



Hyeon-Soo Jeon at the UNDP premises in Pristina, Kosovo (as per UN Security Council Resolution 1244).

Youth and volunteerism foster innovation for development

How can youth and volunteerism advance innovation and development processes? Learn from the experience of Hyeon-Soo, UN Youth Volunteer, serving with UNDP in Kosovo.

Hyeon-Soo Jeon, from South Korea, was interested in starting a career in international development, and just after graduation was selected for an international UN Youth Volunteer assignment, fully funded by the Republic of Korea, with the United Nations Development Programme in Kosovo (as per UN Security Council Resolution 1244).

“ The decision to become a UN Youth Volunteer was easy to make as I’ve always strongly believed that volunteerism is a significant and viable tool for young people to bring about positive change,

“determination and innovation to different processes in developing countries. A UN Youth Volunteer assignment was a perfect way to test my belief and see the power of volunteerism and youth in practice.” -- Hyeon-Soo, UN Youth Volunteer

During her assignment, Hyeon-Soo was tasked with finding effective solutions and innovative approaches to UNDP’s development processes but was involved in other initiatives as well.



Hyeon-Soo (second from left, top row) participating in ‘Unleash 2018 Innovation Lab’ as part of the talents that drafted solutions for SDG 11, Singapore 2018. (UNV, 2018)

As part of the innovation team, through a combined effort between UNDP and a local NGO called “Fondacioni Jeshil”, Hyeon-Soo facilitated a crowdfunding campaign to support an ecological method called Permaculture (derivation from the words permanent and

agriculture). The permaculture project aims to rectify human-made damage to the environment, developing ecological, efficient and productive systems that anyone can use and sustain in communities, households and/or families without damaging nature. Hyeon-Soo and the team ran a campaign that managed to secure 90 percent of the funds that were intended for the initiation of the project.



Hyeon-Soo (right) collecting survey data from a Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) community in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Kosovo (as per UN Security Council Resolution 1244). (UNV, 2017)

Hyeon-Soo's interest in ethnic minorities and their social inclusion also led her to get involved in the design and development of a survey targeting marginalized ethnic minorities of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (RAE) in Kosovo. With the help of two Roma consultants, she collected data on every aspect of RAE human development, such as basic rights, health, education, housing, employment and standards of living. This survey was the first major collection of data about the RAE community in Kosovo, and will help institutions, civil society and international organizations develop policies and design solutions for this community.

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“ When I came here, I hoped that I would have a nice working environment and the chance to grow professionally. From the very beginning, my supervisor guided me through everything and gave me regular feedback about my work, helping me to learn all the tricks on how to become more effective. But what I didn’t anticipate is how friendly and welcoming the local people are. They love to meet foreigners and make them feel like they’re part of the family.” -- Hyeon-Soo, UN Youth Volunteer

Hyeon-Soo graduated from Lund University in Sweden, majoring in international development and management. The deployment to Kosovo seemed like the perfect chance for her to be exposed to an international environment and a new culture. She has now been serving as a UN Youth Volunteer for almost a year and a half. Her UN Volunteer assignment in Kosovo has ignited a strong curiosity about the world, and a desire to work internationally helping those in need.

** All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).*

 Europe et CEI

• youth • innovation • UNDP • RAE community • permaculture • Kosovo • Korea • Republic of Korea

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure](#), [SDG 10: Reduced inequalities](#)