



UN Youth Volunteers assigned in Asia and the Pacific, the Arab States and Africa at the Assignment Preparation Training in Bangkok, Thailand.

## Learning with peer UN Youth Volunteers from different countries and with distinct experiences

Thirty-five UN Youth Volunteers who are assigned in Asia and the Pacific, the Arab States and Africa came together in Bangkok, Thailand, from 26-29 March 2018, for a training specially organized for the UN Youth Volunteers. The Assignment Preparation Training serves as a rare opportunity for UN Youth Volunteers to have a face-to-face interaction with peers assigned in different countries, whilst developing their leadership, communication and intercultural skills.

At the training held in Bangkok, the young women and men came from their duty stations in Iraq, Jordan, Nepal, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey. Almost 90 per cent of them are working in their countries of nationality, and for some of them, this was the first opportunity to travel outside of their countries. The participants are also working in various UN agencies, such as UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, and WFP, with different areas of responsibilities, from field monitoring, research, engineering, communications and to data analysis.

“ What was useful about the training is its practicality. The ways and techniques implemented were really effective and made me feel more responsible and opened up my mind to new things that I need to improve over the next years of my life. --reflections of one of the participants.

Another participants raised, "Learning new useful things from trainers and participants [who] were from diverse countries with diversity in culture and beliefs and viewpoints," as the most useful learning of the training.

A participatory approach was used throughout the training to encourage participants to share their diverse background and experiences in different UN agencies, while also fostering a global network of peers.

One of the criteria for becoming a UN Youth Volunteer is to be below 29 years old, and thus becoming a UN Youth Volunteer is often the first experience for young women and men to work in the UN system. Many tools to help them navigate themselves in the cross-cultural working environment and identify how the volunteer experience can facilitate their personal and professional development were provided through case studies and role-plays.

“ I am at the beginning of my assignment and the APT equipped me with tools for communication and how to deal with confrontation, which I usually try to avoid. --reflections of one of the participants



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*UN Youth Volunteer participants in the Assignment Preparation Training, together with UNV staff from the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. (UNV, 2018)*

Current and former UN Volunteers in UNDP, UN Women, and UNV came to share what they value about volunteering in the UN system. UNV Deputy Executive Coordinator Toily Kurbanov, who was visiting Bangkok to attend the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, also joined to answer questions from the participants about his personal motivation of volunteering and career building in the UN.

The participants returned to their duty stations with a deeper understanding of the role of UN Youth Volunteers in the UN's approaches to peace and development and a strong network of peer-youth, which will be an irreplaceable asset in their volunteering journey and their career.

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