



# Serving & Learning in Sri Lanka

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## Challenging but Rewarding – Managing a Youth Training Project

My main role at UNV was to initiate a training-of-trainers programme targeted at youth, equipping them with skills and passion to transfer knowledge in their community. The programme focused on promoting volunteering actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I took up the role as a trainer and organized an SDG training workshop, as well as developing a Toolkit for Trainers in order to prepare them in terms of both knowledge and facilitation skills.

I am pleased to see that the group of young trainers were self-motivated to spread messages that I strongly believe in so that more people can get involved in volunteering. I am also glad that I had this precious chance of interacting with local young people. Through their active discussions on hot issues, I became more aware of the social conditions in Sri Lanka and subsequently reflected on what can be done in response to the wide array of problems.





## Positioning Myself in the Workplace – Relooking at my Role & Impacts

As a university volunteer, sometimes I might feel inferior when compared to other volunteers or staff members. But the fact that my training-of-trainers programme was targeted at university students has given me an advantage because I could easily step into their shoes and decide whether a particular training method would be effective, so that I could be more audience-oriented when I went on to prepare the training workshop and Toolkit for Trainers. Since my training programme emphasized on volunteering to achieve the SDGs, my role as a volunteer was thought to have had a positive impact on running the programme, influencing young people to commit to volunteerism.



## Unforgettable Experience – Being Inspired by the Local Community

As a celebration of the International Volunteer Day, I participated in a UNV tree-planting programme held in the North Western Province of Sri Lanka. Drought has hit repeatedly which has made farming impossible. Life is hard but that does not destroy hope. From kids to elderly, villagers were mobilized to plant trees that can survive in dry zones. I really appreciate this opportunity to get in touch with the rural community, witnessing how they all got involved and the unity that their actions have shown.



## Stepping Into a New Field – Involving in Design & Communication

In the later stage of my assignment, I was also involved in communications, responsible for drafting infographic content and posts for social media coverage as well as responding to public enquiries online. I also designed a factsheet recording the figures of UNV Sri Lanka for government's consumption and produced a webpage design for an online application page for local volunteering opportunities called V-Force.



## Going Further – Acquiring Extra Knowledge

Apart from fulfilling my duties at work, I also acquired extra knowledge with the use of online learning platforms offered by the UN, I completed three online courses, of which a course about global health and humanitarianism was a learning opportunity that I am particularly grateful for having, as the topic features a good connection between my academic discipline in healthcare and my volunteer position in the development sector.

## From Cultural Awareness to Competence – Shaping my Future

Working in a multi-cultural environment - even for Sri Lankan nationals there are two ethnic groups which have different cultural backgrounds - I constantly noticed the way colleagues from various origins interact and communicate, and learnt to enhance my interpersonal skills according to my day-to-day observations. This six-month experience has been rewarding as I have slowly evolved from being culturally aware to becoming culturally competent, which is a life-long quality that I can apply to future engagements.





## Aside From Work – Living & Leading my Life

The UNV assignment has enabled me to achieve a 50-50 work-life balance which is rare in Hong Kong. Although sometimes I had to work slightly overtime, most of the time I was able to use my leisure time to enrich my experience in Sri Lanka, such as attending external youth-related events and going to cultural exhibitions. I also made many new friends from around the globe and had a nice time doing sports and hanging out together. More importantly, this overseas volunteering experience has given me a chance to practically lead my own life in all aspects from house-hunting to fighting sickness, and therefore has shaped me into a more independent person with the ability to handle different matters in life.

