



UNV-Hong Kong Universities Volunteer Internship Programme

Assignment Report

UN Volunteer in Education and Data monitoring

UNICEF EAPRO Bangkok

My Work

In my current position within the Education team at the UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office, I am primarily responsible for supporting Data Monitoring initiatives. This involves playing a key role in overseeing the Quality Assurance procedures for Core Standard Indicators (CSI) and providing crucial assistance in Data Visualization using the Green Database.

To provide some context, Core Standard Indicators (CSI) serve as pivotal tools for monitoring the progress of Country Offices towards achieving our collective Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These indicators are instrumental in assessing and measuring changes over time, offering valuable insights into the effectiveness of our efforts.

When countries report their CSI scores for each domain, it's common to observe fluctuations from the previous year. These fluctuations can be attributed to a variety of factors, including discrepancies in understanding indicator methodologies, variations in funding levels, or socio-political unrest within specific regions. As part of my responsibilities, I am tasked with conducting Quality Assurance processes for this data. This involves not only identifying the root causes behind score changes but also ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the reported data. By validating the data through rigorous quality checks, we can confidently compare it with previous years' data and data from other regions.



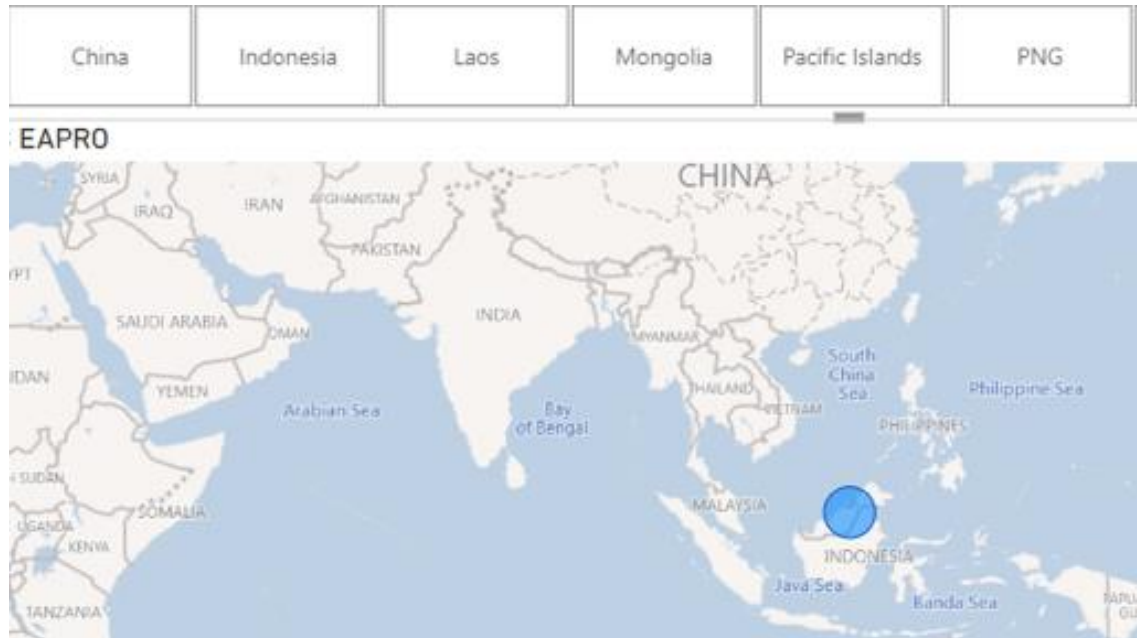
Given that CSI data forms the foundation for collaborative partnerships and informs critical decision-making processes, maintaining its comparability and quality is paramount. This comprehensive approach to data verification contributes to the establishment of a unified, standardized data system within UNICEF. Such a system is indispensable in facilitating coordinated efforts and effectively addressing the challenges associated with achieving our shared goals for sustainable development.

What have I learnt?

My experience at the UNICEF office has been vastly different from my initial expectations. The diversity of cultures represented among my colleagues has been particularly striking to me. We have a communal snack table in our office, where colleagues returning from travels



or overseas missions often bring back local snacks from various countries. I've had the opportunity to sample snacks from India, Italy, China, Korea, Japan, and more, which has not only been enjoyable but has also deepened my cultural understanding of different nations.



Among the skills I've acquired through the assignments, Data Visualization has proven to be one of the most valuable. UNICEF EAPRO occasionally offers training courses, and I attended one on Data Visualization, focusing on using Microsoft Power BI to visually represent data. Following the course, I was tasked with a project to visualize data from the Green Database, detailing initiatives being implemented by countries in

our region. Although challenging, I applied the knowledge gained from the course to successfully complete the project, recognizing its importance for my future career growth.

Moreover, this assignment has provided numerous opportunities for me to engage in various events. For instance, I represented my team at a conference on mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE), which attracted around 400 participants. My role involved communication with event co-organizers and serving as a notetaker during the proceedings. Through interactions with intellectuals and frontline heroes working in Myanmar's education sector. Engaging with individuals from Laos, Vietnam, Nepal, and the United States, all of whom are actively contributing to the education sector and making a positive impact globally, has been enriching.

One particularly memorable experience was hearing a presenter share insights from their work in the Solomon Islands, where multiple languages are spoken. They highlighted the innovative "parent-centered approach," providing booklets for parents to teach their children their mother tongue. Such experiences have deepened my understanding of how to contribute to creating a better world.



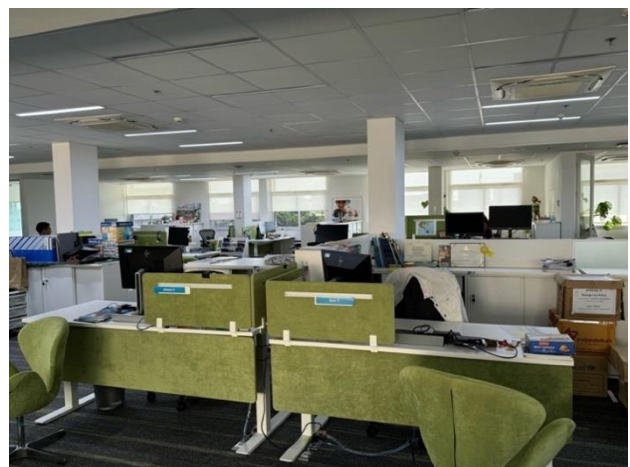
Overcome Challenges

One of the most demanding aspects of my role is ensuring the Quality Assurance of the CSI. Prior to my involvement, Country Offices submit their results to the online system. In our region, encompassing 27 countries, data submissions are required for 14 indicators within the education sector, each consisting of up to 14 data points. This entails reviewing a total of up to 1000 rows of data, all within limited time constraints. My responsibilities include providing feedback on the Country Offices' data and forwarding it to headquarters for further review. Additionally, I analyze the reasons behind data discrepancies between countries for our team's utilization. Concurrently, while reviewing the extensive data, I am tasked with creating a PowerPoint presentation. Despite the daunting nature of this challenge, I successfully managed to overcome it and submitted the assignment before the deadline.



Another challenge I encountered revolved around effective communication with colleagues. The UN system is replete with numerous acronyms, some of which are specific to UNICEF, while others are prevalent within the education sector. For instance, GCF stands for the Green Climate Fund. Initially, during my first team meeting, I experienced frustration due to my inability to grasp the intricacies of the 'UNICEF' language. However, with time and immersion within UNICEF, I familiarized myself with these acronyms and integrated them into my lexicon.

Furthermore, as part of my role, attending events and meetings necessitates communication with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds and varying accents worldwide. This posed a significant challenge initially, as I adapted to conversing with individuals from different cultural contexts. However, through these interactions, I honed my skills in natural communication with foreigners. Presently, I am proficient in



initiating conversations and engaging in small talk with colleagues and individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds around the globe.

As a UNV.....

As a UN Volunteer (UNV), my experience working within the UN has been invaluable to me. It has encompassed more than just acquiring new skills, navigating an international work environment, and pushing my own boundaries. The most profound lesson I've learned from this assignment is the mindset required to surmount the seemingly insurmountable. Prior to this assignment, the idea of transforming the world seemed like an unattainable dream. I didn't believe that one person could make a significant difference, considering the multitude of challenges facing our world today.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent an ambitious agenda aimed at creating a better world. Through my work, I've had the privilege of collaborating with individuals who truly believe in the possibility of effecting global transformation. Living in Hong Kong, a relatively affluent society, it's easy to overlook the plight of those less fortunate around the world. Shocking statistics from the World Bank reveal that an estimated 70% of 10-year-olds in low-income countries struggle to comprehend simple written texts.

Additionally, the worsening impacts of climate change further underscore the urgent need for assistance. However, my colleagues at UNICEF are actively engaged in addressing these pressing issues, working tirelessly to provide aid in areas such as water, education, and protection for vulnerable children.

Through my experiences in this environment, I've come to realize that transforming the world is not an impossible feat. With passion and unwavering belief, dreams can indeed become a reality. Moreover, interacting with dedicated individuals within the UN community who are deeply committed to advancing the SDGs has reinforced my conviction that concerted efforts can truly make a difference in reshaping our world.

