

Testimony – Belinda McMillan

I am currently studying Bachelor of Social Work (Honours) at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). In 2016 Semester 2, I completed a course Social Work Practice: Community Work, where I learned from Linda Bartolomei that DTP is holding an interactive talk with Joshua Cooper. The aim of the discussion was for participants to learn about a different kind of advocacy strategy through the use of a United Nations procedure (the Universal Periodic Review - UPR), as well as to highlight the importance of building solidarity and networks, the importance of research, and the importance of ensuring active participation for a cause. After the discussion I realised DTP was a unique and interesting NGO that I wanted to learn more about. The following semester I was fortunate to be the first social work student to start work placement at the Diplomacy Training Program (DTP) from 30 January to 8 June 2017 on a full time basis.

Some of the tasks and training I was involved in for placement included:

- Designing a post training survey that can be used six months after DTP training to evaluate impact and outcomes of the training
- Designing the Most Significant Change (MSC) step by step process
- Interviewing Human Rights Defenders (alumni) via Skype
- Creating organisational profiles
- Entering in participants enrolment details into the database
- Putting together information packs for the training programs
- Attending inter agency visits at Red Cross Migration Services, Nura Guli – Centre for Indigenous Programs, the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID); the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA); and UN Women Fundraising Canberra.
- Completing the Freedom of Expression in Saudi Arabia online course on www.humanrightscareers.com

I am now able to design surveys and interview individuals to understand what they have learned from services, how they have applied new knowledge and skills to the work they do, how they have impacted communities, and how organisations can use this feedback to improve their services. I also understand why the human rights perspective theory is fundamental to social work as the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) Code of Ethics are based on the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR). The capacity building theory was also very relevant to my placement as capacity building is applied in all DTP training programs by building practical skills in strategic advocacy, including the capacity to engage with governmental processes at the national, regional and international level. The inter-agency visits gave me a broader understanding of the different NGOs in the field and why DTP is accredited with ACFID as they seek to be an influential policy voice, a catalyst for change and a standard bearer for good practice in the international development and humanitarian world.

The alumni I interviewed always mentioned the positive changes DTP training made to their work and communities and I can understand why as working with DTP has also made a positive change in my work and outlook on international aid. Alumni also expressed how they feel DTP is like family to them which I also relate to and I look forward to keeping in touch and continuing to learn from DTP.

Belinda McMillan, 2017