



BDA

Volunteer Corner

Dietetics student **Samuel Olufemi** explains why volunteering with the Northern Ireland Branch is so important to him

Volunteer Name: **Samuel Olufemi**

Position: **Student, Ulster University**

BDA volunteer role: **Ordinary Member, Northern Ireland Branch**

Q How did you get started volunteering with the BDA and why?

A I have practised and served as a key executive member in the dietetic profession in Nigeria and believe this is an opportunity to unleash my ideas to improve the practice and general health outcome of people in this new environment. With this, it has been my desire to contribute my quota to the development of the dietetic profession in the UK and anywhere I find myself, so I joined the BDA Northern Ireland Branch as an Ordinary Member. I attended the branch re-launch meeting that was held in June to connect with the existing members and familiarise myself with the environment. I love the general vision, mission and various programmes of the BDA.

Q Briefly describe your BDA volunteer role(s).

A As an Ordinary Member, I will work with the committee to ensure successful delivery of projects, education and networking for branch members. I will support and represent the branch to plan and implement all projects of interest, fulfil the branch aims and objectives and also educate the public. I will identify specific areas of development challenge and work toward achieving it. I will work with colleagues in my locality to build networks, share knowledge and skills.

Q What's the best thing/s about volunteering for the BDA?

A It would be a great thing for me to see how I could work with other committee members of the branch towards implementing different programmes that would bring many members, both students and non-students alike, to be part of the agenda of the local branch. I will join others to build a formidable workforce and association through programmes that would impact the lives of the students as future dietitians.

As a member of the local committee, it is possible to take part in all-inclusive strategies and projects that allow BDA members see the association as a collective agenda; things like taking part in nutrition discussions on talk shows on local radio or TV, or

developing programmes that support good dietary practices for the elderly in the care and nursing homes. Another approach is the introduction of a 'transgenerational cooking' agenda to encourage good dietary habits that is gradually eroding in our communities. I will join others to write to my local MP of Belfast to raise my voices to support the independent prescribing right to dietitians and other AHPS any moment from now.

Q What didn't you know about the BDA before you started volunteering?

A I did not know about the continuing professional development (CPD) of the BDA. There are many resources and channels I did not know about the BDA, for example, practice-based evidence (PEN), which improves learning and practice in dietetics. I didn't know about the benefits the union offers, such as supporting members in workplace-related legal issues, until I joined. I have also just discovered that dietetics is well regulated in the UK and has different solid departments that are ready to assist members whenever they need assistance relating to practice. There are many things I didn't know about the BDA and things which I would love to know, for example, the constitution that guides its operations.

Q Would you encourage other members to volunteer for the BDA and why?

A More volunteers can be brought to the committees. It is our association, and everyone needs to be involved, though we have leaders who are meant to manage its affairs. I have already encouraged some members to join, and they are now members, and many are still coming, because the BDA is our first constituency as dietitians. Additionally, there are many benefits available to members that a non-member cannot enjoy.

WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

Check out our volunteer opportunities online: bda.uk.com/news-campaigns/get-involved/volunteers.html and look out for vacancies in our Members' Monthly e-zine.