



UN

Volunteers

inspiration in action

Cameras click in recognition of UNV volunteer

23 October 2009

Bangkok, Thailand: A UNV volunteer has won a prestigious national award for a volunteer project that helps marginalized people record their lives through photography.

Linda Germanis, a UNV volunteer Intern with UNESCO fully funded by the Italian Government, was named 'Outstanding Volunteer' for her devotion and valuable contribution to Thai society.

The award was presented by the National Commission on Social Welfare, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, and the National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand under Royal Patronage at a ceremony on 21 October, Thailand's National Volunteer Day.

Ms. Germanis received the award for her work in Saphan Phut, a marginalized area in Bangkok, where she initiated the 'At first sight' project. It aims to introduce people in the community to cameras, and to encourage her colleagues at UNESCO to get involved in volunteering at the grassroots level.

"This is a true example of 'Inspiration in Action'," said UNV Thailand Programme Officer Raymond Brandes.

"One of UNESCO's goals is to create an understanding of an individual's values and those of the society in which they live through education," explained Linda Germanis. "The idea was to develop a project aiming to promote these values through informal education."

The formal output of the project will be a photo booklet containing pictures and commentaries taken and given by the youth of Saphan Phut about their identity, values and challenges. You can [read more on the UNV website here](#), and also [on the project's homepage](#).

"To me," remarked Ms. Germanis after the ceremony, "having received this award is about having had the opportunity to tell a story to an audience - impacting it."

She expressed her pleasure that the award would allow her project to gain greater recognition in Thailand. "How wide the



UNV volunteer Intern Linda Germanis receives her award from the Minister of Social Development and Human Security, His Excellency Mr. Issara Somchai, for her work with the Saphan Phut community. (R. Brandes/UNV)



UNV volunteer Intern Linda Germanis with the Thai Volunteer day commemorative booklet.



Before the award ceremony, Linda Germanis was also decorated with the Thai Volunteer Pin by Ms. Sasamont Intuputi, Chairperson of Volunteer Promotion and Development Committee of the National Council on Social Welfare. (R. Brandes/UNV)



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audience is changes the nature and the number of the tools available to impact individuals and communities,” she added.

Thailand celebrates Thai Volunteer Day on 21 October since International Volunteer Day falls on the same day, 5 December, as His Majesty the King’s birthday. However, because His Majesty the King is an advocate for volunteerism, often 5 December sees another celebration of volunteers as well.

This year, said Raymond Brandes, UNV is involved in the organization of International Volunteer day and His Majesty the King’s birthday in Korat, one of the Thailand’s major municipalities. ‘Volunteering for our Planet’ activities will consist of planting trees to create a low carbon city. At the end of this event, the trees will be symbolically given to His Majesty the King as his birthday present.