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A grateful lesson and a growing up journey

I still remember the time when I received the email from UN saying that I was selected, I was so excited and could not believe my dream come true. Looking backward, this half year was the time that I grow up fastest and the decision of being an UNV was one of the most correct and bravest decision that I ever made.

First coming to Laos

Laos is a beautiful country with kind people. Since not much information about Laos available from the internet, it was a mystery before I came. And I was quite nervous before the trip since it was the first time that I lived in an unfamiliar country for half a year. But my fears were all for naught. UNV PO gave us warmest welcome when we first arrived in Vientiane. She led us to find our accommodation, rent the bicycle, buy the telephone card and introduction us to our host agent colleagues. Also, for the first day I went to WFP office, our HR have already arranged two-day briefing for me to better understand WFP framework and know our colleagues one by one. This really helped me get familiar with my working environment and get to know my colleagues.



Photo: Welcoming dinner for all of our HK UNV

About work

Before I felt a little bit nervous when talking in front of large group of people especially when sharing my opinion, I was afraid of giving the wrong ideas and being laughed by others or thinking that my ideas are nothing. But taking my colleagues as really great examples, I now have more courage to speak and share. And also, I knew more about how to work in a multicultural environment, everyone and every word is being respected. I understood more about the WFP framework and especially VAM (Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping, the unit that I was working in)'s work.

Since my first supervisor received the offer for his second Mater degree, he left in September and thus I had my second supervisor. Both of them are Laotian and really nice to me. They always gave me right amount of work each day, taught me new knowledge if I didn't know and praised me every time I finished the task. My assignment is related to market analysis, so I need to use SPSS for my analysis. But I didn't know how to use this software before I came to work. Luckily my supervisor was so patient and taught me everything about it, and I also used my spare time to learn. Therefore, I could catch up of the work after one week. I felt so grateful to have the

chance to work under them during the six months.



Photo: Both of my supervisors and me in front of our office

And my biggest achievement would be about Community Capacity Assessment, the project that I was following during this six months. Phase one is finalized and after analyzing the data, ten districts are selected for building capacity for handing over in 2019. I learned more about how to analyze data and how to communicate with people during work.

About colleagues

My colleagues are super nice to me also. Because our office didn't have a canteen, all of us need to go nearby restaurants for lunch. As a new comer, I was quite shy actually and was always waiting for others inviting me for lunch. But my colleagues never forgot me and regarded me as a part of team. They introduced the food and culture during lunch and cared about my feelings. I was motivated and became more proactive.

On my last working day, my colleagues held a farewell party for me which was really touching. Our head of programme praise my hard work and all my colleagues gave me big hugs. Since Lao is a Buddhist country, one of my local colleagues handed me a bracelet which she asked for me from the monk in the temple. And she told me that it represented good wishes and safety all the way back home. Despite that, some of my seniors told me that they really hope I could stay longer and it was so sad that I am leaving. At that time, I could not hold my tears...I was so lucky to be a part of WFP and UNV in Lao PDR and I really learned a lot from each of my colleagues and friends. I am so grateful for learning knowledge, challenging myself and making many new friends here. Even though my assignment ended but my story is still going on.



Photo: me and my colleagues on my last day

About friendship

Thanks to other three Hong Kong UNVs, Shu, Kara and Timothy, so that I didn't feel lonely since beginning. We four were backup for each other and provided support when needed. Also, we met so many interesting and kind-hearted friends who generously provided us help but never ask for payback. Tony was one of them. He was a Hong Kong business man worked in Lao for a long time. He always showed us around when

we had time and introduced new friends to us. And also Jama, Pei, Marie...When I thought of these names, our stories all flashed back. It was still like a dream to work in Lao for six months, but it is the sweetest.

I can feel my inner change after assignment finished. I become braver, much more confident about myself and determine my career way. Thanks for all the things that I ever met during this six months and I will continue chasing my dream with determination.