



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

31st Annual Regional Human Rights and Peoples Diplomacy Training Program 6 Month Feedback Report

1. Introduction

The Diplomacy Training Program's (DTP) 31st Annual Human Rights and Peoples' Diplomacy Training for Human Rights Defenders in the Asia-Pacific was held in Timor-Leste from August 21 to September 1, 2023. DTP partnered with FORUM-ASIA, PIANGO, MFA, AIPP, JSMP, and UNTL-HRC. Twenty-four human rights defenders from ten different countries participated in this two-week program. These participants focus on human rights in a range of areas such as rights of migrant workers, women and children, LGBTIQ+, gender justice, the rights of persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples rights, peace-building, and struggles for self-determination, the environment, and climate change.

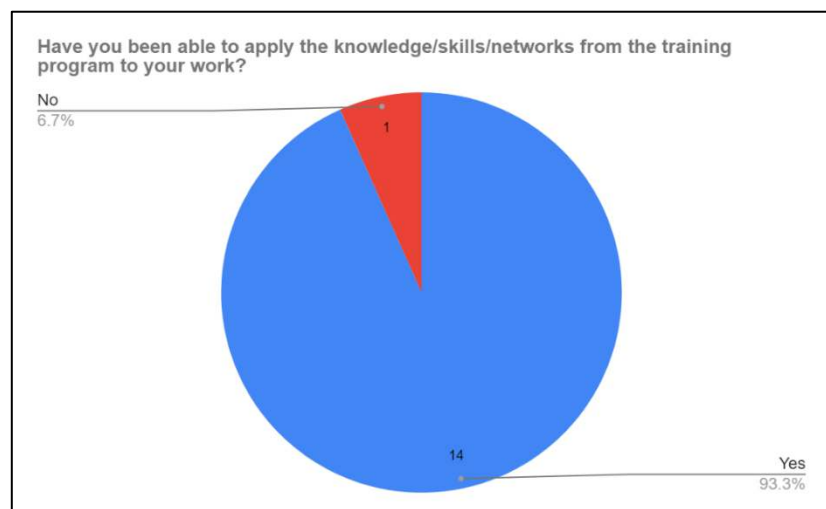
This program began with a focus on the 75th Anniversary of the UDHR, and the international rights standards and mechanisms developed to promote and protect human rights over the last 75 years. It also looked at the struggle for democracy in Myanmar and Timor-Leste, with a stress on the importance of solidarity across the region. The program focuses on the rights of women, human rights and business, LGBTIQ+, migrant workers, Indigenous peoples' rights, child rights, and the rights of persons with disabilities. Participants built skills in advocacy by activities such as creating a short video, group role-plays, and other exercises to engage with the UN Human Rights System.

About six months after this two-week program, a follow-up survey was sent to the participants to discover further reflections on the program and how the training has influenced their advocacy work. 63% of the participants responded to this survey. This report will summarise the fifteen 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

Fourteen out of fifteen respondents agreed that they were able to apply knowledge from the training to their work. This is seen in the chart below. Fourteen people responded to a question regarding more specific details of their advocacy. All of them agreed that the skills they have gained during the program has benefited their advocacy work.

Participants' advocacy efforts include speaking up for the rights of Indigenous youth at the International Indigenous Youth Conference, negotiating with power holders on environmental issues, and connecting advocacy efforts with local communities on topics such as land rights.

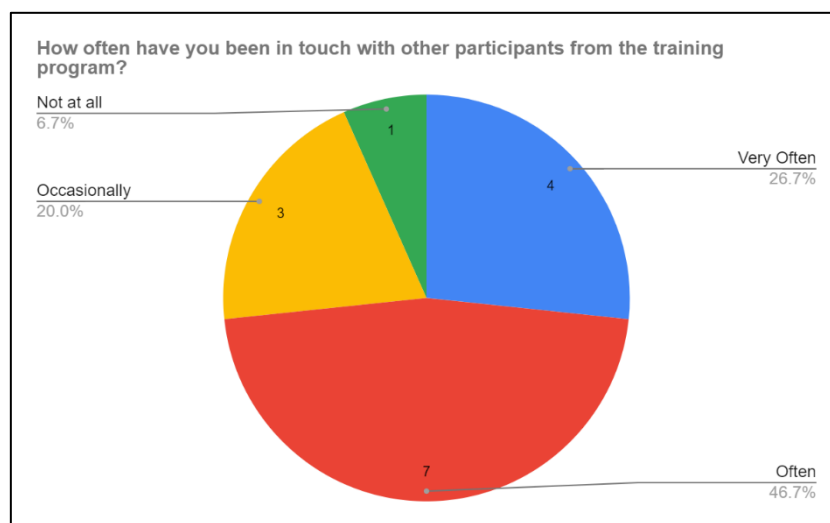


One participant is quoted:

"I applied this knowledge to the Migrant Leader program, which aims to educate migrant workers about human and labor rights. In addition to general teaching, I included diplomacy. This includes designing the training format to be similar to DTP in order to encourage as much participation as possible from participants. For me, it's a success. Because the workers provide excellent feedback. This motivated him to continue using his knowledge to help his friends."

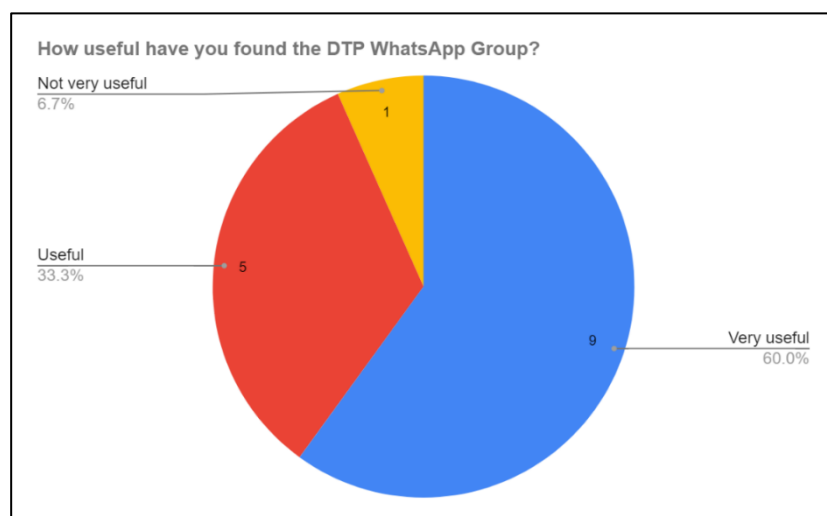
3. Continuing Collaboration with Other Participants

When asked about examples of support or collaboration that has resulted from being in touch with other participants, twelve participants said that they have kept in touch with fellow members of the training and have created collaborations. Eleven 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 organising programs such as the IMCS Continued Learning and Action Program Workshop on Abuse - Children and Young People, which brought together 55 young people as activists from all around Asia. Many participants have had multiple international opportunities after completing the program and continue to share information about advocacy work and programming in various countries.

Another part of keeping in contact with other participants is a WhatsApp Group made for the program. Fourteen of fifteen 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.



Some participants gave feedback as to how to make the WhatsApp Group more effective. One participant asked for participants who share information in the Group chat to give more detailed information. Another participant suggested having scheduled virtual meetings that work alongside the WhatsApp Group in order to foster more collaboration and participation between members. Similarly, a 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 four 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 trainings that are more heavily focused on specific topics such as the international law of women's rights and the intersection of media, campaigns, and human rights.

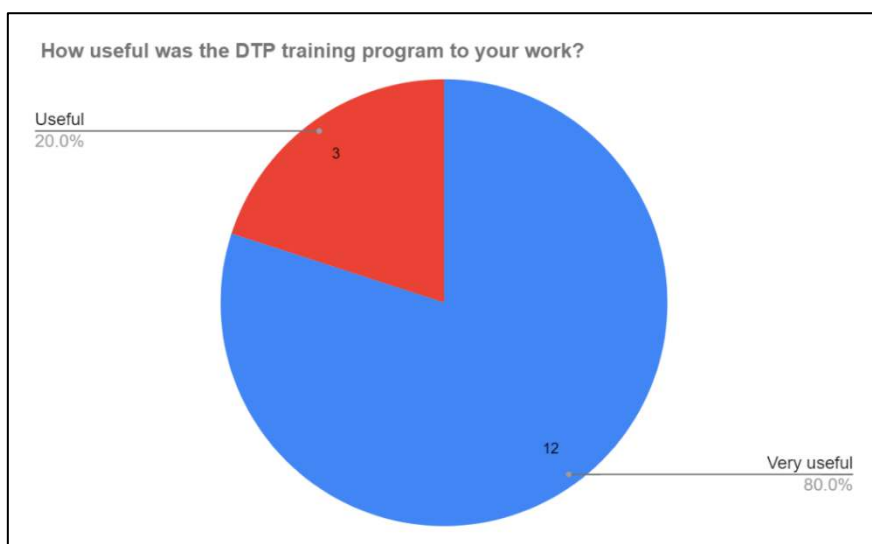
However, multiple participants shared how useful they have found the training that focused on the UN and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. One participant commented:

"The lessons and practical activities provided in the program have greatly enhanced my understanding of international human rights laws and the mechanisms established by the United Nations. The internal organization and procedures of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were thoroughly explored, shedding light on their crucial roles in protecting human rights... This experience has not only deepened my knowledge but has also equipped me with practical tools to contribute meaningfully to the promotion and protection of human rights. I am grateful for the opportunities afforded by this program and look forward to continuing my engagement in the field."

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. Similarly, participants have asked for the development of a larger network of alumni perhaps through another WhatsApp Group. The expansion of alumni networks for all alumni, not just 2023 alumni, would allow the fostering of collaboration through DTP.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, participants of the 31st Annual Training Program in Timor-Leste benefited from the training and learned skills that are useful to their future endeavours. It was 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 communities 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. The WhatsApp Group also plays a role in collaboration, as participants will share information, updates, and opportunities even after the program has ended. These results can be seen in the chart below, as all fifteen respondents found the DTP training useful or very useful to their work.



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. Some participants suggested adding more specific topics such as intentional law for women’s rights and the convergence of media, campaigns, and human rights to the trainings. Finally, some participants suggested a more structured follow-up approach to continue developing a relationship with the program participants and DTP. Multiple participants recommended some form of communication for all alumni to expand networking opportunities and connect others who have experienced DTP programs. Fostering active participation and structuring discussion within the group would be make the program’s WhatsApp Group even more collaborative. It is important to note that one participant shared concerns about the safety of WhatsApp. 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 summarized their findings after the program by saying:

“I’d like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the entire DTP team for your unwavering dedication, tireless efforts, and outstanding teamwork. Your dedication to excellence has not gone unnoticed, and I am deeply grateful for each team member’s valuable contributions. Thank you for your hard work and for creating an environment that promotes growth and achievement.”