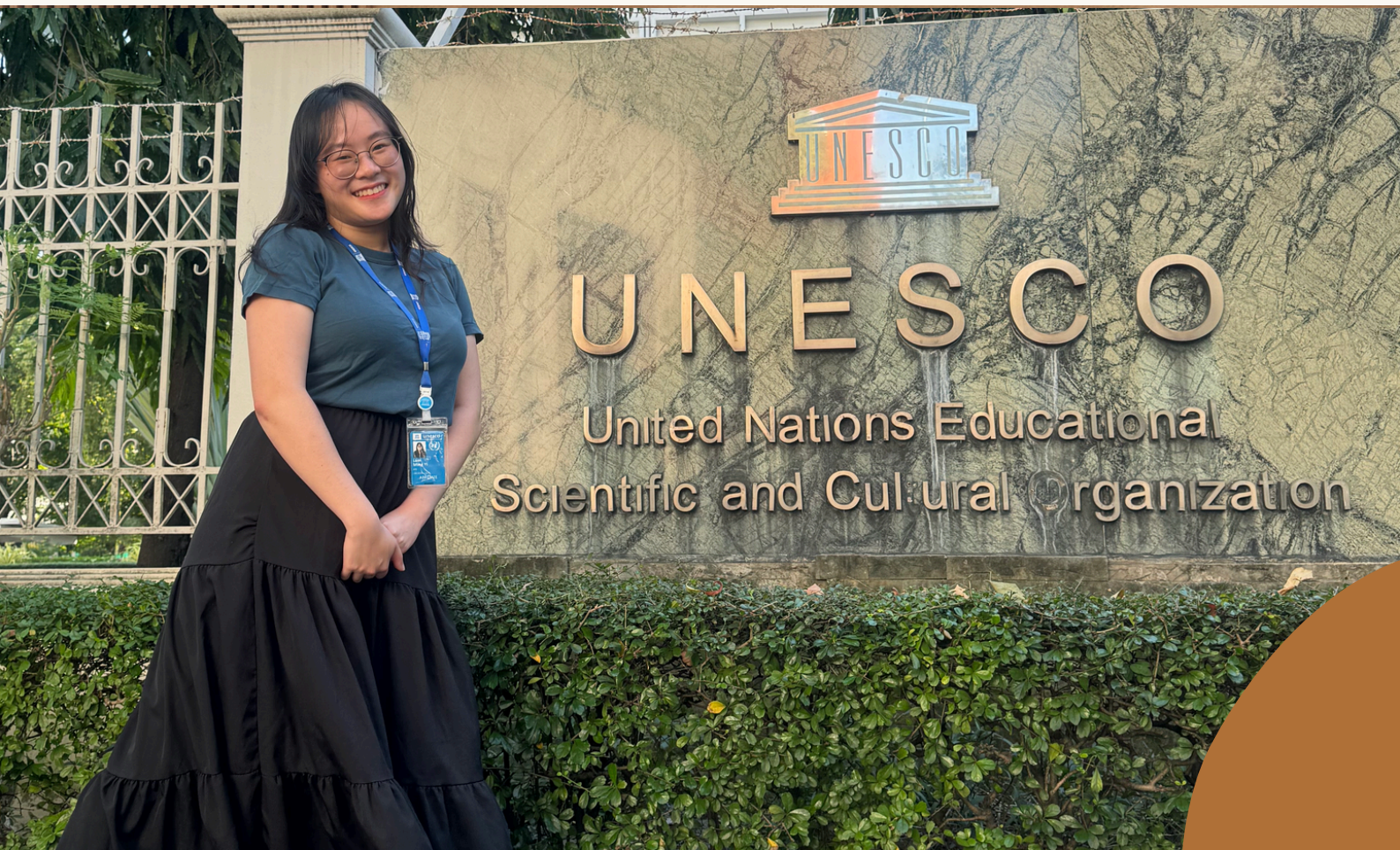


Post-assignment Report

UN UNIVERSITY VOLUNTEER IN SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

In UNCESO Bangkok



Lam Ming Yi

September 2023 -
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INTRODUCTION

As a student majoring in Asian & International Studies, I know terms like international cooperation, bilateral relationships, and international organizations. We learn them: the United Nations, European Union, ASEAN. These entities are well-known but still mysterious to me during my time at university. I remember my freshman year when one of the exchange students mentioned her internship at the UN. I was amazed by her experience, but I never dreamed of being one of them. Four years later, right before I graduated and after overcoming travel restrictions due to COVID, I found myself in Bangkok, Thailand, serving at UNESCO as a Volunteer in Social Human Sciences.

I am truly grateful to all the parties that provided me with such opportunities. My experience in this entity has been truly diverse and exciting.

I hope that in this report, you can gain a glimpse of how wonderful this journey has been for me and why it has been an eye-opening experience.

WHAT DID I DO?

When we talk about UNESCO, the common perception of this entity is often centered around cultural heritage. However, UNESCO actually stands for "E" for Education, "S" for Science, and "C" for Culture. I am working in the Science Division, focusing on Social Human Sciences. The work I have done relates to the ethics of artificial intelligence and the management of social transformation.



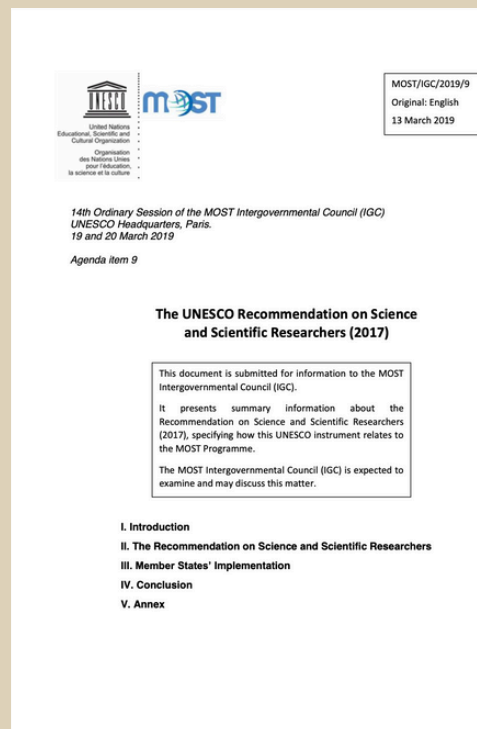
MAPPING SOCIAL HUMAN SCIENCES IN LAOS' HIGHER EDUCATION

Laos is not a well-known country to many Hong Kong residents. I did not know much about it when I started the mapping project. The task aimed to give our director and supervisor more knowledge about Laos. As Laos develops its education system, UNESCO wants to play a big role. Our research focuses on integrating Social Sciences into Laos's educational plan. We also look at education reforms in other ASEAN countries for reference.




REVIEWING LAOS' EDUCATIONAL ACTION PLAN

The Ministry of Education provided a 20-year plan for future science and technology development, which we reviewed to ensure alignment with UNESCO's mission. We sought to include key components such as promoting careers for women and girls in science, providing safe working conditions for scientists, fostering a culture of trust in science, and supporting science-led policymaking.



BUILDING DOCUMENTATION OF INTERDISCIPLINARY WORK



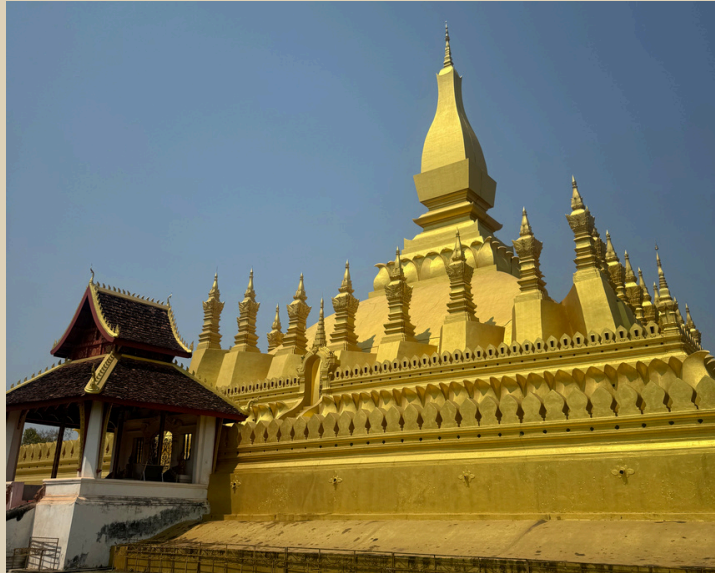
We showcase successful cases of work to challenge the idea that social and human sciences do not matter in societal development. We want to increase public understanding of these disciplines in shaping societies and addressing major changes. We will focus on interdisciplinary approaches that combine social and human sciences with other fields to explore complex issues and suggest alternatives. UNESCO aims to create a network within the social sciences and humanities community at the regional level to activate the research-policy connection. This documentation should lead to strong information exchanges among practitioners. We plan to create a podcast series to introduce various programs in Thai universities. This podcast will share best practices, lessons learned, and insights from experiences in social and human sciences.

INVOLVEMENT IN REGIONAL CONFERENCES



To address challenges related to AI in the region, the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok, with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), organized a regional experts meeting from November 7-9, 2023, in Bangkok, Thailand. This meeting, titled “Empowering Minds: A Round Table on Generative AI and Education in Asia-Pacific,” looked at the effects of generative AI on teacher training and development. It provided a platform to explore opportunities and risks of generative AI in education across the Asia-Pacific region. Co-organized with the Education sector, I learned how international conferences operate.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES



It has been interesting to learn about a new country and stay curious. I admit I did not know much about Laos at first, so I started with sketches when my supervisor asked me to enrich this project. I quickly learned to gather information online and build a database. I also took the chance to meet with professors from Laos' education sector to discuss relevant topics. This experience encouraged me to seek opportunities actively.

Being involved in this work deepened my understanding of this landlocked country. As a member of ASEAN and one of the least developed countries in the world, it is overwhelming to see their development and how international relations connect. My curiosity has inspired me to visit Laos and learn about its history and culture firsthand, especially its dynamics as a neighbor to China.



*The 7th Regional Network Meeting on Human Rights and Peace Education
Interface Meeting between Lecturers from ASEAN, China and Northeast Asia*

Since our sector wants to raise public awareness of social science importance, we organized a meeting with professors from Thai universities. Their insights helped me see the significance of our promotional efforts and addressed my doubts along the way. I heard stories about collaborations between social sciences and other fields and how they help projects grow. The importance of our sector's contributions is often underestimated, and their motivation to work together inspired me.

CHALLENGES

Working in an international organization means meeting staff and individuals from different cultures and ethnicities. Working attitudes and styles may vary, so it is important to adapt. From food preferences to working styles, these differences are interesting to navigate. Mutual respect and understanding are key to overcoming these challenges.



REFLECTION

This experience at an international organization has been fascinating and memorable for me. As a student of political studies, it made me think about how international organizations work, their roles, and responsibilities compared to other international NGOs. The work I have done in these six months has been amazing and provided me with a broad view of different countries. I know there is still much to learn.



A BIT OF FUN!

I am honored to be invited to a traditional Northern Thai wedding by my colleagues. Thailand has many ethnic minorities, and my colleague's bride is one of them. They held the wedding in Chiang Mai and generously offered us the chance to enjoy the celebration. I was able to wear the traditional "Lan Na" costume and experience the uniqueness of the culture through its food and performances.



The famous festival in Thailand, the Thai New Year, Songkran, also known as the "Water Splashing Festival," was a lot of fun for me to join. I had a great time with my colleagues and the joyful crowd.



THANKS FOR
EVERYTHING!