

Volunteer name: Poon Ka Yuet Kerry
University and major: Bachelor of Law, City University of Hong Kong
School year: Year 2
Duty station: Nepal
Assignment title: Knowledge management and communication associate

<UN university volunteer program post assignment report>

Part I: My duties



I am a knowledge management and communication associate in the WFP Nepal family. During my work duration, the KM department is embarking on a newly launched project, namely the WFP Nepal SharePoint site. As a member of the KM team, my job is to hold meetings with the focal points from different departments, gather their requirements and feedbacks on the SharePoint test site, and translate them into documentation so that the IT department can implement them. It's quite a lot of readings to do even for a law student like me.

Figure 1: Kerry in front of the main gate of Nepal WFP office in Pulchowk, Kathmandu

I held meetings to all the focal points from different departments and give presentations on this brand-new proposal. It was at first scary since all the people listening down stage are professionals who are already seniors regarding working in the international organizations, while I am just a greenhand. However, all of them gave me encouragement and kind words. One of my colleague, also my friend, Nafisha, came to me after my presentation, "you nailed it girl." It was a good illustration of how WFP Nepal, as a big, united family, has always been warm and supportive.



Figure 2: When I am giving presentation to initiate the new SharePoint site project to the focal points.

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I also re-organized and integrated the success stories from different departments to form the documentations that we need to provide to our donors quarterly. During the research conducting process, I have learnt a lot on how WFP is making real impact to the society we are living in.

For one example, the CAFS project WFP has been implemented in Karnali. The first benefit that the CAFS Karnali project is bringing to the region is economic advantages. In Larimi Village, the CAFS Karnali program allows a significant lift irrigation scheme to be implemented. Water unavailability for irrigation used to be the major problem in Lihi and Larimi villages of Tila RM, Jumla. Farmers there pray to The God Of Rain, Lord Mahadev every day for their crops. But after the CAFS Karnali project, *lord Mahadev* is no longer the only one they can depends on.

Figure 3:When I am working in the beautiful rooftop of our office

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Part II: Learning experience.

I have equipped myself with loads of skills after this program. Among them all, what benefitted me the most is how to handle cross cultural conflicts. Nepal is a fairly slow country; people are humble and patient. But as a local Hong Konger, I am more used to a fast-paced society which everyone values efficiency. I will be lying if I say there has never been any time when I felt worried and anxious for the procrastinated work schedule. However, my supervisor has encouraged me to take the initiative and be proactive. It helped me realize that I can be the one who pushes the working progress forward if I want to see something get done in short time.



Figure 4: The monthly UNV meeting where we get to meet other UNVs from other



Being a student for 14

years, it is understandable that we may not have such clear insight of what does the word professional entails. But the staff from WFP and from UNV clearly show me the spirit of professionalism. The issue of famine is severe in Nepal and all staff members of WFP are committed to combat hunger and reach the sustainable development goal number 2, Zero hunger. Everyone is devoted into what they are doing and every morning when you are greeted by a casual “good morning” you will feel empowered by the energy of your co-workers. Despite every individuals being occupied all the time, they are still happy to help out whenever you are in need. The collaborative atmosphere has surely stimulated me to be more open and transparent, therefore starting to feel like being a part of the group.

Figure 5: The New Year momo party where everyone in the office has a half-day day off and celebrate the Nepalese New Year of 2080

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Part III: Challenges encountered

I was sick for several times in Nepal. Once, I have contracted Covid-19 with serious symptoms and was sent to the hospital for 2 weeks. It was not easy to stay in the hospital all alone in a country other than your home. However, the UNV coordinator, Bisam came to visit me regularly and brought me food and books, so that I could have some entertainment when I was quarantining. The UNV groups is surely giving love, empathy, and sensitivity to me when I needed the most.

The feeling of being all alone is something worth mentioning as well. My supervisor is a British woman, she once told me, she went to Nepal when she was 19 (the same age as me), but now, 15 years later, she is still struggling with the issue of feeling homesick.



Figure 6: Smriti, daughter of my colleague Ram, invited me to their home to have a family gathering and enjoyed dinner with them.



Figure 7: With my colleagues to Namu Buddha

Luckily, all my colleagues are very welcome, and they introduced more local friends to me. One of my colleagues, Ram, has let his daughter, Smriti to take me around the city and invite me to a family gathering. Another time, me, Smriti and Smriti's friend went to have pani-puri in a local restaurant. My other friend, Kamala also took me to a one-day trekking route to Namu Buddha, where the view is breath-taking.

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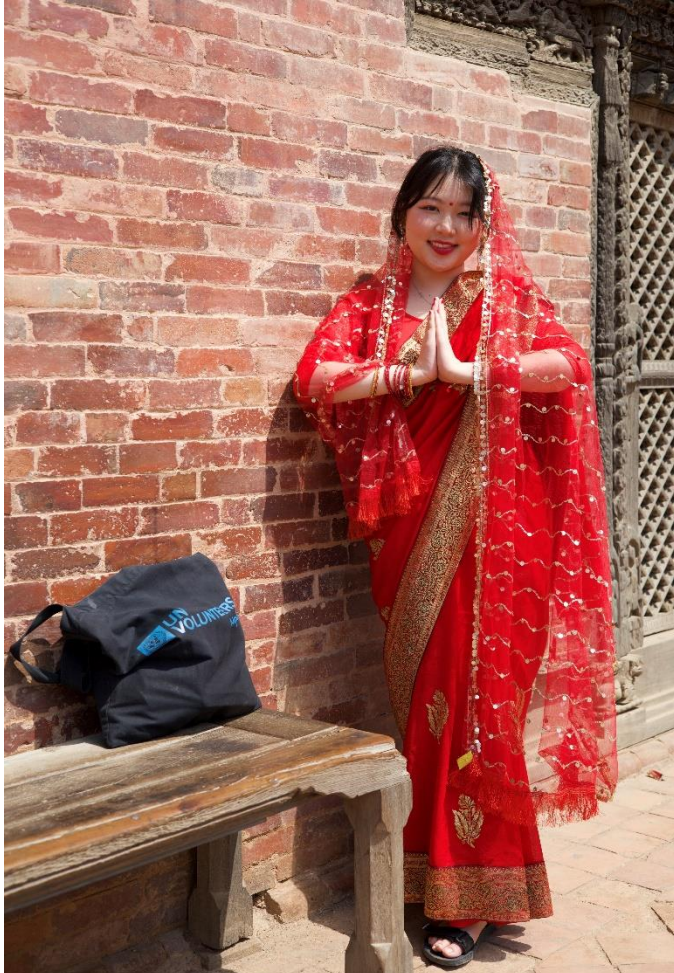


The feeling of being lost in the office is also one of the major issues that I have encountered. Since everyone in the office is very busy with their own deadlines and projects, if you don't reach out to your supervisor proactively, it is hard for your supervisor to keep up with your current progress and hence deliver you with the following up tasks. There were sometimes when I felt like being left out and didn't know what I was doing every time I headed back to office. But the head of HR, Mala consulted me a lot and a truly inspirational lesson is taught, "you must find your own directions." "Talk to your supervisor about what you want to learn and achieve in this 6-month journey, and everyone is willing to clarify your confusion and leverage you." This is exactly one of the core UN values, that is, success means nothing, unless we share it.

Figure 8: When we are having New Year feast with our supervisors.

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Part IV: Reflections



It was a once-in-a-life-time opportunity for me to immerse myself in an office environment with so much diversity. The memory will be embedded in my mind and soul and keep along with me through other obstacles I will be encountering in the future of my life. All the experience will remind me of how unlimitable a person's potential can be, as much as you wish, as much as your strength. There is no limitation unless you set one for yourself. I hope that many years later, I can continue to be as optimistic and courageous as I was in that one-way airplane on the 10th March, ready to set off to Nepal.

Figure 9: Me in a sari, a traditional South Asian dress for women