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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

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Foundation

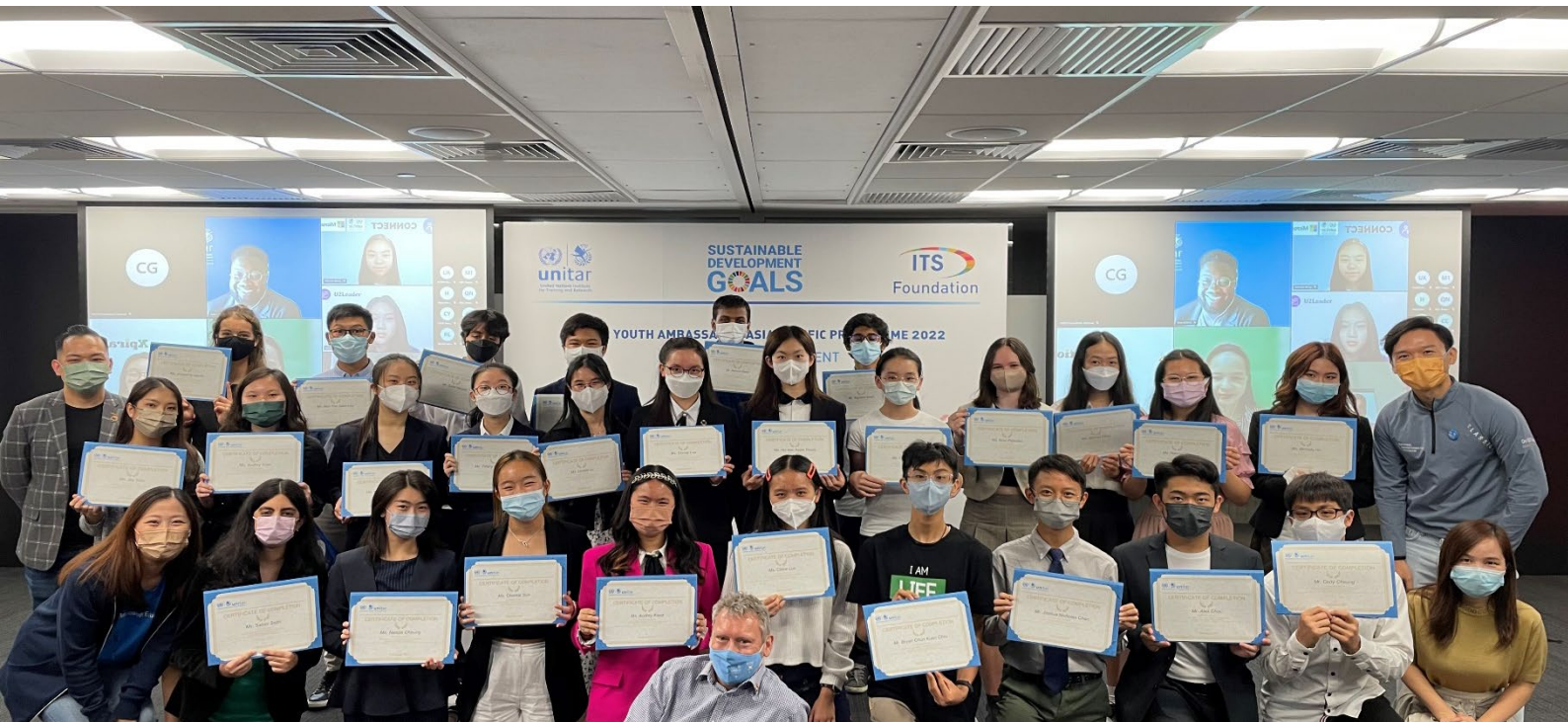
 Microsoft

2022 Project Completion Report

2022 UNITAR Youth Ambassador Asia Pacific Programme

UNITAR Division for Prosperity

March 2023



March 2023

Thank you to our Supporters

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) would like to express its sincere gratitude to the following organizations for their support of this project.

- ITS Education Asia
- Microsoft Hong Kong

In addition, we would like to thank the following experts for supporting the project (in no particular order).

- Victor Abugah (Energy Efficiency Enforcement Senior Officer Accra, Ghana)
- Brijesh Singh (Additional Director General for Police in Maharashtra, India)
- Tomoko Takeda (Tohoku University)

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About Us

United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

UNITAR, established in 1963, is the dedicated adult-learning training arm of the United Nations. We deliver innovative learning solutions to individuals, organizations and institutions to enhance decision-making and support action for a better future.

Each year, more than 133,000 people from around the world participate in over 500 training programmes. Our alumni include diplomats and government officials and representatives of NGOs and the private sector.

March 2023

UNITAR Division for Prosperity

The Division for Prosperity is one of the eight divisions of UNITAR and consists of the Public Finance and Trade Programme Unit and the Hiroshima Office. Driven to “leave no one behind”, we provide creative, cutting-edge learning solutions to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth. We strive to reach society’s most vulnerable, including women, youth and those in conflict situations. Our clients are individuals and institutions in least developed countries, small island developing states and conflict and post-conflict countries.

With staff in Geneva and Hiroshima, as well as field staff across the world, our reach is global, allowing us to deliver critical training and support to learners from more than 90 countries.

The Division for Prosperity programmes fall under six thematic pillars that support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- Anti-corruption and Combating Crime
- Entrepreneurship and Private Sector Development
- Finance and Trade
- Frontier Technologies
- Hiroshima and Peace
- Leadership and Empowerment

On behalf of the Division, I thank you for your support for our work and vital mission. Working together, we can make meaningful progress in building the next generation of changemakers and move closer to eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities for a sustainable, inclusive and prosperous future for all.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mihoko Kumamoto'.

Mihoko Kumamoto

Director, Division for Prosperity and Hiroshima Office

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Contents

2022 Project Completion Report	1
2022 UNITAR Youth Ambassador Asia Pacific Programme	1
About Us	3
United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).....	3
UNITAR Division for Prosperity	4
Executive Summary.....	6
The participants	6
Programme structure and methodology	6
Outcomes	6
Programme Overview.....	7
Purpose of the training	7
Who are the Youth Ambassadors?.....	7
Programme structure and methodology	8
Relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals.....	9
Outcomes.....	11
Online webinars and experts.....	11
Capstone project and future use of skills learned	11
Group discussions and peer-to-peer review	12
Mentoring and coaching sessions	12
Programme in Review	13
Successes	13
Challenges ahead	13

Executive Summary

Launched in 2021, the UNITAR Youth Ambassador Asia Pacific Programme aims to empower high school students in Hong Kong, cities in China and other Asia-Pacific countries to help our world build back better, greener and stronger. It seeks to deepen students' understanding of international issues and the SDGs, develop their skills to create and run projects to address these issues on their own, and connect them with international experts and other young activists.

Over 10 weeks, the Youth Ambassadors learn from local and international experts about the most pressing issues affecting global recovery. They discuss youth-led leadership, the United Nations and the SDGs, digital transformation and innovation, youth employment, youth entrepreneurship for sustainable development, and social and climate justice.

UNITAR Division for Prosperity has long been committed to inspiring youth for sustainable development. Since 2010, Prosperity – through its Hiroshima Office – has been running the UNITAR Hiroshima Young Ambassador Programme for high school students in the Japanese city of peace. The programme has been one of UNITAR Prosperity/Hiroshima's most important commitments to the local community and its people.

The UNITAR Youth Ambassador Asia Pacific Programme scales up the Hiroshima programme, through a partnership with ITS Education Asia, to reach young people from a wider region. Starting with Hong Kong in 2021, UNITAR and ITS extended the Youth Ambassador Programme to more countries in 2022.

The participants

In 2022, 34 students from 21 schools in five countries (Afghanistan, China, Hong Kong, Japan, and Singapore) participated. The gender breakdown was 71% young women, 29% young men. All students completed the programme.

Programme structure and methodology

Over 10 weeks, participants engaged in weekly online webinars and lectures by experts from companies, government agencies and UN agencies, who provided insights into the SDGs and shared innovative SDG-related initiatives. The students engaged in individual and group work to develop an idea or movement to combat an identified problem in their communities. They also received mentoring and coaching from UNITAR and ITS staff. The programme culminated with all 34 participants and their partners presenting on their newly developed ideas for projects, non-profit organizations or start-ups.

Outcomes

In a post-training survey, 88% of the respondents said that they would in the future use what they learned in the programme. Ninety-one per cent said they were able to develop an SDGs project plan, and 96% said that their understanding of key SDG principles improved.

Qualitative feedback from participants also shows that the comprehensive programme promoted their understanding of the SDGs.

“[These sessions] helped me learn about how to implement things and gave me inspiration for innovative ideas to improve our cities. The Microsoft metaverse session was quite informative as I might think about computer science as a future career path. It opened my eyes to the possibilities of the future and what is already happening now.”

Many students felt that meeting the experts and listening to their views was an advantage. Many said that they learned a lot from the perspectives of companies and governments, which they usually do not hear at school.

Programme Overview

The world is becoming more complex by the day. We are facing challenges such as climate change, financial crises and food shortages on a scale that humanity has never experienced before. The global spread of COVID-19 forced us all to change our way of living, doing business and communicating.

On International Youth Day 2018, the Secretary-General emphasized the power of young people and the importance of embracing their potential. Young people can incorporate the SDGs into the goals of their communities and their own countries. They can engage in social activism, strengthen their abilities, express their opinions and call upon other youth worldwide to join their movements.

The United Nations Youth Strategy states that the role of the United Nations is to increase young people's participation and advocacy in society and to disseminate their voices to promote a peaceful and sustainable world.

Purpose of the training

Launched in 2021, the UNITAR Youth Ambassador Asia Pacific Programme aims to empower high school students in Hong Kong, cities in China and other Asia-Pacific countries to help our world build back better, greener and stronger. It seeks to deepen students' understanding of international issues and the SDGs, develop their skills to create and run projects to address these issues on their own, and connect them with international experts and other young activists.

Over 10 weeks, the Youth Ambassadors learn from local and international experts about the most pressing issues affecting global recovery. They discuss youth-led leadership, the United Nations and the SDGs, digital transformation and innovation, youth employment, youth entrepreneurship for sustainable development, and social and climate justice. The 2022 programme was held online, with an in-person graduation ceremony for those in Hong Kong.

This year, under the theme of "Smart Cities", the Youth Ambassadors explored what an ideal society should resemble. At the start of the programme, all participants already had ideas or worked in projects tackling local SDG-related challenges

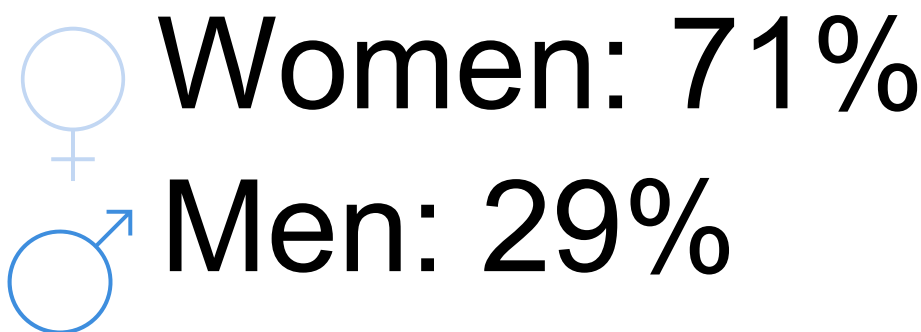
The participants joined lectures and workshops by experts from private companies, government and United Nations agencies and developed their ideas through mentoring from ITS Education and UN staff and experts.

Who are the Youth Ambassadors?

This training programme has been run for high school students in the Asia-Pacific region since 2021. In 2021, UNITAR and ITS focused on high school students in Hong Kong, a strong entrepreneurial hub in Asia. In 2022, the programme expanded to students across the Asia-Pacific region. In 2023, the programme will further extend its outreach, to the Pacific Islands and South Asia.

2022 number of participants, gender balance

Thirty-four students from 21 schools in five countries (Afghanistan, China, Hong Kong, Japan, and Singapore) participated. The gender breakdown was 71% young women, 29% young men. All students completed the programme.



School distribution

- French International School (HK)
- Hong Kong International School (HK)
- St. Paul's Co-Educational College Primary School (HK)
- ITS (HK)
- Chinese International School (HK)
- Renaissance College (HK)
- Diocesan Boys' School (HK)
- Canadian International School (HK)
- Island School (HK)
- German Swiss International School (HK)
- Victoria Shanghai Academy (HK)
- YMCA Hong Kong Christian Academy (HK)
- Singapore International School (HK)
- King George V School (HK)
- Wycombe Abbey (HK)
- American International School (HK)
- Harrow International School (HK)
- Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School (HK)
- Dulwich College (Singapore)
- The American School Tokyo (Japan)
- K International School Tokyo (Japan)

Total 21 schools

Learning Success Indicators

1. Strengthen participant's knowledge on SDGs and the UN System
2. Strengthen participant's knowledge on innovation and entrepreneurship
3. Empower participants to launch their SDG projects

Programme structure and methodology

The 2022 programme was held in a hybrid format, with both in-person and online activities. Over 10 weeks, participants engaged in online webinars and lectures by experts, who provided insights into the current state of the SDGs from a global and regional perspective. Experts from private and public sectors with innovative SDG-related solutions were invited to introduce their initiatives to the participants.

To complete the programme, students developed and submitted self-directed projects on a SDGs of their choice. In addition, students were expected to actively engage in group discussions and peer review and give advice on each other's projects.

Mentoring and coaching were provided by both UNITAR and ITS Education to the students to help them shape their ideas and ventures.

The programme culminated with all 34 participants and their partners presenting on their newly developed ideas for projects, non-profit organizations or start-ups.

Programme components

1. Online webinars (Zoom)

ITS and UNITAR experts provided insights into the current state of the SDGs from global and

regional perspectives.

2. Capstone project

Students developed and submitted self-directed projects on a SDG of their choice.

3. Group discussions, peer-to-peer review

Students actively engaged in group discussions and peer review and gave advice on each other's projects.

4. Innovation and entrepreneurship workshop

Experts from private and public sectors with innovative SDG-related solutions introduced their initiatives. Experts included

- Brijesh Singh (Additional Director General for police in Maharashtra, India)
- Tomoko Takeda (Tohoku University)
- Victor Abugah (Energy Efficiency Enforcement Senior Officer Accra, Ghana)

5. Mentoring and coaching sessions

Participants took part in mentoring sessions by UNITAR and ITS Education to develop their projects and give an effective pitch.

Relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 4: Quality Education



Target 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills to advance sustainable development through education such as sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and an understanding of cultural diversity and the contribution that culture makes to sustainable development.

Goal 5: Gender Equality



Target 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth



Target 8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all people, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities



Target 11.6: By 2030, reduce the environmental impacts per capita of cities, including through special attention to air quality and the management of general and other wastes

Target 11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible green spaces and public spaces for everyone, including women and children, older persons, and persons with disabilities

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals



Target 17.16: Promote the multi-stakeholder partnership supplementation of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development and support the achievement of the SDGs by all countries, in particular developing countries, through the mobilization and sharing of knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources.

Target 17.17: Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships based on the experience and resource strategies of various partnerships.

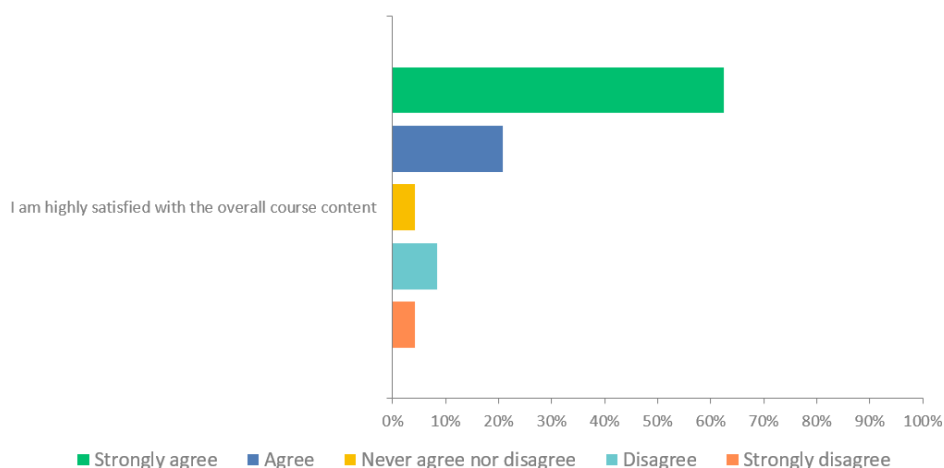
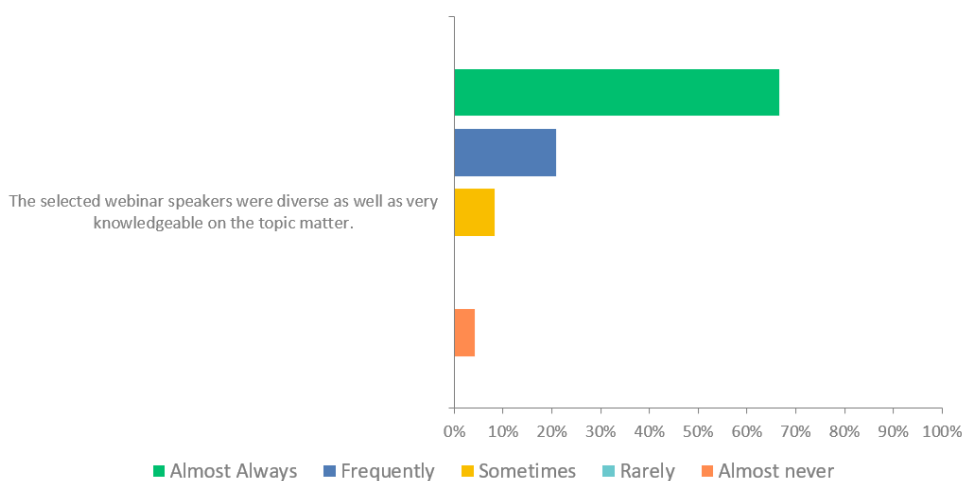
Outcomes

The results of the programme were assessed through a post-training questionnaire. Of the 34 participants, 24 responded (71%). The survey asked participants about the online webinars, capstone project, group discussion/peer review, and mentoring/coaching sessions.

Online webinars and experts

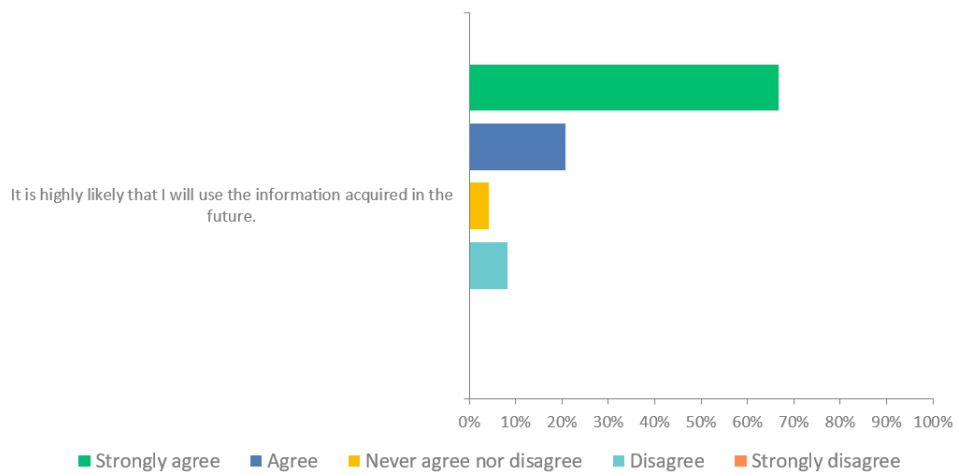
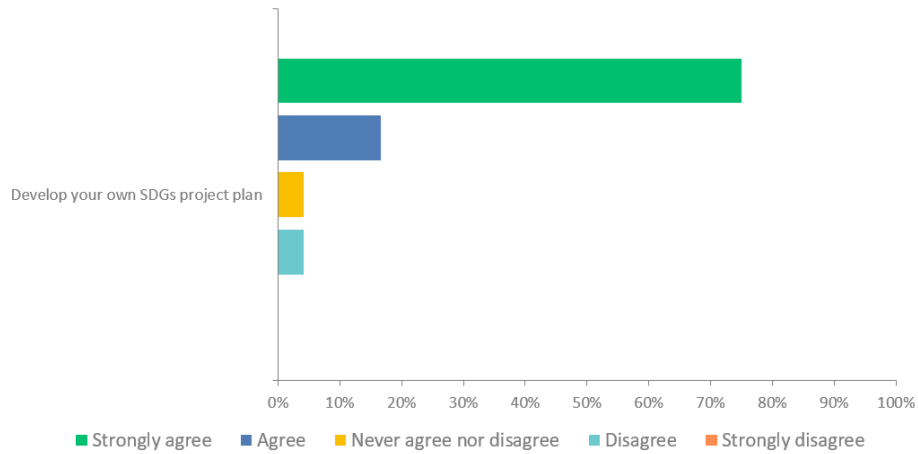
All 24 respondents answered that the online webinars and experts were useful to their learning journey. Specifically, 88% of participants found that the selected webinar speakers were diverse and knowledgeable on their subjects. Eight-four per cent agreed or strong agreed that they were highly satisfied with the course content from webinars and experts.

Comments from participants include: “I found the workshop from Microsoft with the use of AI and metaverse to be extremely useful.”



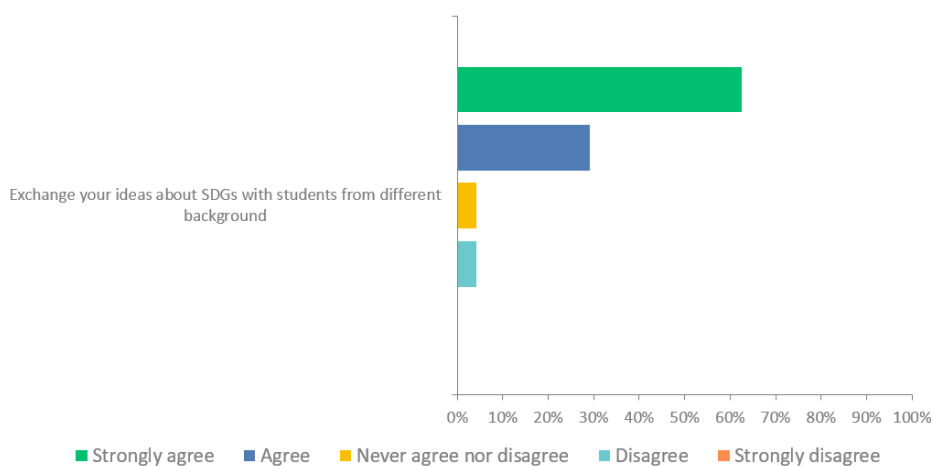
Capstone project and future use of skills learned

On the questions regarding the capstone project and relevance of materials, 92% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Youth Ambassador Programme enabled them to develop their own SDGs project plan. Eight-eight per cent agreed or strongly agreed that they would use the skills learned in the future for their project.



Group discussions and peer-to-peer review

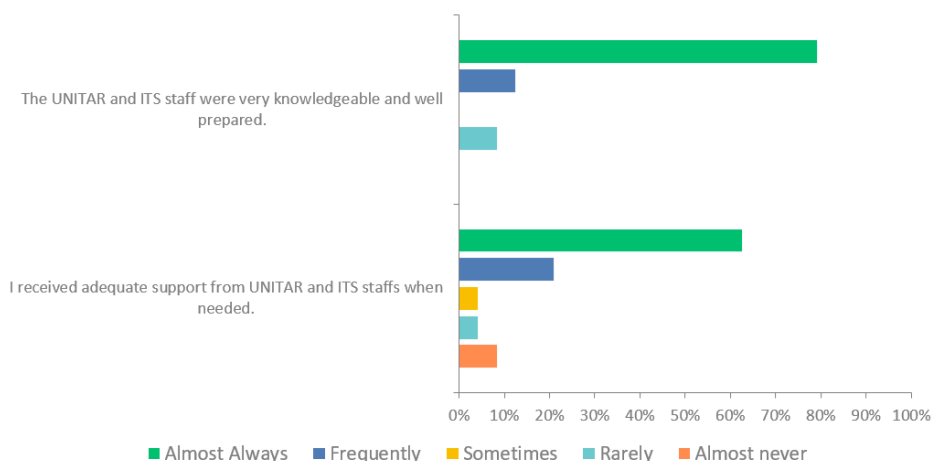
Of the respondents, 93% agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to exchange ideas about the SDGs with students from different backgrounds through group discussions and peer-to-peer review.



Mentoring and coaching sessions

Of the respondents, 92% agreed or strongly agreed that the UNITAR and ITS staff were very knowledgeable and well prepared, while 84% also responded that they received adequate support

from staff when needed.



Programme in Review

UNITAR Division for Prosperity has long been committed to inspiring youth for sustainable development. Since 2010, Prosperity – through its Hiroshima Office – has been running the UNITAR Hiroshima Young Ambassador Programme for high school students in the Japanese city of peace. The programme has been one of UNITAR Prosperity/Hiroshima’s most important commitments to the local community and its people. The UNITAR Youth Ambassador Asia Pacific Programme scales up the Hiroshima programme through a partnership with ITS Education Asia to reach young people from a wider region.

Here, we reflect on the lessons learned from the feedback from participants and our observations.

Successes

The programme provided comprehensive learning opportunities to the participants

- The basic guide for development of programmes, presented by ITS and UNITAR were an important basis for subsequent learning. Participants identified the System Work of Social Change as having had a major impact on their learning journey.
- Nearly all participants said the experts were an important part of the learning journey, citing them as inspirations for their current work.
- Participants also said that the information provided in the programme was of great relevance to their work. UNITAR and ITS will continue to ensure that materials are up to date and relevant to changing contexts in sustainable development.

The participants see long-term uses for their new knowledge and skills

- Participants said that they believed the training would help them continue to develop their own SDG project plan.
- Participants believe that they will use what they learned as Youth Ambassadors in the future, including in their capstone projects.

Challenges ahead

UNITAR and partners must ensure programme quality remains high when expanding the Youth programme

We plan to expand the UNITAR Youth Ambassador Programme to China, the Pacific Islands, South Asia and other regions in the future. As the programme expands, UNITAR and partners must ensure

March 2023

that the programme maintains its high quality throughout by pursuing:

- further partnerships (financial and non-financial)
- expert review of materials and theories of change.
- recruitment of high-quality participants