

Yuuka Iwamura, UN University Volunteer in Communications with the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Sri Lanka, delivers a presentation on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at a local school near Kandy city, as part of her advocacy work promoting the SDGs to local people. (UNV, 2017)

Contributing to peace and development while shaping their professional future as UN University Volunteers

Since 2013, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and the Kwansei Gakuin University (KGU) in Japan have mobilized over 70 university students selected from nine partner universities to serve as UN University Volunteers for five-month assignments with UN entities worldwide.


The KGU Programme enables youth to gain exposure to, and make an impact on, peace and sustainable development by working with UN partners and within communities in the field. These opportunities allow the university students to acquire enriching professional experience in international development and peace, helping them shape their future careers.

Yuuka Iwamura and Sae Nishioka, undergraduate students of Sophia University and Kwansei Gakuin University respectively, served as UN University Volunteer in Communications with the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Sri Lanka and as UN University Volunteer in Knowledge Management and Communications Support with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Barbados. They supported advocacy and public relations efforts in 2016-2017.

“ My assignment was not a piece of cake, but a lifetime experience. Personally, the added value of

“volunteerism was ‘tolerance’. I believe that volunteering is the way to serve the community with warmth and tolerance, in order to realize a better future for everyone.” -- Takuya Azegami, UN University Volunteer in Communications and Advocacy with UNDP in Uganda.

An undergraduate student of Toyo University in Japan, Takuya Azegami served as UN University Volunteer in Communications and Advocacy with UNDP in Uganda. Between October 2016 and March 2017, he assisted the communications efforts of the UN Communication Group by conducting online outreach through web and social media.

 *Takuya Azegami (right), UN University Volunteer in Communications and Advocacy with UNDP in Uganda, during a meeting with his supervisor. (UNV, 2017)*

Kwansei Gakuin University has been a partner of UNV since 2004. During that year, one of Japan's most prestigious private schools signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNV to implement a UN Student Volunteer Scheme, which deployed student volunteers for assignments of about five months. From 2004 to 2012, 68 student UN Volunteers from KGU were deployed to share their knowledge and to make a contribution to development, peace and education.

Since then, collaboration has intensified with the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding in 2013. Currently, nine universities are part of the United Nations University Volunteers Programme, led by the Kwansei Gakuin University: Kwansei Gakuin University, Osaka University, Akita International University, Sophia University, Tsukuba University, Toyo University, Meiji University, Meiji Gakuin University and Rikkyo University. The programme is supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Japan.

Japan has been a strategic partner for UNV since the mid-1990s, playing a leading role in promoting volunteering for peace and development in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) since 1997. The recognition of the importance of volunteering in the aftermath of the Kobe earthquake in 1995 and the death of the Japanese UN Volunteer Atsuhito Nakata in 1993 in Cambodia played a major role in Japan taking up this leadership role.

Kwansei Gakuin University (KGU) is one of the most prestigious private universities in Japan, dating back to 1889. KGU is an independent institution for higher education, offering Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral degrees in over 35 different disciplines. The university maintains academic standards that rank among the highest of all Japanese universities and colleges.



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