

UN University Volunteer Programme Post Assignment Report

My UNV Assignment with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation

In July 2019, right after finishing my undergraduate degree, I went on the journey as a UN Volunteer to the United Nations Regional Hub for Asia-Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand.

I started the assignment with great excitement, as working in the UN has always been a dream for me. I was assigned to the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), whose mission is to facilitate and mainstream South-South Cooperation, i.e., the cooperation between developing countries. As an alternative model of development cooperation to the traditional donor-recipient model, South-South Cooperation empowers the developing countries by giving them more decision-making capabilities and catering to their demands.

My Assignment

My assignment is to coordinate the office's youth related programmes, with a focus on entrepreneurship training. My main task is to organize an Entrepreneurship Academy with several partner institutions in Hong Kong. Over time, I also took on other initiatives, coming up with new project proposals, as well as bringing in new partners and funding resources.



Visiting the ecological park in Shenzhen

In August, I represented the Office to participate in the Shenzhen International Low Carbon City Forum, where I learnt a lot about the new technologies and initiatives in low carbon infrastructure and green city. During the Forum, I also met other participants, mostly the government officials from Southeast Asia, and promoted the idea of South-South Cooperation to them.



Consultative Meeting on the Entrepreneurship Academy

In October, I organized a consultative meeting about the Entrepreneurship Academy that I oversee, bringing together institutions working on youth entrepreneurship programmes in Asia-Pacific, to facilitate sharing and learning from each other's experience and expertise.

Later, I organized another seminar with a private sector partner to facilitate the exchange among startups from Thailand, Malaysia and China.

In these few months, I also got many opportunities to push the boundaries of my own comfort zone. As someone extremely anxious about public speaking, I challenged myself to be the MC of a seminar organized by our office. At an exhibition of development agencies organized by the Thai government, I also made an effort to speak to the participants to promote South-South Cooperation and UNOSSC.



Being MC at a seminar



Promoting our office at the Exhibition at Thai Government



Working at the United Nations has also given me chances to attend events and conferences that are eye-opener to me. For example, the Climate Change Week, “Beijing+25” Asia-Pacific Review on Gender Equality. I even got a chance to meet the former UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon.



Mr. Ban Ki-Moon giving lecture about climate change in UN Conference Center



Looking back to this half a year, the experiences of managing projects, representing the office to external events, having meeting with partners independently, etc., have transformed me from a freshly graduated student to a more mature adult. I am grateful for my supervisor, who gave me lots of freedom to take full charge of a project, and to propose and implement new initiatives. At the same time, the experience has given me food-for-thought about the more efficient ways to achieve the SDGs, and the skills and knowledge needed to participate in the agenda.

Life in Bangkok

Being the most travelled city in the world, Bangkok is full of interesting things to explore. I took the chance to engage myself in local activities such as Thai cuisine cooking class, Muay Thai, etc., exploring a completely new area of interests. I was also lucky to know the NGO ATD Fourth World in Thailand, which host open dinner every month. Every time for me, the open dinner would mean a lovely evening having great conversations with like-minded people, as well as enjoying delicious home-made food.



Open dinner at ATD Fourth World



Thai cuisine cooking class

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the Agency for Volunteer Service Hong Kong, which sponsored my UNV assignment; as well as the UNV office, which creates the programme to give young people chances to work at the UN. It is through this programme that I got the chance to continue my journey with the UN as a consultant for another half a year. Though the future is still uncertain, this experience will always remain a precious piece, guiding my career development, as well as personal growth, in the days to come.