

MY UNV JOURNEY



2024

Post-assignment Report



DUTIES PERFORMED

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



As a UNV in Digital Inclusion at UNICEF's Regional Office for South Asia, based in Nepal, my team and I focused on building strategic partnerships to advance digital inclusion across the region. For public partnerships, I conducted in-depth research into the digital transformation strategies of organizations like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, USAID, and other multilaterals to identify collaboration opportunities.

In the private sector, I analyzed the CSR and ESG frameworks of MNOs and tech companies, as well as the education and technology programmes of various foundations across South Asia. I developed pitch decks and briefing notes that highlighted UNICEF's unique value proposition, with the aim of identifying funding opportunities and collaboration areas such as empowering girls with digital access, enhancing digital infrastructure, and subsidizing zero-rating content. These materials were shared with UNICEF South Asia's public and private partnership teams, and other UNICEF National Committees facilitating connections with potential partners. This approach helped lay a strong foundation for actionable, impactful and sustainable partnerships in the region.



LEARNING FROM CHALLENGES

This assignment significantly enriched my professional and cultural competencies. I developed expertise in crafting strategic pitch decks and briefing notes tailored to diverse stakeholders, while sharpening my research skills by analyzing complex organizational strategies and translating them into actionable proposals. Professionally, I gained a deeper understanding of UNICEF's operational frameworks and the UN's public-private partnership ecosystem, learning to align organizational missions with partners' goals for maximum impact.

As a junior UNV, I encountered several challenges that tested my confidence and adaptability. Presenting my work to senior colleagues was not easy, as I often felt inexperienced and worried they might question my abilities. Fortunately, my supervisor's trust gave me the confidence to deliver presentations, articulate ideas, and address colleagues' questions more independently. She also encouraged me to have more informal chats with specialists and experts from different areas in the office, through which I gained deeper insights.



While English was the primary language at the workplace, occasional language barriers made it difficult to fully connect with the local Nepali communities. Sometimes, I felt embarrassed during gatherings with local colleagues because I struggled to participate actively. Sometimes, feelings of loneliness and homesickness frustrated me, as adjusting to a new environment far from home took an emotional toll, especially in the early weeks.

Despite these challenges, one memorable moment lifted my spirits: when a senior colleague asked if I missed home food. I said I did, and the very next day, she surprised me with siu mai and HK-made chili jam! This deeply touched me and strengthened my sense of belonging and support within the team.

REFLECTIONS

My experience as a UNV was truly transformative, providing deep insights into the work of the UN and fostering my personal growth. I developed a greater appreciation for UNICEF's role in driving systemic change through strategic partnerships (SDG 17). The agency's diverse backgrounds and strong emphasis on cross-sector collaboration allowed me to learn from and work alongside talented professionals with various expertise. Addressing global challenges like the digital divide often involves interconnected efforts in education, social behavior change, and social policy, reminding me of the power of collective action. Even individuals can make a difference through donations, volunteering, or thoughtful decision-making in daily life. These actions can lead to gradual change in addressing global issues such as poverty, inequality, diseases, and climate change.

This assignment strengthened my resilience, adaptability, and confidence in navigating complex, multicultural environments while engaging with a broad range of stakeholders. Witnessing how partnerships can amplify UNICEF's impact in South Asia was inspiring, reinforcing my commitment to global development and motivating me to pursue further opportunities in international cooperation.

