Promoting youth participation in volunteerism and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme brought together more than thirty UN Volunteers from 14 countries in the Asia-Pacific region in Beijing, China, ahead of International Volunteer Day (IVD) 2019, to share volunteer experiences. At the UN Youth Volunteer Leadership Workshop, they reflected on the role of volunteers in promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

While equipping youth volunteers with the necessary skills to help progress the implementation of SDGs, the workshop also encouraged participants to explore the interlinked contributions of volunteers in the context of the 2030 Agenda. This was done through knowledge sharing and leadership building.

Participants exchanged their understanding of volunteerism as UN Youth Volunteers through their respective practices and challenges in their specific country contexts. Various participatory sessions were facilitated to help nurture skills and knowledge relevant to working in an intercultural environment, as well as professional and leadership skills.
It was an unusual combination of a structured, fun-filled and outcome-oriented workshop. Taking part not only enabled me to articulate the unarticulated, but also helped me find purpose and clarity in why we do what do, during our assignments and in life at large. --Bishnu Chettri, UN Volunteer from Bhutan

The UN Youth Volunteer Leadership Workshop was held for the first time in Beijing within the framework of the Innovative Demonstration Project on Promoting Youth Participation in Sustainable Development and Building a Community with Shared Future for Mankind. This is a long-term partnership between the China Soong Ching Ling Foundation, China Soong Ching Ling Science & Culture Center (SCLSCC), United Nations Development Programme, UNV and the China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges.

UN Youth Volunteers and stakeholders at the UN Youth Volunteer Leadership Workshop convened in China. ©UNV, 2019

In addition to the training sessions, participants also attended modern and innovative infrastructure and systematic courses for youth learning in SCLSCC.

Meanwhile, during the half-day study tour to the Beijing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, participants learned about the traditional Chinese medicine theoretical knowledge, while gaining a basic understanding of the volunteer service model in the university.

The tour around the China SCLSCC was very impressive. It reminded me that there is no age limit to learning, and that education is such an important tool we should all value. --Rita Tamton, UN Volunteer from Fiji

Furthermore, the Beijing Volunteer Service Federation (BVF), SCLSCC and universities based in Beijing jointly held a symposium on sharing a comprehensive perspective of SDG implementation through volunteerism, in the context of International Volunteer Day.
The aim was to build a better platform for youth to participate in volunteering, and to guide and educate young people in terms of implementing the SDGs, promoting engagement in 'building a community of shared future for mankind'.

During an expert seminar on the Development of International Youth Volunteer Service Training and Exchange Base participants discussed the training of international youth for voluntary service.

Sustainable Development Goal: **SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals**