



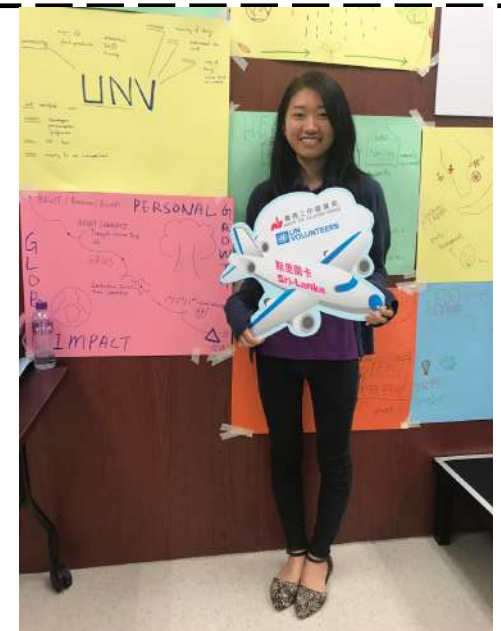
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**UNV HK Universities Volunteer Program
International Organization for Migration (IOM)
UN University Volunteer in External Relations
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

Before Taking the Assignment

I have been interested in serving the needy in the community for years as I believe that the greatest power of life is to spread the happiness around us and to help the underprivileged live a better life. During the process of different local and mainland services, I come to realize that seeing the smiles on the faces of the service targets truly motivate and touch me. I also hope that I can utilize my service skills acquired in a broader and higher level, so that not only more people's lives in the world can get some little changes because of me, but also I can further sharpen my skills and broaden my exposure to better equip myself for the later service chances. This United Nations Volunteer Internship is a precious chance for me to contribute my skills and spread my love to the international community. Through the process I would also expect myself to become even more mature and have a more comprehensive understand towards international issues.

Nonetheless, I also went through lots of struggles before I decided to click on the button to accept the offer. As I study business in university, choosing this opportunity is unusual, at least among the people around me in the same major. Separation from family and friends were also one of my biggest concerns. At last, I managed to take the step to expand my comfort zone. I believed that I have to explore as much as possible when I am still in university and to fill it with some solid and unforgettable memory which I would smile at when I look back in the future. Indeed, the program is the best opportunity. 😊



New and Challenging, but Fun, Rewarding and Horizon-broadening – My Main Roles and Duties

Public Information, External Relations Division, International Organization for Migration Mission to Sri Lanka

I am attached with the External Relations Division and work directly under the supervision of Chief of Mission and the guidance of the Programme Analyst. My main job is to handle the Public Information work. Since the unit is a supporting unit, I am also required to support other functional units' work if necessary. Below are some of my routine work.

- Managed public information work
Coordination with United Nations Resident Coordinator Office, event coverage, publications production, online advertisement campaign, social media and website updates, public information and social media guidelines monitoring etc.
- Represented IOM in meetings, for example UN communication group and embassies
- Presented in a guest lecture in a public training institute, discussing the topic "Migration Myths vs Reality"
- Others: Meetings with Senior Management Team, verbal Mandarin-English translation, assistance in projects of other units, new year promotional items handling etc.

Support for Regional Labour Migration (LMR) Unit

Later on, I was also assigned by our Chief of Mission to assist the Regional Labour Migration (LMR) Unit from mid-October to end of November. Our LMR unit mainly work on a 4-year project named Colombo Process (CP) which is a Regional Consultative Process on the management of overseas employment and contractual labour for countries of origins in Asia.

A Regional Workshop for Labour Attachés of the Colombo Process Member States was going to be held in early December, thus I assisted on some logistics (flight itineraries and accommodation arrangement) , visuals production (banner and folder cover), regional coordination and communication etc.



Making the most out of the experience – My project in IOM

Focal point of Global Migration Film Festival in Sri Lanka

During September, I was humbly given an opportunity by our Chief of Mission to lead a project with the support from my unit – organizing the Global Migration Film Festival 2018 Sri Lanka. I had a mixed feeling at that time, happy that I am appreciated, excited for the project, but also more worried as I am not sure if I am capable to take the project on. At last, under the encouragement from my supervisor, I accepted the challenge and started to manage the event. From the event concept to the implementation, I have to take care of every part of it meanwhile taking my colleagues opinion into account. The process was really long and difficult. Nonetheless, I got to learn much more on how work in an organization, especially in a multi-cultural environment. Team management, EQ ability, diplomatic skills, project management, external relationship management, and presentation skills etc. I have learnt all these when I was managing the project. Below are my responsibilities related.

- Event compere
- Partnerships with embassies and UN agencies, guest invitation, promotion
- workshops facilitation
- Venue, movie and catering selection
- External and internal coordination etc.



Impacting the Local Community

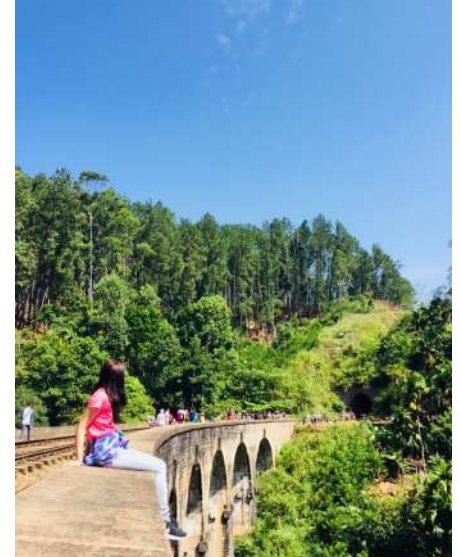
Awareness raising and correct information delivering to help people make informed migration decision is the main impact that I have created throughout the assignment. In Sri Lanka, many people consider migration to other developed countries a good way to seek for a better life. Popular destinations include Australia, Canada and Italy etc. However, not all people are qualified for the visa application. Some would then take risk by migrating irregularly. Many cases end up being trafficked to elsewhere and are not able to return back to Sri Lanka; some may end up being exploited. Hence, a very crucial component of IOM's work is to deliver a correct migration concept.

Through organizing different events and using social media, people could obtain correct information regarding migration. From time to time, I help answer the Facebook inbox inquiries. People mainly enquire our assistance in migration to Australia programme and the medical clearance for visa application. Though these are not very significant help, I am still happy that I can be here to solve their problems. On top of the above, I also gave a lecture with our Chief of Mission, Giuseppe Crocetti and my supervisor, Nisansala Gunarathne, our Programme Analyst, discussing the topic – Migration Myths VS Reality in Bandaranaike International Diplomatic Training Institute (BIDTI) to the students in International studies. The main idea of our lecture is to explode the myths and convey accurate information. We believe regular migration is beneficial to both host and receiving countries if it is used in a correct way. **Migration is not a problem to be solved; it's a reality to be managed.** Through using statistics and evidence-based research, the students there are able to learn more about the crisis and migration knowledge. They could also know more about IOM's work and position in migration.



Fun time exploring the Sri Lankan culture – Apart from work

I would say my work in Sri Lanka was much heavier than I expected. Before I left for the assignment, our Hong Kong buddies who work there before told us that they managed to maintain work-life balance and the working style there is more relaxing than that in Hong Kong. Apparently, the work culture varies between agencies and between units as well. However, I still enjoyed much time with my colleagues outside office. I also travelled to Ella with my Korean buddy Yeomin. Sri Lanka is really famous for its tea tree plantation, amazing natural view and well-preserved heritage.



Special experiences and most unforgettable memory

There are for sure many unforgettable memories that worth remembering in these 6 months. One would be the encouragement given by the audience after my 2-hour presentation in the above lecture. Delivering speeches or presentations is one of my biggest weaknesses as I get very nervous every time beforehand. I still remember I was very scared for the whole day as the lecture was in the evening. After the presentation when I was packing to leave, some of them came to the front and gave thanks to me, saying that I was very sweet and gave a very good presentation. Honestly this meant a lot to me as I am really scared of presenting. Giuseppe also complimented me for my performance and even gave me a gift as encouragement. I am really glad for this and proud of myself.

Another thing that may be very subtle, but made me reflected was the UN passport. One day I saw my colleague's UN passport on the desk. All of us has a passport that represents our identity – our country of origin that makes us proud. However, this also separates and defines us. The world is divided into different countries; each country is isolated by its strict border. However, all of us living in this planet are human and we are the same by nature. The UN passport represents our conviction to serve for everyone impartially, regardless of our own nationality. This is a belief that the UN is upholding and also an ideal world that I would like to live in and create.



Other Snapshots 😊



