

# Adventures of a Tour Guide

By Oleh Vovk, Visitors' Services Section, Outreach Division, Department of Public Information

Oleh is from the Ukraine and joined the Guided Tours Unit in June 2013. Prior to joining the United Nations, Oleh was a law student in Berlin, Germany. In this short article, he shares his first impressions of being a United Nations Tour Guide.

At first it might seem monotonous to work as a tour guide, even in an organisation as large and prestigious as the United Nations, but ever since I started as a United Nations tour guide – every day has been one adventure after the other.

My first real interaction with the United Nations began with my participation in the Model United Nations which convened at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in the spring of 2012. Since then I have been fascinated with the work of the Organisation, and my excitement continues to build day in and day out. The United Nations does great things every day and an amazing team of young, vibrant, professional, and multi-lingual tour guides share this information with the public every day.

Each day spent at the United Nations is a celebration for me. Recently, I celebrated Malala Day with visitors on my tour and discussed women rights issues and



On International Youth Day, Oleh informs a group of youth on how the United Nations promotes Human Rights. The 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights document are displayed on tour route. 12 August 2013



Oleh stands in front of the Nelson Mandela International Day poster, 18 July 2013

the promotion of education for girls; I gave tours on Nelson Mandela Day and encouraged people to spend 67 minutes for a charitable cause. I gladly interact with visitors after the tour is over, as it is not only a job for me, it is not even a paid hobby, it is something much bigger. I help students better understand the work of the United Nation by answering their questions and even assisting them by providing vital information to help them with some of their school projects.

In celebrating this year's International Day of Friendship, I had the opportunity to make some new friends on my tour and these friendships only grow stronger

with each passing day. With such friendships come unusual and hilarious moments such as finding myself volunteering to be auctioned for a dinner-date to raise funds at a charity event organised by students from China. Needless to say, this was a first for me but it was really successful – the United Nations Refugee Agency also known as UNHCR received a large donation from the student who paid to go on a dinner-date with me!

Being multi-lingual, I give tours in English, German, Russian and Ukrainian and I enjoy every moment at work with my colleagues. I try to remember every question, every reaction and the face of every visitor on my tour. As I walk my visitors through the various exhibits and Chambers on tour route and as I narrate information on the work of the Organisation, I hope the excitement, energy, and the passion I exhibit remains with my visitors for a long time.

I receive lots of compliments and applause every day at work and I feel like I am accomplishing something every time. It is a very rewarding and humbling experience. Even as I write this short note, I am already curious about what new and exciting experiences the United Nations will bring my way tomorrow.

Come visit the United Nations – it's your world! We very much look forward to welcoming you! ♦