

JPO & SARC story: working towards achieving the SDGs.



Shinobu Sasaki, a current Japanese funded JPO. Shinobu currently works with UNDP at the UN Headquarter in New York as a Gender and Diversity Analyst. Here, she shares her JPO experience.

Background

I was brought up in a liberal family and taught that it is a good thing to be ambitious and to believe in possibilities. Family values led me to become a feminist. After completing my doctoral studies, I obtained a job working on inclusive education for children with disabilities at an international NGO.

Motivation for becoming a JPO and SARC

When I was doing my Ph.D in Gender Studies, I had the opportunity to undertake a three-month internship with UNDP's Asia-Pacific Regional Centre in Thailand, and this experience confirmed my desire to be part of the UN mission.

I currently work as a Gender and Diversity Analyst, with a core focus on gender parity by nurturing women's leadership inside the organisation and by raising an awareness of LGBTI colleagues as well as on the inclusion of persons with disability in the workplace. UNDP strives to create an inclusive organisational culture and the agenda on diversity and inclusion is very important to us.

Additionally, I worked on the UNDP's commitment to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in our offices. I worked closely with JPOSC and UNV to launch and implement the [Talent Programme for Young Professionals with Disabilities](#).

Challenging and fulfilling experience

I very much enjoy working with my colleagues from other sister agencies here. In New York, I have the opportunity to co-lead the inter-agency workshop called [UN for All: Dignity and Inclusiveness at a UN workplace](#), working closely with UN Cares, UNFPA, UN Women, UNICEF and the Secretariat. This workshop is a full day workshop for UN personnel and their significant other and attempts to ensure our workplaces are inclusive, regardless of our gender, disability, sexual orientation, health conditions, etc. I am trained to be a facilitator and to deliver sessions every month, together with co-facilitators from other agencies. This has helped me to learn new things and constantly reminds me of why I work for the UN. Every time I facilitate, I get inspired by my colleagues who are knowledge-able, willing to share their experiences, respectful and committed to the full realisation of human rights! I really appreciate being part of this team and activity.

Advice to prospective candidates

If you want to grow as a diversity and inclusion professional, UNDP is a great place to work, so go for it! Being a JPO not only provides you with the opportunity to contribute to the work on global issues and the SDGs, but also supports your continuous learning. In my case, my current work on gender parity within the organisation pushed me to think deeper about my life-long questions on the relationship between women and men. By moving towards established, concrete steps, I am learning and improving practical and implementation skills. Above all, I believe our passion for the agenda should shape our work and careers.

