My interest in peace and security issues in Northeast Asia led me to participate in this initiative. Through learning about disarmament I realized how important it is to share knowledge and information among citizens. These issues should involve every generation, but we still hardly have the opportunity to understand how much they relate to our lives. Reaching out to young people, even if they are still indifferent to this issue, will help us to adopt a long-term perspective.

My grandparents underwent horrors throughout the Korean War, which instilled the paramount value of peace in me. I hope that young people like myself can steer positive progress in the contentious issues. Therefore it was inspiring to participate in close-knit, remarkable training from leading UN practitioners in disarmament, peace, and security issues.

Over the months, the young leaders worked in two separate groups on two policy papers, with the goal of sharing their views and recommendations on how to make youth voices better heard in the region.

My biggest discovery was how tightly interwoven disarmament is in the history and future of Northeast Asia, and for individuals like myself. The online session that introduced emerging technologies became a big inspiration for me and I started developing a strong interest in cyber security issues. I now understand that responsible innovation is mandatory and how a future without it could affect people like me. I believe that the youth equipped with necessary creativity and innovation can shape the future paths of peacebuilding.

Growing up in a country without a violent conflict was something I took for granted. Witnessing first-hand hundreds of thousands of Syrians fleeing to Turkey I realized peace does not simply exist by itself unless we fight for it and keep building it with action. As youth, we do need to speak up our concerns about disarmament. Getting our voice heard is the first step to make social change for the public and policy transformation for policymakers. It is only through collective and consistent efforts that we can achieve the goal of disarmament in this region.

As a peacebuilder and trainer in peace education, I have always found disarmament education to be one of the most challenging issues to make relevant to youth and civil society. Many issues seem too difficult to conceptualize and the nuances of disarmament, difficult to grasp. Through the project, I have learned to form my own ideas about how disarmament could speak in the language of everyday people in Northeast Asia. I believe youth participation is especially important because youth have the potential to play a central role in advancing regional cooperation and identity building, which is essential to build security that is not just national but regional and global.