Dear APS graduates,

We share values and hopes for building a better world. At present, you are witnessing the great changes in the International System, with increasingly radical and uncompromising visions and positions. This is leading us to a great polarization. You, at the University for Peace and Ateneo de Manila University, learned that dialogue is essential for understanding and, therefore, to generate spaces that break with intransigence and radicalism. This is achieved on the basis of the permanent values and ideals of peace. The essential value is based on respect for people’s lives and dignity.

You, as graduates of the 11 generations of APS, have a central task in building a global, sustainable Culture of Peace, sustainable peace and development which places people at the center. The work of each and every one reinforces concord, reconciliation, compassion and solidarity. All of the above makes us live human rights and the protection of the planet as a daily action, taking responsibility for a new future in a world where peace prevails.

UPEACE Rector Francisco Rojas Aravena
University for Peace in Costa Rica, on 30th August 2019

Tokyo, Japan -- The Nippon Foundation has rolled out its “Revitalization and Enhancement of The Nippon Foundation APS Alumni Network,” a program that aims to stimulate collaboration within the APS Alumni Network and to provide support for career development of APS alumni.

On June 8, 2019, Mr. Takejyu Ogata, President of The Nippon Foundation, announced that an endowment fund of USD1,000,000.00 will be allocated to support the APS Alumni Network’s revitalization and enhancement program.

Mr. Ogata took inspiration from a previous meeting with APS students at UPEACE, in which he and the students discussed various global issues and ideas for possible solutions. He also shared that the Nippon Foundation’s vision is to transform societies.
Kazumasa Okao was born in Hyogo, 1984. At the age of ten, he experienced the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and, witnessing support pouring in to all affected areas, realized his passion to help people in need. He studied chemistry and genetics at the Ibaraki University and established a career in the medical industry. Eventually, he worked with the JICA’s Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers to expand the reach of his support to people living in developing countries where medical care is urgent but lacking.

In 2014, Kazumasa joined the Asian Peacebuilders Scholarship (APS). Intrigued by the effects of yet another earthquake, the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, to Japan’s energy policy, he majored in environmental development and peace – environmental security and governance.

New interactive approaches to learning impressed Kazumasa as he journeyed academically in the UN-mandated University for Peace (UPEACE) in Costa Rica. “I struggled with differences of the lecture style and language at first, but I became confident through trial and error,” Kazumasa said.

Not only that, Kazumasa became fond of living in Costa Rica. The APS basically provided for his school fees and daily living expenses. In describing his most treasured moments, Kazumasa said, “I used to walk 8 kilometers to go to the UPEACE campus in the morning for exercise. It was really nice to walk in nature. In Costa Rica, there is also a famous surf spot called Jaco – about an hour’s drive from the capital city, San Jose. I would usually finish assignments as soon as possible so that I can spend most of my time there.

In 2015, Kazumasa received his Master of Arts degree in Environment, Development and Peace – Environmental Security and Governance and MA in Political Science Majored in Global Politics from Ateneo de Manila University. He acknowledged that, through APS, he was able to connect peacebuilding with global climate change issues. He commends, "[t]hrough APS, you can learn global issues and international relations comprehensively, and you can learn different perspectives... through discussions with classmates. This program is recommended not only for those who aim to work for international cooperation but also for those interested in the environmental field."

After graduating, Kazumasa pursued a career in international cooperation at the policy-level. He joined Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry that was assisting in the development of chemical substance control laws in ASEAN countries. Then, he got a consultancy job at a CSR report production company where he gained experience related to reducing greenhouse gases and private sector monitoring of environment, society, governance (ESG) concerns.

Kazumasa currently works with Japan’s Ministry of the Environment where he engages in international projects and negotiations related to the Paris Agreement. He was a part of the 8th Cohort of the APS.

This is based on an interview by Chihiro Masuho (Class of 2012, APS cohort 5). English Translation by Kazumasa Okao and Mario Takahashi (Class of 2012, APS cohort 5).

Read more: https://humansofupeace.squarespace.com/studentsandalumni

“Today, it is not only international organizations and NGOs but also public and private sectors that are highly aware of sustainability. APS is an ideal place to learn about environmental issues and peacebuilding.”
Endro Kristanto

Endro Kristanto is a research associate at Migunani, a leading research institution in his hometown Yogyakarta, and a rising entrepreneur of micro coffee roastery. In 2008, he joined the APS Dual Campus programme with a major in International Peace Studies. He had worked as development sector research and evaluation specialist in Indonesia for nearly 10 years. His other professional experiences include working as a Monitoring and Evaluation Manager for Women’s World Banking and Australia Indonesia Partnership for Strengthening Agricultural Finance and as a service provider for Oxfam’s post-tsunami recovery program in Indonesia.

“No pude imaginar” is the expression that I always use when I am asked about how it felt studying at UPEACE.

Endro Kristanto, INDONESIA

“No pude imaginar” is the expression that I always use when I am asked about how it felt studying at UPEACE. It does not merely reflect the fact that studying in Costa Rica was a rare opportunity for me but also the feeling of gratefulness for this chance to receive love and kindness from the people of UPEACE.

My professional life was positively shaped by UPEACE and the people who contributed to honing my academic skills. This fact motivates me to always try, as much as possible, to help in the promotions of Asian Peacebuilders Program in Indonesia.

Here is a short story of how UPEACE made an impact on my life.

Writing has always been my passion. Early in my career, some friends and former colleagues told me of my potential to be a good writer. However, there was no opportunity to develop my writing skills until I studied at UPEACE. In the end, my writing skills were taken to a different level.

My writing skills began to improve during the English Course I took in Ateneo de Manila University. The writing exercises, as well as the substantial feedbacks I got from our instructors, helped me improve the quality of my works. Later, in Costa Rica, I continuously enhanced my writing because of the word limit requirement and the freedom to choose the focus of my academic papers. I also benefited from consulting course instructors about my papers and receiving their feedback on my completed papers.

The impact of the trainings I had in UPEACE transformed my career in research and evaluation. Shortly after UPEACE graduation, I received an assignment as an evaluator of a post-disaster-early-recovery project. Since then, several research and evaluation projects followed. All research or project evaluation I did for international NGOs and UN agencies required me to write rigorous reports in English. Nonetheless, I felt completely equipped in fulfilling the demand and used all of the writing skills I acquired from UPEACE. Of course, in addition to the writing skills, the perspective on development that I learnt from UPEACE also inspired the concept, reasoning, and analysis I put on my writing.

Studying at UPEACE also broadened my professional network and, recently, this network has enabled me to work in a project overseas. I have always aspired to collaborate with fellow UPEACERS. I have been exploring this possibility for the past few years and, today, I am working with Kyi Kyi Seinn, a classmate from Myanmar. Our collaboration started from light discussions of ideas when we visited each other way back in 2009 and 2015. After that, I spent the next two visits I made to Myanmar to help Kyi Kyi Seinn’s non-governmental organization, Moving Forward Together (MFT), by delivering a training on monitoring and evaluation. Now, I am hired by MFT as an M&E consultant on a youth empowerment in agriculture project, a field that coincidentally intersects with my recent career focus.

At the personal level, the opportunity to study in Costa Rica enabled me to discover an interest by serendipity. In Costa Rica, I consumed coffee more than I usually did anywhere else. Thus, the coffee culture there implanted ‘the seed of enthusiasm on coffee’ within me.

My enthusiasm grew faster, a year after I left UPEACE, and when I visited a Costa Rican pavilion at the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, China. I listened to a Tico as he told stories about Costa Rican coffee. I was impressed by the flavor and brought some coffee home. Since then, I became more enthusiastic toward coffee and thought about starting a coffee business.

I recently started a micro coffee roastery at home. Interestingly, one of my major green bean suppliers is Diyus Hanafi, another UPEACER!

Being a member of the UPEACE Network can be truly amazing! Now, I am looking forward to further collaborate with other UPEACERS. I will not be surprised by what may come ahead.
Tokyo, Japan – From May 9, 2019, Maya Mizuno, APS Program Coordinator at the University for Peace (UPEACE), embarked in a 19-day APS promotional series in Indonesia, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Japan. A total of one hundred twenty (120) people, including representatives from Education Ministries, United Nations agencies, local and international non-governmental organizations, and local universities, attended the activities. The promotional events would not be possible without the APS alumni who willingly shared their experiences and gave assistance on logistics and public relations.

Dr. Juan Carlos Sainz-Borgo, Dean of UPEACE, and Clarissa Cecilia R. Mijares-Ramos, APS Program Coordinator at Ateneo de Manila University (AdMU), also held an information seminar held at the main office of Nippon Foundation in Tokyo. During the event, Some Japanese alumnx shared their personal stories and gave practical advice about the application process and APS life.

In June, Mrs. Mijares-Ramos continued the promotional series at an Education Fair in Yangon, Myanmar. APS alumnae Phat Nguyen (APS 10) and Tri Le (APS 10) likewise conducted APS information seminars in three (3) different cities of Southern Vietnam from June to July.

APS offers a dual Master of Arts degree program to be completed in two prestigious universities, AdMU and UPEACE. Beginning March 2020, the AdMU academic curriculum will undergo changes to give more focus on social and international development areas. The 14th APS Cohort students will be the first batch under the new AdMU curriculum.

Applications for the 14th APS Cohort is already closed.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

THE AIA GRANTS PROGRAMME

The AIA Grants Program is an initiative by the APS Alumni Secretariat, in partnership with The Nippon Foundation, University for Peace (UPEACE), and Ateneo de Manila University (AdMU), that seeks to provide opportunity to APS/ALP/DIPS alumni to collaborate and implement their project ideas.

For the 2020 intake, APS/ALP/DIPS alumni can get up to USD 5,000.00 project funds.

Interested applicants should submit their interested applicants should submit their project proposals by 16 October 2019. For application form and guideline, please write to apsalmunisecretariat@gmail.com.

NEW APS ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICER NAMED.

Ms. Gayathri Camage (APS 11) is the new APS Alumni Relations Officer. Ms. Camage graduated with M.A. in Political Science (Global Politics) and M.A in International Peace Studies in 2018.

NEW DEVELOPMENT

APS WEBSITE


The APS Alumni Network website is also expected to be launched in 2019. It will serve as a platform for interaction among APS alumnx.