provide psychosocial support, we organize women support and empowerment activities using interactive tools such as art, theatre and sport, and we provide legal support, access to emergency shelters and do case management.

What is the most memorable moment you’ve experienced during your work?

The most memorable moments are when I attend the psychosocial women support groups. These groups are very emotional, it is a space for Syrian refugee women to share their emotions, fears and dreams in a very open and confidential way.

Yousef Al Filali

Community Development Officer
Location: Azraq Refugee Camp, JORDAN



Yousef Al Filali, Community Development Officer, JORDAN

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Hope.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

I was myself a Palestinian refugee in Jordan. My parents fled from Palestine to Jordan in 1948. They returned after a few years but fled again when I was a small boy. They settled in the Al-Wehdat camp outside of Amman, which is now part of the city. My experiences from having been a refugee myself make me understand and feel what they are suffering. I feel very close to refugees and their needs. I find it very easy to understand their problems, anger and frustration. I remember what it was like to stand in line for hours to get bread and water. Sometimes, I work for almost 16 hours a day. But I don't feel tired then, only happy. I have worked as an air controller and businessman before. My decision last year to come out of retirement to work with CARE in Azraq was a very important one for me.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

The most rewarding part of my work is when I can make a mother and her children smile. My major concern when I first meet refugees is to make them feel comfortable.

I use my social skills to break the ice and make sure that it does not seem like a formal, official visit, but

more like we are family or old friends. I let them know that we speak the same language – both in the literal sense and in the other senses of the expression as well. I want them to consider me a brother or a father or an uncle. I tell them that whenever they see me, they can always stop me and I will do whatever I can to help – even if it means working long hours. It is important to tell them that we are here only for one purpose: to help them. We say that we try to understand their frustration but that we can never fully understand what they have experienced. If I can see on their faces that I have changed something to the better for them, that's what makes me happy.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

The most challenging part for me is that whatever we do to help the refugees, is not enough. People here in Azraq have lost everything, their home, their houses, their jobs, their belongings; a lot of them have lost loved ones. I remember when I was a little refugee boy, how much I envied when people were eating sandwiches around me. We did not have enough to eat. The refugees at the Azraq Camp need everything as well.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

CARE runs community centres in the different villages in Azraq Camp. We receive refugees in the reception

'THE MOST REWARDING PART'

- 'Transforming the lives of young ones through empowerment'
- 'Seeing the refugee community getting empowered, seeing increased gender balance, increased transparency, adequate social justice, and self-reliance'
- 'Seeing the life of my learners changing from despair and nightmares in to hope and valid dreams'
- 'If you love what you are doing for a living, you don't have to work a day in your life'
- 'Knowing that in my own little way I am able to reach and help a lot of my countrymen'
- 'Seeing the smile and happiness in the faces of vulnerable people'

area and provide them with the most important information they need. We invite them to our centre to attend further information sessions where CARE and other aid organizations present their work. I explain to refugees what kind of assistance they can receive, where mothers can get support for their babies, how the water and medical supply works and whom refugees can contact if they need further assistance. We also visit refugees in their shelters shortly after they arrive to provide information and make sure they have everything they need.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

Unfortunately, something very sad happened a few weeks ago. A three months old girl died in the camp. She was sick when she was born, and the exhaustion of fleeing made it worse. CARE's duty is also to organize funerals at the cemetery around 120

Nidal Adnan, Volunteer Doctor, JORDAN



kilometres from the camp. I helped the father bury her. When we were about to return to the camp the father did not want to leave. He sat on his daughter's grave and did not stop crying. My heart broke from sadness. It's probably the most horrible thing in the world when a parent has to bury his child. But doing so far away from your home while you are on the run, makes it even more difficult.

Nidal Adnan

Volunteer Doctor

Location: Amman, JORDAN

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Optimism.

"There is not one Syrian who has not lost a loved one or has not been affected financially or psychologically."

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

Being a human means that we also have to act in a humane way. I come from Syria, a country in war and going through a difficult time. I feel obliged to help people who are living in misery. There is not one Syrian who has not lost a loved one or has not been affected financially or psychologically. Also, I have



Hassan Ahmed Mohamed (left), Head Teacher, Juba Primary School, KENYA

just become a father a few months ago. Now I feel even more responsible for others and value humanity even higher.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

I like being able to help people when they ask me for assistance or advice. When they respond to my gesture with gratitude and nice wishes, that is when I feel most rewarded. It gives me so much satisfaction and gives me the urge to continue.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

I receive so many questions every day, many of which I do not have answers to. A lot of people ask me about why they were not registered to get assistance from CARE yet. But there are so many people who need help that it can take quite some time. I also receive questions that are not in my field of expertise. For example some refugees ask me about their legal entitlements and what the difference between a refugee and an asylum seeker is in a specific country. It is also very challenging when refugees ask us for transportation allowances so they will be able to attend my sessions in the centres. Unfortunately, we cannot grant these to them.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

I have a lot of different tasks. I am a trained doctor,

so I give sessions about medical care. I prepare the sessions based on the needs of the respective group I am working with. For example elderly people want information about chronic diseases such as blood pressure and diabetes. Younger refugees want to learn about first aid or how to deal with burnt skin. I always use pictures and videos to make it easier. After the sessions I file the names and I contact other refugees who might be interested to attend future sessions. I also help to register refugees in CARE's centre.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

We worked on a ten-day-initiative called "Youth for Change". The project included youngsters between the age of 13 and 17 years who participated for ten days. It was a very special time for me because I felt that I had an impact on adolescents – a very important age group. I felt that we all became one family. The last three days of the initiative I gathered all the participants and we designed slogans, drew and colored signs to raise awareness on good hygiene practice.

Another great experience was when I held my first session in CARE's centre. I felt slightly anxious in the beginning. But during the session I joked and gave examples which helped break through the barriers between the refugees and me. Now people call the centre and ask when I will hold another session

Hassan Ahmed Mohamed

Head Teacher, Juba Primary School

Location: Dagahaley Camp, Dadaab Refugee Camp, KENYA

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Life-Saving.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

To restore hope and improve the lives of my fellow Somali refugees, asylum seekers and persons of concern residing in Dadaab Refugee Camps in northern Kenya.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

Transforming the lives of the young ones through education empowerment.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

Deep rooted culture of the society that interferes with the formal education particularly for girls, for example early and forced marriages, female genital cutting and lack of value attached to education from the refugee community.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

Just as a few examples: I handle school administration and management, I teach lessons and lead the

Mary Muia, Program Assistant, KENYA

implementation of the curriculum, I oversee co-curricular activities including ball games, athletics, music and drama; Initiating or innovating best ways to revitalize pupils participation in clubs and societies.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

This happens every time I see my former students developing from an early age to graduate from secondary school and then joining me in the teaching fraternity as colleagues. This makes me a proud teacher, knowing that my efforts in providing education services to the refugee community had borne fruits.

Mary Muia

Program Assistant

Location: Dadaab Refugee Camp, KENYA

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Helping.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

As a young girl in high school, I was a member of the Girl Guide club and on many weekends, we would always be asked to go out to other institutions near our school; there was a school for the deaf, a school





for the physically challenged and an orphanage and we would be asked to offer some charity services like cleaning their rooms, their compounds, washing their

“In March this year, I had a very serious sun burn on over half of my body and I had to seek medical attention in Nairobi.”

clothes, helping in the kitchen and sometimes just to play games with them. In the beginning I never used to understand why we would be asked to do such acts but as I grew older I realised that it is through such noble services that any person can offer assistance to a less fortunate person. Later on in college I would see land cruisers branded with various NGO names passing by our school heading to disaster stricken areas loaded with food stuff, non-food items, medical equipment and of course staff. I always wished that someday I would have an opportunity to be an aid worker and serve my fellow Kenyans affected by any kind of disaster. Years later, here I am, working in the world’s largest refugee camp — and my dream came true.

What’s the most rewarding part of your work?

I get a lot of satisfaction whenever I work on a project in which I have to engage the young school children. The children and I have bonded over the last two years and whenever I present a project proposal to them, they gladly embrace it and give it their best input and I am always assured to get some amazing feedback. A recent example is from May and June, when I engaged the children in a project towards the commemoration of World Refugee Day. The Dadaab Refugee Community had chosen to focus on the theme “Peace”; and for 31 days, aid agencies in Dadaab engaged their

beneficiaries in collecting their wishes. I was so proud when the children from Dagahaley Schools where CARE manages primary education, came up with amazing and passionate messages which I gladly shared widely.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

First, there is the communication barrier. 95 percent of the refugees in Dadaab are from Somalia and their language is Somali. Thus I need an interpreter. Despite having an interpreter, there is always the risk of your message not fully translated or not receiving full feedback. However, since the Education system being implemented in the camps follows the Kenyan curriculum, it is a lot easier to communicate with the youth and children in school since they learn English.

Then there is the high insecurity. Since October 2011, Dadaab is experiencing continuous security incidents including carjacking, kidnappings, attacks on police escorts and therefore field visits are no longer easily done.

And then the harsh weather conditions. Dadaab’s weather is hot and humid with semi-arid vegetation. During the very hot months of January to March and October to December, it’s very tough during the day and to catch any sleep at night due to the high temperatures between 35 – 40 degrees.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

As a Programme Assistant, my day to day work includes providing general administrative support to the senior team of our refugee operations. For example, I organize and facilitate donor missions and other related external visits, I organize workshops and

“March 15th 2014 is a day I will cherish. It is the day my colleague Reshma Aziz Khan delivered the now famous “Letters of Hope” written by the children of Dadaab to the children of Syria who are refugees in Jordan.”

trainings, I represent the Senior Management in coordination meetings and I act as the Programmes Communications focal point.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

March 15th 2014 is a day I will cherish. It is the day my colleague Reshma Aziz Khan delivered the now famous "[Letters of Hope](#)" written by the children of Dadaab to the children of Syria who are refugees in Jordan. This all started with an e-mail discussion between CARE Jordan and CARE UK seeking ideas on how Dadaab could take part in Syria's 3rd mark of the conflict's beginning. This collaboration turned out to an impacting project which was reported about in many international media houses. I recall my first visit to the schools to discuss this project with the children and I was so amazed when they told me all they knew about Syria, information which I least expected them to be aware of. I further watched them create beautiful drawings depicting peace, how they painted their letters, how they eagerly accepted me to photograph them. Then Reshma came up to Dadaab to pick up the letters to bring them to Jordan and to hand them over to Syrian refugee children. The kids kindly requested her to ensure she gets back with some replies. When some weeks later I received the reply letters from the Syrian kids, I took them together

with large manila cut outs of both the [BBC](#) and [CNN](#) articles and the moment I stepped into the class the kids who had written the original letters, and after they saw what I was carrying, milled around me cheering and giggling as they pushed and pulled each other in a bid to get a glimpse of their faces in the media. It was simply an amazing moment for both for the kids, myself and their teachers.

Mohamed Mahat Nur

Community Mobilization Officer

Location: Dadaab Refugee Camp, KENYA

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Kindness.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

I grew up in Dadaab, a town that hosts refugees who have fled various conflicts in the East African region, most of whom have come as a consequence of the civil war in Somalia. This significantly affects my Kenyan home town, for example in aspects of population or degradation of vegetation when large settlements for the refugees were built. On the other more positive side, the refugee camps also created businesses and job opportunities for the Kenyan host communities – and it created a dream in me from a very tender age to



Mohamed Mahat Nur, Community Mobilization Officer, KENYA

CHALLENGES

- Inability to respond to all specific needs of each vulnerable person
- Raising funds
- Knowing the type of suffering refugees face, especially women and children
- High insecurity
- Harsh weather conditions
- Difficult to find a balance between resources that originate from outside the community, and those from within
- Language barrier
- Balancing work and family life
- The need versus the capacity, access and security, and the short term funds to address long term suffering

someday become a humanitarian social worker. I used to see a lot of humanitarian workers from different corners of the world providing services to the refugees. So I grew up dreaming to be a social worker to help as many people as possible by uplifting the lives of helpless young girls and women to ensure existence of a society living in dignity.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

The most rewarding part of my work is when I see the refugee community getting empowered, when I see increased gender balance, increased transparency, adequate social justice, and self-reliance.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

As a Community Mobilizer, it is difficult to find a balance between resources that originate from outside the community, and those from within. You and the community are under considerable pressure to receive outside funds. Donor agencies want to help, while community members want to receive. At the same time bringing in outside resources contributes to the dependency syndrome and reduces the chances of sustainability and self-reliance. Yet there are ways to empower refugees by convincing an outside donor to fund skills and management training and assist the community in obtaining most of its own resources. This is how you can contribute to self-reliance and

sustainability.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

I am a Community Mobilization Officer which means I stimulate social change in the refugee community in the direction of more development, poverty eradication, better governance, increased integrity and transparency in the management of community affairs especially in the provision and sustainability of water sanitation and hygiene promotion services.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

One of my most memorable experiences is when I contracted measles while I was handling new refugee arrivals during the drought and famine in the Horn of Africa in 2011. I unknowingly thought that I had a common cold because measles typically begins with a mild to moderate fever, often accompanied by a persistent cough, runny nose and sore throat. This illness continued for three days and after a sharp rise of fever I was rushed to Dadaab hospital where I was kept in isolation room for 14 days undergoing rapid medication. Fortunately I fully recovered – and enjoyed the well answered prayers from my colleagues and the refugee community I serve.



Agatha Muthoni Mugo, Gender Officer, KENYA

Agatha Muthoni Mugo

Gender Officer

Location: Dadaab Refugee Camp, KENYA

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Selflessness.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

I want to be at the service of humanity and assist in bringing hope and defend human dignity among the refugees. My work satisfies me through my service to humanity especially the poor.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

Empowering refugees through awareness creation on human rights and gender equity and seeing them put the information learnt into practice to an extent of demanding for the protection of their rights and seeking help whenever they feel their rights have been infringed upon.

Empowering staff on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) related issues through capacity building and mentorship; as a result they have been able to effectively reach out to the rest of the community; including their remarkable ability to handle beneficiaries in a professional way.

Being able to help survivors find solutions to their problems ranging from individual comprehensive case management and referral, to as simple as giving an ear and sharing a message of hope and encouragement; and seeing once downtrodden survivors back on their feet with a renewed hope to face life.

Successful handling of SGBV cases through mediation and dialogue with the involved parties and assisting



them to come up with solutions to restore peace and understanding between themselves. It is really satisfying to find a couple/families who had a problem and their families almost breaking apart, coming back together to confirm that they are faring well after intervention.

My work in the refugee setting has also been a rich platform to interact with persons from diverse cultural backgrounds and beliefs, to learn their way of life and being able to work closely with them. It has been highly satisfying for me to give a hand to someone in dire need with fast diminishing hope, living with them as friends, assisting them to find a solution to their problems and in the end, seeing them back on their feet with renewed hope and a broad smile of gratitude.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

The language barrier: This hinders one's ability to socialize freely with the beneficiaries and vice versa where one has to depend on translators. At times one may lose some important information through translation whereby either the beneficiary or the translator may choose to withhold some information which according to him/her may seem insignificant.

Insecurity: For a humanitarian worker, free movement within the community is paramount, as this allows better interaction in order to better understand people's issues through home visits, assessments and close monitoring. However, following the high level state of insecurity in Dadaab refugee camp, this has led to significant restricted movement within the refugees' blocks, only under police escort. This compromises the nature of effective home visits among the beneficiaries which should be free and

relaxed. Presence of police during home visits creates a sense of suspicion and this usually erodes the natural behaviour among the community members where they may turn formal, play safe or even withdraw from giving information, compared to when a community humanitarian worker would make a casual visit.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

As a gender officer, my work includes raising awareness among the refugee community members, leaders, refugee staffs including agency staffs and other stakeholders on prevention of Sexual and Gender Based violence. This is usually through sensitization forums, campaigns and capacity building; all aimed at promoting gender equity through respect and protection of human rights among the refugee community members especially women and girls. During these activities, there is usually a lot to learn from the participants. As a result, I am able to design and apply the appropriate strategies of empowering them towards counteracting the harmful behaviours

“This is how much that language barrier can get you shaken!”

and promoting the positive ones, as well as encouraging them to take personal initiative to eradicate all forms of SGBV within the community. Most of the refugee community members especially the Somalis hold close to their traditional beliefs and practices. Therefore to counter such beliefs and encourage behavioural change in eradicating of all forms of SGBV, a lot of understanding of the beneficiaries’ way of life, dialogue, capacity building and reasoning together on why they need to abandon such practices is paramount.

I am also involved in responding to SGBV cases through case management, to assist SGBV survivors to solve their problems and reinstating their dignity and resilience.

What is the most memorable moment you’ve experienced during your work?

It happened during my first days in Dadaab, during a SGBV case management session. A beneficiary came and reported that she was killed by her husband the previous night. This confused me. So I turned to my refugee staff who was translating for me in search for clarification, and asked him, “the client claims to have been killed by the husband yesterday night but here she is alive and reporting, kindly ask her if she is the



Samuel Ochieng' Odawo, Special Needs Education Teacher, KENYA

one who has killed the husband.” When my staff asked her for the second time, she repeated the same thing, this time a bit loud to confirm that she was sure of what she was talking about; the husband had killed her.

I told my refugee staff, then this is not our case, this is a police case. My colleagues then explained to me, “Madam Agatha, the client doesn’t mean that she was slaughtered by the husband, she only means that she was seriously beaten by her husband.” He added saying, “in Somali language, when a person is beaten

**“Life is the art of living sustained
by contribution.”**

seriously we say the person was killed.” It is not until after this clearer explanation when I sighed, after confirming that I was not handling a murder case but a serious physical assault, and went on to document and provide the appropriate assistance to the client.

Samuel Ochieng’ Odawo

Special Needs Education Teacher

Location: Dadaab Refugee Camp, KENYA

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Care.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

My life was blessed and positively impacted by the tireless efforts of many humanitarians. Having been a beneficiary of special schools for the blind, which were run by missionaries, I always desired to care for others just as the missionaries cared for me. I harbour profound love and unquenchable passion for the proper and full empowerment of mankind. I firmly believe that no man is a reject and thus, every individual is immensely endowed with potentials which often go untapped. This is particularly so with regard to people who are blind or visually impaired, a vital group of society which is most close to my heart. Therefore, I am on a mission to empower this group of people by training and mentoring them to be independent, productive and self-reliant. ‘Life is the art of living sustained by contribution.’



Dania Ghanayem, Volunteer, LEBANON

What’s the most rewarding part of your work?

The most rewarding part of my work is seeing the life of my learners changing from despair and nightmares in to hope and valid dreams. As a teacher, my desire is therefore to see my learners grasp and put to practice the knowledge and skills I have taught them with great anticipation. It is a real source of true joy!

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

Working in Dadaab refugee camp, the world’s largest camp presents a myriad of unique and complex challenges. Other than challenges shared by ordinary refugees, learners with disabilities in particular the visually impaired — most of whom are girls — face multi-dimensional challenges for example gender discrimination, discrimination based on disabilities, harassment by the non disabled learners. Thus, it is difficult to completely integrate them with the rest of the school/community given the environment is not conducive.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

My work entails performing all pedagogical duties in the special unit for learners with special needs and in particular those learners with visual impairment. The unit is an integral part of Juba Primary School, one of the seven schools under the refugee assistant program run by CARE Kenya. In addition, I also help train/mentor other teachers on matters of special needs, education, as well as helping in managing the available teaching/learning resources. Besides, I facilitate community participation in promoting

special needs education while contributing to promote partnership with local education institutions. Above all things, I endeavour to be a positive role model to my learners who are blind and offer them the much needed psycho-social support. Being totally blind myself, I blend well with them as they are able to interact freely with me and see me as their role model

For my work, I use an ordinary computer on which I have installed a screen-reader software to help me read the contents displayed on the screen. The said software is perfect, more so with text, and hence I am able to do virtually all my computer and internet work. Thanks to this software, the blind are now not only able to use desktops and laptops but also smartphones and other mobile devices like ipads and tablets which use touch screen.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

One thing that stands out as the most memorable part of my work is when my learners with visual impairment first got their own classroom in the school purely dedicated for them as initially all learners with special needs shared one classroom: it was indeed a real joy to all of them as they marched in and comfortably settled in their new classroom characterised by the zeal, the ecstasy, and a new breath of life like that of a bird set free from its life-threatening trap. One learner in particular, Halimo Aden Abdi, has since changed dramatically in behavior and character: from continuous absenteeism to a regular class attendant. Always being the first to arrive each morning: from depression and isolation to real exuberant and active participant in the learning process. In essence, Halimo being a beneficiary of humanitarian work is slowly turning in to a small humanitarian trainee as she is always ready and willing to help not only in cleaning and tidying up the classroom but also assisting her older classmates in tasks where they get stuck. She is indeed an amiable learner who is a source of inspiration and the epitome of hope for the future to come. Halimo is one of a kind!

Dania Ghanayem

Volunteer at CARE International

Location: Chouf, Mount Lebanon, LEBANON

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Sharing.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

I am Palestinian, but I have been living in Syria all my life. I always felt that I want to do more for my people; help them as much as I can. When the conflict started in Syria, I felt the urge to do something to improve Syrians' and Syrian-Palestinians' lives even more. I am from Yarmouk camp in Damascus and I saw that people were trapped inside. They did not have anything to eat and could not take their family members to hospitals, when they suffered from severe injuries after their houses were bombed. When I fled to Lebanon two years ago, I started volunteering for Mercy Corps. Then I volunteered for CARE's partner organization DPNA and then for CARE. I feel that I can finally do something for my people. They are part of me and I am part of them.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

I want to make people happy. I want to feel that I can change something. My contribution might be small, but I am doing as much as I can. A lot of times families are concerned that their children cannot go to school. During our information sessions I tell them about where and how their children can have an education. I feel very content when I can give them hope and information that improves their lives.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

There are more than one million Syrian refugees in Syria. There is not enough money to help everyone. All of the families I talk to are devastated and desperately need assistance. But CARE has only funds to help half of the families whose needs I assess. I don't think there is anything more challenging than knowing that you cannot help everyone. It is also difficult for me when I feel that families are feeling uncomfortable with sensitive questions or situations. A few weeks ago I visited a family and I asked them if I could use their toilet. The woman felt very ashamed, because she did not have a toilet and pointed towards the field outside. She was always used to live in a nice and big house. Suddenly she has to live in a very crowded room without a kitchen or a bathroom. It is also challenging to see how difficult it is for men that they cannot take care of their families anymore. Once I met a father whose son desperately needed surgery. But he could simply not afford to take his son to the hospital.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

We are five volunteers in Chouf, Mount Lebanon. We are visiting up to seven refugee families every day and ask them about their needs and coping mechanisms. Based on our assessment refugees will receive cash assistance of 175 US dollar every month for the next five months.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

A few weeks ago, I visited a family from Syria that had lost everything. The mother was not able to provide for her children anymore and the six and seven year old boys had to work on a farm to make ends meet. It is heart breaking to see when children have to work. Their parents want them to go to school and have an education. But especially mothers who have fled without their husbands sometimes do not see another

“This sorrow, the trauma of war, it does not translate to any assessment form on this

choice but to pull their children out of school and into the workforce.

Zeina Rawass

Volunteer

Location: Chouf, Mount Lebanon, LEBANON

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one

Zaina Rawass, Volunteer, LEBANON



word? Aid.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

I have been volunteering since I was twelve years old. My father always wanted my siblings and me to be engaged and help people in our community. I started as a girls scout, then I supported different organizations working with children and people who need support. I volunteered for CARE's partner organization DPNA before and now I am volunteering for CARE. I studied law and am currently doing a master's degree in Media Studies. I feel that I am missing something in my life if I am not volunteering.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

Since the beginning of the Syria crisis, more than one million Syrian refugees have sought shelter and safety in Lebanon. As a Lebanese I want to make them feel welcomed in my country. It is the first time I work with an organization that is helping people who are not Lebanese. But people are all the same and Syrians need all the support they can get. A lot of times, it is just small things that make a family feel happier. A lot of the families I visit are worried about where they can get medical assistance, for example. When I tell them about the different options they have or refer them to organizations that can help I see how relieved they are. The information that I provide makes them happy. That is very rewarding for me and I can see that I can make a difference.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

As a volunteer, I am assessing people's needs – their most pressing needs are to have something to eat and a place to stay. But a lot of times refugees also have

Ibrahim Hawi, Area Manager, LEBANON



wounds one cannot see. One of the families I visited in the past weeks had a daughter who lost all of her hair, because she cannot process what she witnessed in Syria.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

As a volunteer we are visiting up to seven Syrian refugee families every day. We are assessing their needs to see how CARE or other organizations can help them best and if they are eligible to our cash assistance. We ask them different questions about their family's situation, their living conditions, how they had to leave Syria.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

As a volunteer I am visiting families' homes and assessing their needs. I fill out an assessment form to see how CARE or other organizations can help them. Some things, however, I cannot fill in a form. Last week I visited a family and their situation was so bad that I could not stop crying for hours. The family was living in a very small room with five people. Most of the family members are working on a field to make ends meet. But they are allergic against something on the field, so all of them have skin rashes. They are so poor that the mother cannot even afford to change her baby's diapers.

Ibrahim Hawi

Area Manager

Location: Mount Lebanon, LEBANON

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Equality.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

I feel that I chose the job and at the same time the job chose me. I have volunteered my whole life. I studied to become an agricultural engineer. One job I was offered was as a consultant in agricultural development. I started to understand what humanitarianism and emergency relief work was all about. When I look back, I sometimes think that I was probably meant to work in this field. I apply the same humanitarian principles to my private life. I want to make my family and friends as happy as possible. It fulfills me to improve other people's lives.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

With CARE, we are supporting Syrian refugees who have lost everything. They have lost their homes, their jobs and a lot of them have lost loved ones. We can only ease their pain; we cannot give them back what they have lost. When I feel that we can improve their lives at least a little bit and put a smile on their face, that's what I feel is the most rewarding part of my work.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

The people I am working with need a lot of assistance. They need food, shelter, medical aid. As CARE we cannot respond to all of their needs. Almost every day refugees ask me for assistance. If CARE cannot help them, I refer them to other organizations. But they are not trained to know how humanitarian assistance works. When they come to our organization, they are disappointed that we cannot help. But resources and capacities are limited; we can unfortunately not help everyone. It sometimes hurts me that we cannot do more.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

I am the Area Manager for CARE's assistance for Syrian refugees in the Mount Lebanon region. We are supporting refugees with cash assistance to cover their basic needs. We are also improving the water and sanitation situation of refugees and host communities together with local municipalities. A big and important part of my work is also to create awareness among the communities for the plight of Syrian refugees and make sure that we are all joining efforts.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

A few months ago, a Syrian refugee complained on TV that he did not receive assistance from CARE. That was not true. A few days later he came to one of our distributions to receive blankets and cash for heaters during the cold winter. We have to understand that people who are in need sometimes become angry and react in a way that they would usually not behave. I could see that he felt very guilty. It was very important for me to treat him like I would treat any other refugee and show him as much respect and support as possible – despite his behaviour. For me, this is what humanitarianism should really be about.

Ibrahim Boukari

Project Manager

Location: NIGER

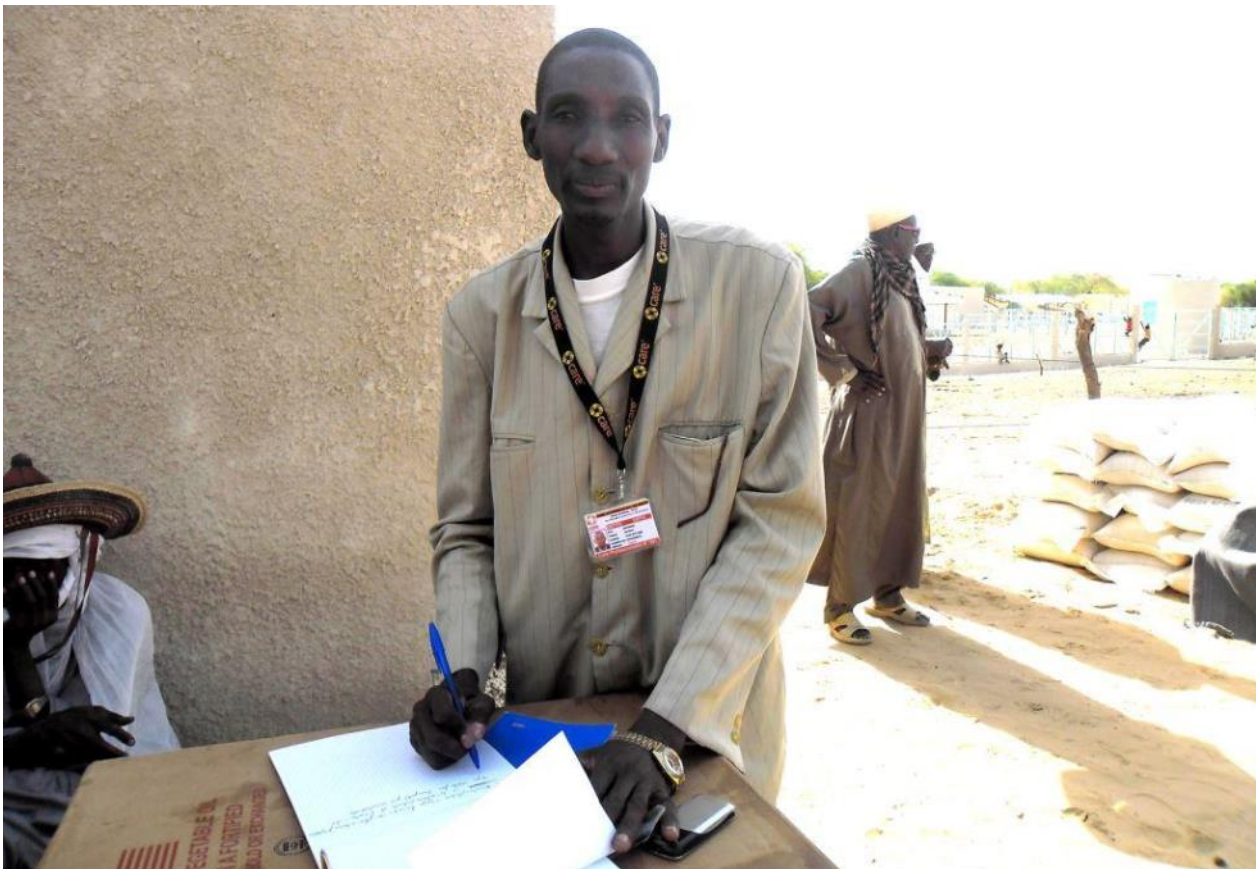
Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

I became a humanitarian worker when I chose to work with an international humanitarian NGO (CARE). My first experience with CARE was when I worked in a project to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS. Then, with the 2005 food crisis in Niger, I became team supervisor for food distributions. With the experience gained, in 2010 I was responsible for monitoring and evaluation and became the focal point of operations and food distribution in Dakoro (Maradi region). From 2012 to 2014 I was emergency projects manager in Diffa. I am a member of CARE's Roster of Emergency and Regional Emergency Coordinator for CARE Diffa.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

The greatest satisfaction I get from my humanitarian work is morale. It pleases me to serve people who are in need, I am happy to contribute to the humanitarian mission of CARE Niger. My satisfaction is greatly when I receive notes of congratulation from the beneficiaries as well as my supervisors after each operations response.

Ibrahim Boukari, Project Manager, NIGER



What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

The big challenge in humanitarian operations is to respond with speed and quality. We have to ensure that assistance is provided in a timely manner to those who need it most yet at the same time it has to comply with norms and humanitarian principles. The need to assist quickly and effectively is constant in humanitarian operations.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

The work I am far within the framework of humanitarian action has resulted in:

- Continuous monitoring of vulnerability
- Needs Assessment
- Building the capacities of civil society in responding to emergencies
- Driving the process of targeting beneficiaries
- Distribution of food, animal feed and non-food items kits
- Conduct "post distribution monitoring" post distribution surveys

What is the most memorable moment you've

experienced during your work?

The memorable moment for me is when in 2005, a man aged about 80 who had received 200 kilograms of rice began to cry. He said he was moved to receive aid from people he had never seen and who did not ask anything of him in return.

Araceli Bayubay Mercado

Program Monitoring Evaluation, Accountability And Learning Officer

Location: PHILIPPINES

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

I have been a development worker for almost a decade, and when Typhoon Haiyan struck the Visayas Region in November last year, I decided to do volunteer work in the Department of Social Welfare and Development and packed relief supplies after office hours. But I had a feeling of “it’s not enough”. Thus I decided to look for a job in which I can be directly involved in the emergency response. I was fortunate to be hired by CARE Philippines and now support our humanitarian response to the affected communities.

What’s the most rewarding part of your work?

This is my first time to work with a humanitarian organization and all I can say is: It’s all worth it! No matter how tiring your day can be, the most rewarding part is that at the end of the day, I know that I was able to touch people’s lives and made a difference to them. When I’m monitoring our work in the geographically isolated and depressed communities,

Araceli Bayubay Mercado, Program Monitoring Evaluation, Accountability And Learning Officer, PHILIPPINES



the long travel and walks are all worth it. Helping others is always a rewarding experience for me. Despite the hard situation on the ground, the immense needs of people after the disaster, you can still see their courage to move forward and start all over again. The time spent in talking and meeting with the beneficiaries, hearing their stories is always a rewarding experience and inspiring. Their courage is something that you will admire, and will be your source of strength in loving and continuing what you are doing.

Every day is a new learning experience and a moment by moment commitment to being a humanitarian worker. Who I can be as a humanitarian worker and what I can do for other people is a commitment that I will pursue.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

Firstly, the different dialects. It’s quite challenging to be in a place where you don’t speak the local dialect. Thus getting the context of what people are saying is something that I always practice. Although I understand a few local words when you speak with local people I need extra time to explain and help them understand.

Secondly, being away from home. Balancing my time with work and family is difficult.

But my passion to make a difference and helping other people is something that I can’t resist. Luckily, communication and technology help a lot!

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

Arnel Roca Murillo, Driver, PHILIPPINES



In monitoring the implementation of projects and our achievements, I look for numbers (quantity) and stories (quality) of our work. Seeing the number growing bigger and bigger, means that we have reached a lot of people and it means so much for our work. When we talk of numbers, it's not just numbers – but people from the most vulnerable groups, women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly. We are working on to help the affected communities recover, build back safer and increase their resilience.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

During one food distribution it was raining. I was just amazed and touched by how people organized themselves and patiently fell in line while getting their food packs. A very touching experience for me was to see that the beneficiaries no matter what their situation in life is still behave in a certain way and care for others. Affected people also volunteered in carrying the goods and provide assistance to the elderly, pregnant women and people with disabilities.

Arnel Roca Murillo

Driver

Location: Tacloban, Leyte, PHILIPPINES

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Helping.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

I live in San Miguelay in the province of Leyte, one of the worst-hit areas by typhoon Haiyan. It is about an hour drive from the city of Tacloban. CARE Philippines staff always came here for their emergency assistance and that is how I got to know them. One time, their driver informed me that he was leaving and they needed a replacement for him. I was vacant at that time, and I wanted to work and be productive. I have also seen how CARE has been helping my village and I was thankful for that, and wanted to be part of such work. Good thing, I am an experienced driver also. I was interviewed by the area coordinator then and thankfully I was accepted.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

The most rewarding part for me is that because of my work for CARE, I am able to drive to and reach the most far-flung and isolated villages in many municipalities here in Leyte – places I have not been

to yet even though I come from this province. Knowing that we go there to help survivors of typhoon Haiyan gives me fulfilment feeling that I'm part of the team. I find it meaningful that I'm behind the wheels ensuring the staff get to their destinations safely especially since many of the roads are really challenging in poor conditions.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

I live in San Miguelay, already a remote village, a bit far from Tacloban City. After typhoon Haiyan, many roads going to the city proper were destroyed along with a number of the public transport vehicles plying the route from my village to Tacloban, so getting around is difficult. The most challenging part is when we have an early call time at 4 or 6 am because we need to travel to distant locations. So I have to leave my place even much earlier to get to the city proper where the vehicle is parked. There is no public transport at such an early time, but no matter the challenge or the condition, I have to get to Tacloban and make it on time, before the staff arrives. So I find ways, like request my brother in law to drive me by motorcycle, even at such odd hours. The same is true going back home. Normally, our work finishes way past dinner time, at around 7 or 8 pm, sometimes even later than that, so there's no more public transport. That's why I have to find relatives or neighbours who can take me home at night. If I don't manage that then I just sleep in the office. Even on days when we finish late, and have to start early the following morning with little sleep, I make it a point to be ahead of everyone else. It's a day-to-day challenge for me but I just regard it as part of the job.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

I drive for CARE staff based in Tacloban visiting various villages where CARE's projects are located. I am assigned mostly with the shelter team and we see homes that were greatly devastated by Haiyan. I am also assigned to drive for the foreign staff of overseas CARE offices who come here to monitor the projects. Whenever we have reached our destination, instead of resting, I try to help out as much for example carrying materials or equipment. I would do anything to help the team, because I know they are also helping my countrymen. Each of our individual efforts, no matter how little, can make a difference in other people's lives.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

I particularly remember our trip to Samar to visit our livelihood beneficiaries there. We left really early in the morning and the roads going there are really challenging: rough and unpaved and very narrow. The rains at that time made it worse. The roads became very muddy so it was really tough to navigate. I was beginning to worry but I didn't share these thoughts with my colleagues because I did not want them to be concerned. So I just did the best I could to bring them safely to the location. When we reached our destination, I realized we had a flat tire, so while the staff were busy conducting interviews and visiting beneficiaries, I fixed the problem. By the time they were ready to go, the vehicle was fixed as well. Going back was another challenge because of the rains. But I ensured that our travel was safe and I got back on time for one overseas staff to catch his flight back to Manila.

I will not forget the people I have had the chance of driving for and working with in CARE. They are all dedicated and hard working. They also showed appreciation for my work by always thanking me after each ride.

Dennis Amata

Information Manager

Location: PHILIPPINES

Dennis Amata (right), Information Manager, PHILIPPINES



What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Initiative.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

I decided to become a humanitarian worker the moment I realized that I needed to pursue my passion while I'm still young. I left my stable and comfortable corporate job in a high-rise building in the Philippines' main business district to start my career in the humanitarian and development world. My family wasn't in favour of my decision because of the security of tenure I had in the corporate world. Also, a lot of my professors and former bosses were disappointed that I left my work in Corporate Communications and Public Relations where in fact they were telling me that I have a bright future. It was a tough decision because I know working for an NGO isn't really a luxurious job. No more corporate events, staying in 5-star hotels during business trips and those other corporate perks. But I must say I wasn't happy with my previous job. It seemed that something was missing and everything was routinary. I really wanted to do something for my country. Even before Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines, I've been a volunteer for various local organizations. I knew I just didn't want to do it during weekends or my free time, I wanted to work full-time. When most parts of Visayas region became heavily affected by Typhoon Haiyan, I immediately resigned from work and took the risk of looking for job opportunities involved in the emergency response. CARE called me for a job interview and the rest is

history.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

I always believe that if you love what you are doing for a living, you don't have to work a day in your life. Serving my fellow Filipinos by responding to their needs after the onslaught of monster Typhoon Haiyan is the most rewarding part of my work. I don't primarily need financial return nor exuberant "Thank you's" for doing humanitarian work. Seeing our beneficiaries' smiles and ensuring the safety of children are enough. I've felt the difference now. I am always looking forward to go to work. I consider this not just a job but a social responsibility to help make our society a better place to live in.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

I didn't graduate with a social science or research course nor do I have a prior experience in humanitarian work, so I really had to start from scratch. Though I'm used to fast-paced work, learning a whole new different system and protocols was a bit challenging. Also, as CARE Philippines' Information Manager, info overload is inevitable. It's a big challenge to properly organize and verify the overwhelming number of data and information coming from various sources.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

As the Information Manager of CARE for its Haiyan Emergency response, I maintain the database and ensure the effectiveness of our information system. I handle all the distribution data from food and non-food items to shelter repair kits to livelihoods conditional cash transfer. I ensure the accuracy of information that line managers rely on to make critical decisions. I also do capacity building for our local partners to establish their information and knowledge management system.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

My most memorable moment is when I visited a school in San Miguelay, Santa Fe, Leyte. We had distributed food and shelter repair kits. The children were in the middle of their classes when we arrived. They were so happy to see us and ceaselessly thanked us for considering them to be our beneficiaries. The elementary school was severely damaged. The roofs were torn and wall wasn't in a good condition

anymore. Some of the students were having classes inside the tents provided by the UN. I played with the kids and listened to their stories. Their teachers told me that the children were traumatized by typhoon Haiyan, yet they also mentioned that the children are starting to be happy and hopeful again because of the help they have been receiving from CARE, other organizations and the local government. And to be part of that change and recovery process is a worthy story to tell to my future children and grandchildren. The experience of being a humanitarian worker is something I'll cherish throughout my lifetime.

Efren Mariano

Shelter Advisor

Location: PHILIPPINES

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Compassion.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

Initially, it was by accident that I became a humanitarian worker. I first got to work with an engineering firm involved with the Transit and Resettlement Center for Vietnamese refugees in Bataan, Philippines under the UNHCR. They liked my performance that I was absorbed by UNHCR. After that, I was sent to other emergencies in Nepal and Bangladesh. Then there was a time that I had to return to the Philippines because our house caught fire so I had to be with my family to focus on rebuilding our own home. From time to time, I would also go back to private sector as an engineer, and later on for better income, I have also had a productive and profitable stint in sales. But the humanitarian itch would always bug me, and fortunately enough, there were always offers for humanitarian work. As aid worker, I have been all over Asia Pacific, in South America for Haiti and in Africa for Congo responding to various man-made and natural disasters. What I appreciate in this work is that our expertise allows us to help others, makes us empowered to do cost-effective emergency response. Such is needed in order not to waste resources. This is the job I have since loved most, and which won my greatest passion.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

There were several instances in the past where I have seen fellow aid workers or colleagues get saddened or even depressed and widely insecure every time a

What does Humanitarianism mean to you?

Helping

Compassion

Initiative

Kindness

Benevolence

Practicing the Philosophy of

Humanity

Optimism

Unlimited giving

Selflessness

Care

Giving

Philanthropic

Help

Assistance/Life

Protection of Human Rights

Sharing

Equality

particular project is about to close, thinking that they will lose their jobs. But for me, I look at it in a different perspective: it is not about losing a job. The moment I close a particular project, or my job “ends”, it is also the time that the people we served start recovering their life back. And I consider that the biggest success - for the communities, for all of us.

I also find it rewarding whenever I put in a good performance as evidenced by the fact that I never run out of job offers and many referrals which could mean they were satisfied with my work. And that also translates to positive results for the communities I have served.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

Whether in refugee camps, conflict areas and disaster-devastated places, one of the most challenging parts always has to do with the difficult living and

environmental conditions, like in very remote areas and conflict borders. There are issues on security and safety. There are the threats of acquiring sickness like malaria. There are also concerns with the safety of food and water. On another level, there's also the social aspect, where I see people deal with many difficulties. I witness them grapple with adjustments, and yet I have to work on to address their problems, and sometimes I can't help but be affected by their problems, their suffering. There were times when I questioned myself: “Why is it that other people have their job in a normal environment, why am I living and working in an ‘abnormal’ environment, seeing other people's problems?” But then I muster the courage and had to remind myself that in order to do an effective job, I have to be strong for them. And that is also one of the purposes why we humanitarian/aid workers have to take retreats and time off to reenergize, have a semblance of ‘normal life’ back and have time to be with family.

I am into social media like Facebook because that's the only way I can have a sense of what they are doing, for me to be updated with their lives and activities. In the same manner, that is also the reason why while on the ground, I take delight in taking many photographs of myself at work. Some younger colleagues would tease me about it but it is not because I am vain, or due to this "selfie" syndrome, but it is only through photographs I send and share with them that my family, especially my children, can see and appreciate what my work is, what I'm doing.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

Presently, I work as shelter advisor for CARE Philippines Haiyan response, and we help communities build back safer homes. Although, I am also a WASH expert and I have a masters degree on Environmental Engineering, I joke to colleagues that for my past couple of assignments, I have been "typecast" as site planner and shelter engineer. But I'm actually glad with my current deployment because I get to apply for Typhoon Haiyan Response all the lessons I have learned from the various emergencies I have worked on. I am thankful that aside from the technical expertise I have honed in more than a decade's worth of humanitarian work, I have also enhanced the human aspect of aid work. I have learned and embraced community-based approach that empower communities

Efren Mariano, Shelter Advisor, PHILIPPINES

to participate in the rebuilding and recovery process and do some of the works themselves. That's more rewarding because the communities are happy, we are also happy. I like CARE's strategy, we have a wider coverage. I am also impressed with our approach to focus on geographically-isolated and depressed-areas, enabling us to target the most needy and vulnerable populations. It is also great that we are very much concerned about accountability and transparency.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

Something that really strikes me in being a humanitarian worker is that thought, the feeling of looking back at the faces of different people undergoing conflict or disaster, in different countries regardless of ethnicity, religion and language is that in spite of such differences, they share the same suffering. And when we help them, they may not look the same, but they all give the same smile, they all give the same thank you's. So there's the universality of suffering, but also of joy and gratitude.

One of the most unforgettable moments I have experienced being an aid worker happened during one of my first few international assignments as consultant, site planner and WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) engineer for UNHCR in Nepal back in the





Rona Jean A. Casil, Admin / Finance Assistant, PHILIPPINES

early '90s. When I first arrived, I saw malnourished children, many with skin diseases. It made me very sad. The sight of those children made me remember my own children who were still small at that time. At the start, the Nepalese children would get sick, but as we moved them to a better location in the camp where they have more access to basic services, and they are better-fed, I saw their steady transformation. It was delightful to see them running around in the camp, to hear them finally laughing, giggling. Wow that was like music to my ears. This experience also gave me a heart-warming feeling and gifted me with the greatest memory.

Rona Jean A. Casil

Admin/Finance Assistant

Location: Tacloban City, PHILIPPINES

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Helping.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

I have lived in Tacloban all my life. On the day of the storm, I was actually just relaxing on my bed until the unexpected happened — the water reaching our house, winds getting strong and furious, our doors being broken, roof sheets being torn off and then the waters rising higher. So we decided to leave the house

and just save our lives. We could not get past through the main entrance because of the high waters and the strong current, plus the debris that blocked the way, so we went to our backyard and climbed the wall to our neighbor's higher house to seek refuge. After that we spent days at the airport trying to get a flight out of Tacloban. When we came back days after to start picking up the pieces of our disrupted lives, the car shop I work for was damaged so operations stopped. Then I saw a job post from CARE, and I thought to myself in the meantime that the shop is on forced break, maybe I should just look for another work to take my mind off the typhoon, off the disaster.

There was no electricity yet in Tacloban at that time so I texted my sister in Cebu to open my email and send my application letter to CARE. It's ironic that my initial intention was only to get preoccupied so I could get my mind off what we went through the typhoon, the suffering of my entire beloved city, only to work in an organization that primarily thinks everything related to the typhoon, the effects and the survivors. But it is through that irony that I have learned to appreciate humanitarian work and the kind of help we can bring to those affected by the disaster. It was quite a journey from being a survivor to humanitarian worker.

What's the most rewarding part of your work? Knowing that in my own little way I am able to reach and help a lot of my countrymen at that. I know what



Fadumo Dahir Dualeh, Education Manager, SOMALIA

it is like to survive Haiyan and it makes me deeply happy that I am somehow helping the other survivors' recovery as well; that I could find something positive from this disaster, instead of just dwelling on the tragic part and traumatic effects of the storm

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

Below: Abdallah Michael Charles, Finance & Admin Officer, SOUTH SUDAN

One of the challenges for me was working with all the different people who usually come from different parts of the country. As a result, we have different languages, beliefs and cultures. But at the end of the day, I gain additional knowledge and friends and I consider it a blessing. I also get to meet other nationalities, many of them I would otherwise not have meet. Sometimes, the language difference is a challenge, like getting used to varied accents, but I eventually get the hang of it. I truly appreciate how responding to the disaster has fostered camaraderie among many nationalities, and how the world is helping my province, my fellowmen here.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

I do finance and administrative work. I am in charge of somehow "running" the office in Tacloban, taking care of all the logistics needs of the staff from vehicles

to supplies to accommodations, among other things. I take care of visiting CARE foreign staff and other international guests. I take care of the petty cash for the office and all other finance matters like liquidations and reimbursements of field staff and office expenses. It may sound simple, but it can be very stressful when there are many glitches being encountered, especially during the emergency phase when the logistics and infrastructure in Tacloban and nearby municipalities were severely affected.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

When we went to a very remote barangay ('district') to distribute shelter repair kits to survivors whose homes were badly or totally damaged by Haiyan. It was a really long ride, several hours over rough, rocky and at times muddy roads. My butt was hurting during the tough and long ride. We crossed four mountains and two rivers in order to reach the far-flung village. When we finally got to the destination, it was raining hard, but rain or shine, the distribution must go on so we went about the distribution process. In the end, it was fulfilling seeing the people being happy about what they have received and showing us so much gratitude. I knew then that no matter the difficulties, the survivors will recover. And I'm thankful, I'm part of that journey.

Fadumo Dahir Dualeh

Education Manager

Location: Hargeisa, SOMALIA

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

To help the most vulnerable people wherever they are and especially to support rural children who are out of school and have no access to education.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

To see young children in the very remote areas who are going to school and enjoying their education, seeing them having qualified teachers, sitting on chairs and tables. I enjoy seeing children out of school now and accessing education under flexi-time classes.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

Insecurity.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

I enable children in rural, remote areas to access primary and secondary education through improving learning environment. For example through the construction of schools, teacher training, providing school uniform and teaching and learning materials, providing sanitary towels for girls, provision of school furniture.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

During monitoring visits and community mobilisation campaigns, where I reach the very remote areas in Somalia and most vulnerable people who are lacking access to basic education. I sit with them and we share ideas on how to improve education. Also whenever I see children in newly constructed facilities, I feel happiness and contentment because I compare their current situation and the previous one where they were learning under trees – those moments are unforgettable.

Abdallah Michael Charles

Finance & Administration Officer

Location: Malakal County, Upper Nile State, SOUTH SUDAN

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word?

Benevolence.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or

volunteer?

I wanted to understand the needs of the people, when I wanted to provide the humanitarian work to those vulnerable people. And, it is my social-corporate responsibility to become a humanitarian worker.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

When I see the community that I am helping have met minimum life standards and a positive change in their life. I feel rewarded when I see that my contribution has a positive effect towards the community.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

Sometimes, I am not in a position to deliver assistance on time. The rain and logistics are the key challenges here in South Sudan. At the same time, the community also has numerous needs. They are having a high expectation of CARE but often we have limited resources and limited capacity to respond to all needs.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

Currently I do conduct hygiene promotion campaigns for internally displaced people and host communities. I am also doing solid waste management activities to ensure the health risks of displaced people are reduced. We establish pit latrines, bathing shelters and hand washing stations. I am also working on the

Abdallah Michael Charles, Finance and Admin Officer, SOUTH SUDAN





Alex Kilong, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, SOUTH SUDAN

seeds and vegetable kits distribution to those vulnerable households as part of CARE's livelihood assistance. In addition to that, we carry out gender based activities to try to identify and support the survivors.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

On April 11, 2014 I went to the Protection Of Civilian area, where people displaced by the conflict seek safety in Malakal. It has rained a lot. The people are sleeping on mud. I was one of program officers and was not able to do much more to help those people. I wanted to do more. Yet, I was not in the position to support them and guide their children on where to go. That was terrible.

Alex Kilong

Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at CARE South Sudan

Location: Malakal, Upper Nile State, SOUTH SUDAN

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer? Giving.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or



Dorothy Akinyi Muchaki, Health Project Manager, SOUTH SUDAN

volunteer?

To serve the poorest communities with life-saving support services amidst challenging conditions.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

When I cover a story of a beneficiary who feels changes through the projects implemented by CARE/ any other INGO.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

Meeting community expectations is difficult. When project targets are not met, writing a report makes life hard.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

Developing system wide monitoring & evaluation for use by various projects, reporting templates, and documenting lessons learnt during and or after project period.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

I covered a story on community participation in Dolieb Hill. The story was selected the best for South Sudan in the Dutch Consortium for Rehabilitation (DCR) project.

Dorothy Akinyi Muchaki

Health Project Manager

Location: Unity State–Bentiu Sub Office,
SOUTH SUDAN

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer? Philanthropic.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

I have had a passion for the alleviation of the suffering of humankind, a fact that encouraged me to take up career training in the medical/health field. I therefore count myself very lucky to be able to make a living by doing work that is in alignment with my values and the things that I believe in. Being a humanitarian aid worker is a lifestyle; to me it is a calling – not just a job. There is often no sharp distinction between work and the rest of your life, between your interests and passions and your job description. There is an upside to that work that you feel passionately about, and are not doing simply because you are getting paid.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

Knowing that I engage my professional skills and experience to save lives and make a difference in the lives of vulnerable people.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

Obstruction by the armed combatants preventing the relief workers from reaching the sick and injured, inaccessibility to affected areas due to impassable roads due to floods and/or mined roads, lack of timely

Sarah Joshua Okwaci, Gender/Gender Based Violence Officer, SOUTH SUDAN



supplies, absence or unreliable communication networks and equipment, language barriers when handling beneficiaries directly.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

As a Health Project Manager, I offer technical hands-on services on project planning, project implementation and monitoring, budget disbursement and procurement, collaboration and partnership, health facility management support and supervision,

“I celebrate in my heart when I see a malnourished child become healthy again, a child that I once took to hospital walking again.”

coaching and on-the-job training.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

Some of the most memorable moments during my work was when we had to work as health team, with different aid organizations working together to save the lives of patients during the conflict in South Sudan. I had never seen so many men injured. The smell of blood was everywhere in the air. The team of two doctors and nurses and clinical officers worked tirelessly triaging and attending to the most critical, cleaning and stitching the injuries to arrest blood. Others we had to send to South Sudan's capital Juba or Wau for more specialised surgical care. We gave antibiotics and tetanus toxoid to prevent tetanus and finally took some to a big conference hall to recuperate as we did not know where else to take such a large number of trauma patients. This was an experience that will remain in my memories. My joy is that we saved many lives.

Sarah Joshua Okwaci

Gender/Gender Based Violence Officer

Location: Malakal, Upper Nile state, SOUTH SUDAN

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer? Help.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or

volunteer?

To serve the people who are suffering with life-saving services that will help them overcome their conditions.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

When I meet the needs of the beneficiaries we reach with our projects, or see other organisations do the same.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

Meeting community expectations at the same time as meeting project targets is difficult sometimes.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

Developing gender-based violence (GBV) messages; prevention and response to GBV and capacity-building for system wide monitoring and evaluation for use by various projects; reporting templates; and capacity building for beneficiaries; mainstreaming gender into programs at the same time.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

I managed to launch the GBV project within three days of joining CARE, and managed to implement 3/4 of project activities within two months of project period in Malakal and Maiut County.

Joseph Ngamije

Area Manager

Location: Unity State, Rubkhona-Bentiu, SOUTH SUDAN

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Justice.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

When I was eleven years old, I was forced to become a refugee in my own country, Rwanda. On the first day, we spent a night in a church that was so crowded so no one could sleep. I could see how innocent children and mothers were the most to suffer from a conflict they have never started. We spent two days without food, water or medication. I remember how I started selling bread in the camp to help my mother getting money for food. And this is least compared to what I saw before I become a refugee: genocide. People died including my own brother. Innocent children were massacred. From then, I developed a spirit of giving justice to those who are helpless, giving a voice to the voiceless, giving protection to the most vulnerable. From that tragedy, I decided to do something better: to become a HUMANITARIAN WORKER.

Joseph Ngamije (far right), Area Manager, SOUTH SUDAN





Bushra Abdu Aldukhainah, Humanitarian Program Manager, YEMEN

What's the most rewarding part of your work?
I rejoice myself when I see a child smiling, looking at and being fed by her mother in our health and nutrition centers in Bentiu, South Sudan.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do? I work for CARE South Sudan as Area Manager, Health and Nutrition. My eyes are always open to rapidly assess emergency situations and develop emergency response programmes. I provide technical and managerial support to CARE staff in Unity State, one of the states that are critically affected by the current insecurity. Even if I provide technical and managerial support to staff, I also spend 70 percent of my time with the community. I spend my time with health workers providing primary health care, educating the community on health, nutrition and hygienic practices. I spend time in the clinic ensuring that we are giving quality services. We are also building latrines, and rehabilitating malnourished children.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

Most of our activities in Rubkona-South Sudan are located in the UN camp for displaced people. However, there are people outside who don't get any assistance. CARE is the first humanitarian agency to expand its activities outside the camp. Since I am a team member of the mobile clinic, I clearly remember when we found a ten years old boy who had jaundice. When I

saw him, he was pale, yellow eyes, skinny and could barely speak. We immediately took him to a hospital. When we were in the car heading to the hospital, I kept asking myself that if CARE had not started outreach activities, what would have happened to this child. I said to myself: NOW I CAN SLEEP WELL. LIFE OF THIS LITTLE BOY IS GOING TO BE SAVED. Even if the child was suffering, I was happy to contribute to saving one life.

Bushra Abdu Aldukhainah

Humanitarian Program Manager

Location: Haradh, YEMEN

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer? Practicing the philosophy of humanity.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

I can feel empathy for what it means to be a displaced person within your own country, losing everything you have and be under the mercy of the situation; I opted to be part of a humanitarian organization to reach out to vulnerable people in difficult situations. Nobody can understand better than me about the women and children suffering in the context I am working and living. My country has experienced the human tragedy of six wars and two years of civil unrest which has resulted in damages in everything from social services, huge inter-displacement and

continued conflict. The civil unrest, coupled with poverty means the whole country lacks basic services. Health facilities are struggling to cope, and schools are run down. As a citizen in a suffering country and a local CARE staff member I feel I am part of it. I got the option to work in emergency and education.

I have a good local knowledge, I speak our local language, yet I am suffering from the restrictions women face in mobility due to culture and tradition. It is therefore not easy for women to be a humanitarian worker. But I was luckily despite the enormous mobility, cultural and contextual challenges and limitation to come forward to support vulnerable people.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

The most rewarding part for me is working with woman and children in the context where women's mobilization is restricted and culturally limited. I am able to reach out to them, I understand their needs and try my best to support with dignity. I help displaced women who are normally unable to share their concerns and challenges even within their own family — but I can hear their thoughts and share their feelings. I know what it means to be a woman in such a culture. For these women, being forced to flee their homes doesn't just mean losing the roof over their head. It's about losing their connection to their

“Daughter, do you know how much difference you have made in our life through this latrine? Now I don't feel afraid anymore to go to toilet at night, I don't have to walk long distances to respond to the call of nature. I am not worried about my daughters anymore.”

Kahlia Hassan Falaha, Community Mobilizer, YEMEN



family, to their source of income, their place of work. It's about losing access to the network of people around them who they would normally turn to in times of hardship. Once they have fled immediate danger, women and children face discrimination and further abuse. These are some of the factors which make displaced people particularly vulnerable. An effort to reach them helps them feel comfortable sharing their graveness. I can see the smiles on faces of children when we support them with water, sanitation and hygiene measures and build up their livelihoods.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

The challenges and dilemmas I face are in relation to the implementation of our humanitarian response. Humanitarian action is a moral rather than a political philosophy, I think, and no matter how interesting and intellectual and deep these conversations are, in the end, the main question that remains is how to access people in need. The main challenge I face is the need versus the capacity, access and security, and the short term funds to address long term suffering. This sometimes leaves me disappointed and depressed. We are helping to keep people just barely alive, but that's it, and that is a serious problem.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

I have worked in the education sector with a humanitarian organization providing schools and trainings to teachers, father and mother councils and

“I still can't believe that I am finally getting a latrine to spare me from long journeys especially during the night. That's why I should protect my precious materials until the latrine will be built.”

community members. Currently I am working in the emergency sectors of WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) and livelihood. Through these components we give great assistance to women and children by providing safe drinking water through rehabilitation of water points, providing silver filters for safe drinking water, hygiene kits.



Warda Hassan Ali, Community Mobilizer, YEMEN

Warda Hassan Ali

Community Mobilizer

Location: Aden, Khormaksar, YEMEN

What does Humanitarianism mean to you in one word? Dignity.

Why did you become a humanitarian worker or volunteer?

Being a humanitarian worker is not just a job to earn money. It is the job that is in alignment with my values, beliefs and interest. I count myself committed to defend human dignity and provide assistance to the vulnerable people. I find myself in this challenging job.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

Helping people most in need, especially women and girls, is the most emotional experience. Changing lives is my dream. I feel very happy when our team provides essential services such as drinking water, when we improve sanitation and hygiene or conduct livelihood activities.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your work?

Security is the most challenging issue. Changing behaviour is a long and difficult process. People hardly understand that we focus on the most vulnerable people. Less vulnerable people often try to get a share from the limited assistance. There is always a conflict about who is entitled to what assistance.

Tell us a little bit about the work you do?

My role is community mobilisation. In other words: building understanding about needs, CARE's activities and policies, building leadership bodies, getting feedback, raising awareness. Also I support the team and the community in implementing project activities such as water, sanitation and hygiene or livelihood activities.

What is the most memorable moment you've experienced during your work?

I am impressed when I watch kids, who returned home after being displaced, playing around in the villages. They talk and play with me. I am very happy when I sit down with the women, feeling I am a



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About CARE: Founded in 1945 with the creation of the CARE Package®, CARE is a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty. CARE has more than six decades of experience delivering emergency aid during times of crisis. Our emergency responses focus on the needs of the most vulnerable populations, particularly girls and women. Last year CARE worked in 86 countries and reached more than 97 million people around the