



DIPLOMACY TRAINING PROGRAM

AFFILIATED WITH THE FACULTY OF LAW & JUSTICE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
A training program for peoples of the Asia-Pacific region

30th Annual Regional Human Rights and Peoples Diplomacy Training Program 12 Month Feedback Report

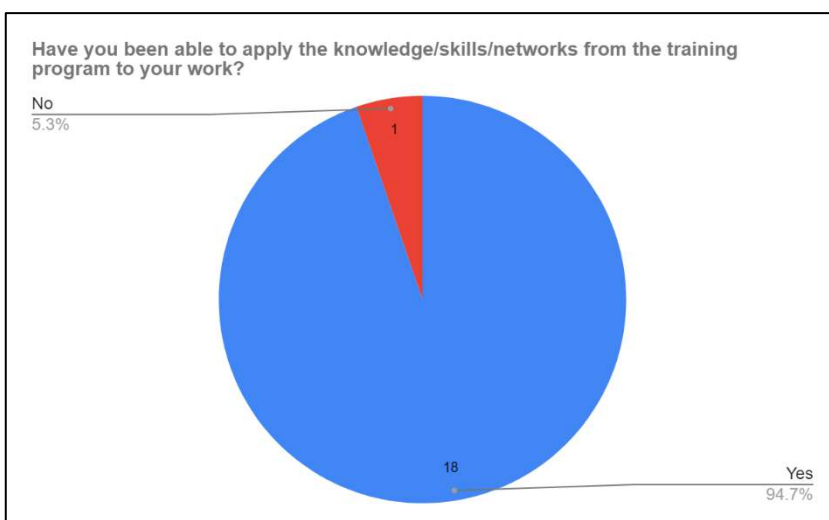
1. Introduction

The Diplomacy Training Program's (DTP) 30th Annual Human Rights and Peoples' Diplomacy Training for Human Rights Defenders in the Asia-Pacific was held in Bangkok, Thailand from 26 January to 3 February 2023, in partnership with Mahidol University, FORUM-ASIA, PIANGO, MFA, AIPP, HRDF, SHAPE-SEA. Twenty-nine human rights defenders participated in this program and came from 13 different countries. The participants work on a range of human rights concerns, including rights of migrant workers, women and children, LGBTIQ+, gender justice, trafficking, Indigenous peoples rights, peace-building, and struggles for self-determination, youth, environmental issues and climate change, and human rights education.

This program began with a focus on the 75th Anniversary of the UDHR, and the international rights standards and mechanisms developed to promote and protect human rights over the last 75 years. There was also a special session reflecting on the achievements of Asia civil society mobilisation that resulted in the adoption of the influential 1993 Bangkok NGO Declaration on Human Rights. Other issues explored in this training include the rights of women, human rights and business, migrant workers and Indigenous peoples rights. There was a strong focus on practical advocacy strategies, in which skills were developed through practical exercises such as developing a short video and group role-play.

About a year after this two-week program, a follow-up survey was sent out to the participants to discover further reflections on the program and how the training has impacted their advocacy work. 66% of the participants responded to this survey. This report will summarise the nineteen responses of that survey and will describe advocacy activities participants have been involved in since the program concluded, examples of collaboration founded from connections made during the program, and suggestions to make following programs and alumni communication even better.

2. Activities and Advocacy after the Program



Eighteen out of nineteen participants agreed that they were able to apply knowledge from the training to their work. This is seen in the chart to the left. Fifteen people responded to a question regarding specific details of their advocacy. All of the agreed that the skills they have gained during the program has benefited their advocacy work.

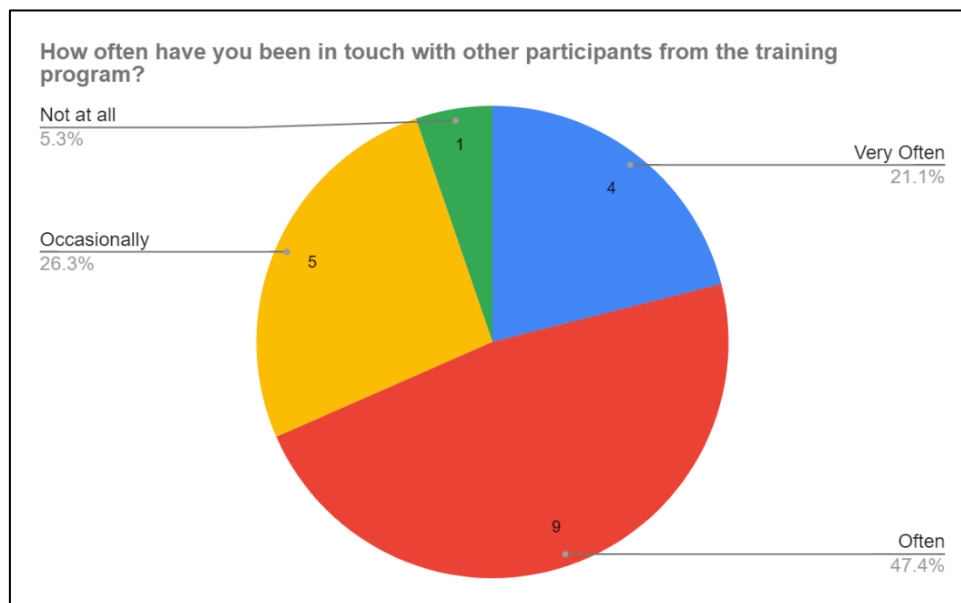
Participants' advocacy efforts include the organising of workshops on Indigenous rights, migrant workers' rights, gender based violence, and climate justice. Participants were also involved in networking with stakeholders to address social justice, educational rights, and environmental sustainability. Some participants were even able to connect with local government representatives and bring them into workshops.

One participant is quoted:

“Since the DTP program, as the Asia Pacific Coordinator for IMCS Pax Romana, I've led advocacy activities focusing on human rights, including the rights of Indigenous peoples. This involved organizing workshops on Indigenous rights, collaborating with NGOs for community projects and implementing capacity-building programs for Indigenous students. I've also networked with stakeholders to address educational rights, environmental sustainability, social justice, and Indigenous peoples' rights, leveraging skills and connections from the DTP training.”

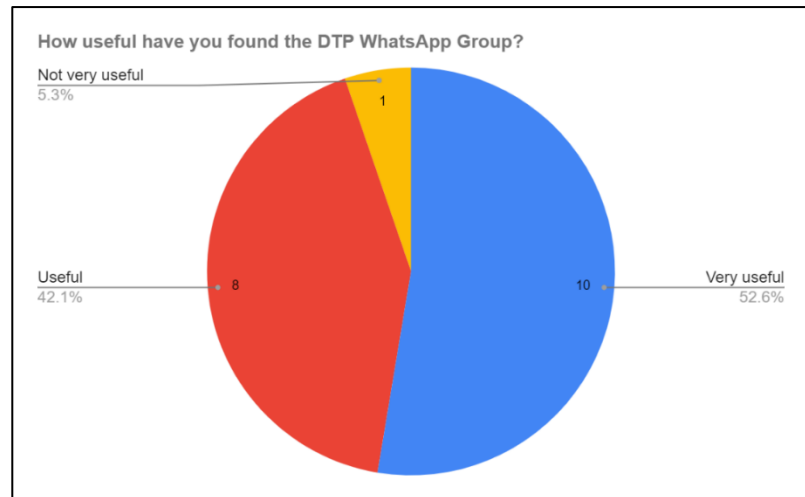
3. Continuing Collaboration with Other Participants

When asked about examples of support or collaboration that has resulted from being in touch with other participants, fourteen participants said that they have kept in touch with fellow members of the training and have created collaborations. Thirteen participants said that they have kept in touch with fellow participants either often or very often, as seen below.



Many of the participants who responded agreed that they kept in contact with at least one person from the program. Forms of collaboration include giving statements on human rights issues to one another, sharing forms of funding with others, and providing updates on certain human rights movements. Secondly, many participants found not only colleagues with similar interests, but also friends who support each other in their personal lives. One participant mentioned the value of having a friend who is also interested in human rights on the improvement of their work.

Another part of keeping in contact with other participants is a WhatsApp Group made for the program. Eighteen of the nineteen people found the WhatsApp Group to be useful or very useful, as seen in the chart to the right. The WhatsApp Group has provided an outlet for participants to share important news, opportunities, events, and updates to each other. One participant said,



“The WhatsApp Group proves to be valuable as it serves as a platform for sharing updates about what's happening in each participant's country. Additionally, it facilitates the dissemination of E-news. In the event of collaborations with other organizations, the group allows for seamless communication, ensuring that each member is promptly informed.”

Some participants gave feedback as to how to make the WhatsApp Group more useful and effective. One participant asked for more structured discussions to be introduced to encourage more active participation from the members and foster a more dynamic exchange of ideas. Two other participants suggested having more scheduled meetings to increase collaboration. Another participant asked for a larger alumni group to be created to work congruently to the program WhatsApp Group. Finally, one participant brought attention to the safety of WhatsApp due to scams.

4. Suggestions for Improvement

First, participants were asked for feedback as to how to make the program more useful. While nine people were fully satisfied, other participants provided constructive feedback for future programs. Some participants suggested additional case studies and real-life examples would be beneficial and would allow for deeper insights into human rights advocacy. Basing an approach on real life examples would allow for more interaction for the participants and create a more collaborative environment. Other participants suggested an assessment on the balance of topics that are discussed in the program. Finally, another participant requested that a change in duration, as they felt that the resource persons involved could have taken more time on their topics to make each presentation clear for the participants. With a longer program, participants would be able to dig deeper into the content.

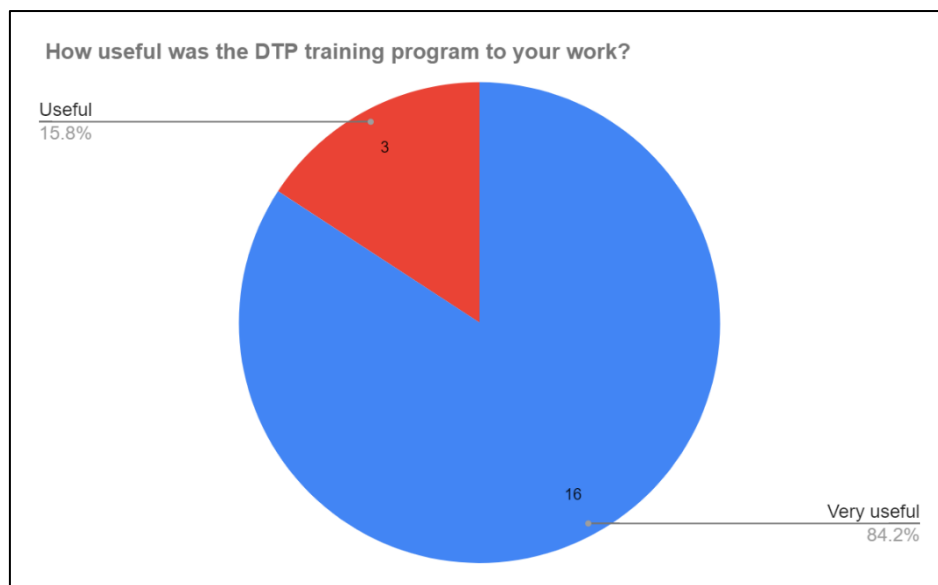
Secondly, participants would like more follow-up and interaction after the program ends. Multiple participants mentioned having scheduled meetings as a group after the program ends to stay in touch with other participants. Structuring more opportunities to connect after the program has ended would be beneficial for collaboration. It would also be valuable to schedule more opportunities for DTP to follow up with participants and support their needs.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, participants of the 30th Annual Training Program in Bangkok, Thailand benefited from the training and learned skills that are useful to their future endeavours. As seen below, nineteen participants found that the insights and knowledge gained throughout the program are applicable to their advocacy work, especially regarding UN mechanisms. The skills developed from the program

have also allowed for organising involving local governments in various human rights areas. Networking is also a vital part of the program, as many participants connected with one another and have found friendships that support their advocacy. The program has also created an environment that promotes collaboration across countries. Multiple participants mentioned that they have shared funding opportunities with the people they have met through the program. The WhatsApp Group also plays a role in collaboration, as participants will share information, updates, and opportunities even after the program has ended. Fostering active participation and structuring discussion within the group would be make the WhatsApp Group even more successful. However, it is important to note that one participant shared concerns about the safety of WhatsApp.

To make this program even more successful, it would be beneficial to expand the training by connecting the content with real-life examples, current events, and case studies. This expansion would also make the program more interactive and collaborative. One participant suggested making the program longer, as it would give speakers more time to present and participants more time to absorb the information. Finally, some participants suggested a more structured follow-up approach to continue developing a relationship with the program participants and DTP. One participant recommended some form of communication for all alumni to expand networking opportunities and connect others who have experienced DTP programs. While the program was overall successful and beneficial to the participants, this follow-up survey has provided crucial constructive feedback to improve upon future programs.



Finally, one participant summarised their findings after the program by saying:

“I would like to express my gratitude for the invaluable experiences and insights gained from the DTP program. These have significantly enhanced my role at IMCS Pax Romana, especially in advocating for human rights, social justice, and Indigenous peoples' rights. The program has not only enhanced my professional skills but also expanded my perspectives on human rights advocacy. I look forward to continuing to apply these learnings in my role and contributing further to the field. Additionally, I'm keen on exploring collaborative opportunities with fellow alumni and the DTP network to strengthen our collective impact on human rights issues globally.”