UN Volunteer assignment makes a great life experience

Natsumi Sawada, a fully funded UN Volunteer from Japan, was assigned at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Subregional Office for North and Central Asia (SONCA), in Almaty, Kazakhstan from September 2019 to February 2020. Her goal was to deepen her knowledge of socio-economic development in the North and Central Asian region and to learn about the work and culture of the UN.

During her assignment, Natsumi was able to meet experts from within and outside the UN system, as well as participate in networking events.

“This experience has helped me to achieve my goals.”
Now, at the end my assignment, I can say I understand the basics of how this huge international organization works. --Natsumi Sawada, UN Volunteer with ESCAP

The Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2020, to be officially launched on 7 April, was among the activities Natsumi was actively involved in. She contributed to the report by conducting research on government policies in North and Central Asia which helped her learn more about the regional cooperation and development efforts of countries in the region.

Natsumi also enjoyed working in a dynamic team and valued the experience of working with people from different cultures. "All co-workers were so kind and helpful, helping me out when I had a question or needed guidance," Natsumi shares. "I also managed to learn some Russian during my UNV assignment!"

While she might have been cautious of what to expect from a UNV assignment, Natsumi has undoubtedly gained invaluable experiences and made unforgettable memories during her time in Almaty.

I would highly recommend interested candidates to actively apply for volunteer assignments through the UNV Global Talent Pool. In a nutshell, I consider my tenure with the United Nations as a great life experience. --Natsumi Sawada

UN Volunteer Natsumi Sawada shared her experience with ESCAP in a video on social media.

Natsumi Sawada is a Bachelor's degree student at Kwansei Gakuin University (Nishinomiya-shi, Japan), majoring in humanities. Before joining the ESCAP Subregional Office in Almaty, she worked as a programming and robotics teacher and was actively volunteering in her community. She also completed a course on the history of the United Kingdom and Europe at
Oxford University and has studied abroad in the United States and Australia.

UN Volunteers in Kazakhstan during 2019, from Natsumi Sawada’s personal photo archive.

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