Minsun Kim, UN Youth Volunteer with UNDP in Kosovo (as per UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

Youth volunteering to kick-start a career in development

The dedication of young volunteers is helping developing countries achieve their goals at an ever-increasing rate. Hundreds of youth volunteers, worldwide, have supported programmes across UN agencies through the UN Volunteer (UNV) programme in Kosovo (as per UN SC 1244).

Minsun Kim was searching through the Republic of Korea Ministry of Foreign Affairs website when she stumbled upon an opportunity that well matched her qualifications and aspirations – serving as a UN Youth Volunteer in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Kosovo*. Her assignment was fully funded by the Republic of Korea.

Minsun found that her service as a UN Volunteer provided practical, real-world experience that complemented her Bachelor’s degree studies in International Relations at Durham University, as well as Master’s degree in Security Studies at University College London.

She was assigned to work with the Governance and Peacebuilding portfolio at the UNDP, mainly its security and governance pillars. During this time, Minsun helped to draft and
launch the Municipality Self-Assessment Report, developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Local Government Administration. The report was developed after thorough research on needs and priorities for municipal capacity development in Kosovo*.

"Importantly, the purpose of my research was to assess perceived shortcomings of municipalities, create a baseline, and help identify appropriate evidence-based interventions that would help municipalities exercise their mandate. --Minsun Kim, UN Youth Volunteer with UNDP, Kosovo*

While doing the research and drafting the report, Minsun received detailed feedback from her supervisor and together they used the findings to create recommendations for municipalities.

"We drafted the Municipality Self-Assessment Report from the information we received from over 1300 respondents that consisted of Directors of Directorates, municipal officials, and Assembly members," Minsun shares. "Findings indicate that the municipal officials consider that the main challenges include limited capacity and lack of enforcement of laws, regulations, policies, and procedures that form the basis for the functioning of local governance. Lastly, my supervisor and I recommended certain steps for municipalities to follow to strengthen their capacities to properly exercise their mandate."

Minsun Kim, first from left, at the launching event for Combating Cyber Security Project, at Norwegian Residence in Kosovo, February 2019. ©UNV, 2020

Another initiative that sparked Minsun’s interest and that she was directly involved with was the Social Cohesion Report. This report compiles findings of facilitated workshops, capturing elements of social cohesion in Kosovo. At the workshops, experts, practitioners, civil servants, Civil Society Organization representatives, and members of the public came together to identify strengths and weaknesses regarding trust, interdependence, economic exchange, and interpersonal interactions. Minsun not only organized the workshops, but she also added secondary research and literature analysis to finalize the report.

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To be honest, at the beginning my assignment was challenging. I struggled with the cultural difference from the places I had lived in previously. But as time passed, I realized that people are very supportive, and appreciated that. --Minsun Kim

*References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

- Republic of Korea • Full Funding

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions, SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals