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for every child



# Culture Book

UNICEF Regional Office for  
South Asia (ROSA)

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UNICEF Regional Office for  
South Asia (ROSA)

*Revised edition*



**Culture Book 2023**

UNICEF Regional Office for south Asia (ROSA)  
October 2023

UNICEF  
ROSA  
CULTURE  
BOOK

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Our culture book is  
not only about us  
*but also about you.*



# NAMASTE

## An inside look at ROSA's vibrant and strong culture

This book provides an inside look at ROSA's vibrant and strong culture to help you understand our values and how we function as a team. Our culture book is not only about us but also about you, so we invite you to take the time to read it, as it will help you cultivate relationships and thrive.



# 01

## What is unique to ROSA?

We rely on collaboration rather than hierarchical distinctions. At ROSA, we practice an open-door policy; anyone can communicate directly with senior management, while colleagues across teams can freely meet and share information. We work as units and individuals but also as a team. As a regional team, we act as an innovation hub for different initiatives.

As a small unit, we can function without much adherence to hierarchy with an open line of communication.



Even before joining the ROSA team, I had heard about the wonderful spirit from colleagues. Now, as a newcomer to ROSA myself this year, I quickly understood why this office is a special place to work. Whether it's the laughter and fun during our Team ROSA meetings, the unwavering dedication to serving the children of South Asia, the commitment to continuous performance improvement, or the innovative reverse leadership opportunities, ROSA's vibrant culture not only binds us together but also empowers each of us to contribute significantly. It's a collective journey where every effort matters, and together, we're truly making a meaningful difference.

**Sanjay Wijesekera**

UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia

We lead by example, and we  
*strive to practice what we preach.*



I love coming to work here in ROSA. There's a special atmosphere characterized by warmth, a strong and palpable sense of collegiality, and a common desire and drive to make the region a better place for the 630 million children we serve. Core values run deep and the office is constantly trying to innovate and grow, from the way in which #TeamROSA promotes and encourages reverse leadership to how we listen, learn and deliver for children within and across teams.

**Noala Skinner**

Deputy Regional Director, UNICEF ROSA



## 02

### A culture guided and driven by UNICEF's core values

As the Regional Office for South Asia, we want to echo, inspire and nurture UNICEF's values in all our offices across the region. As brand ambassadors of UNICEF, internally and externally, we need to constantly reflect and reassess the values deeply rooted in our culture. We ensure that we practice what we preach at work and in our personal lives. We live and stand by these values.

Steered by a succession of robust, humane and passionate leadership, *we celebrate positive outcomes regarding the rights and well-being of every child.*



"We look at life differently. We are not hierarchal and we want to break the silo mentality. My office is open to anyone and this makes us more agile. If I give my time, I can empower and motivate my colleagues to accelerate their work. We respect all individuals regardless of rank or position."

**Jean Gough**

Former UNICEF Deputy Regional Director for South Asia (2016-2020)



"Leadership often starts at the top—that's true. Simultaneously, leadership also pulls us forward when it comes from the bottom-up; when we engage the ideas, voices, and out-of-the-box thinking of all UNICEF and anyone starting a new post with a fresh mind. We are seeking to accomplish this with our leadership initiatives at ROSA."

**George Laryea-Adjei**

Former UNICEF Regional Director  
for South Asia (2020-2023)





# 03

## As a team, we keep moving forward to improve and to grow

A strong team spirit is central to achieving UNICEF's purpose as a team, where every individual feels invested, unified and motivated. With a diversity of skills, experience and talents, at ROSA, we encourage a participatory and inclusive attitude where colleagues can engage, get to know and learn from one another. Cultivating a supportive and open environment empowers us to be innovative and creative to complete our work perfectly and competently.

We build an environment where *team spirit is central.*



"We build an environment where team spirit is central. ROSA is a community of incredibly amazing people who have created a calm and peaceful environment; whether at work or meeting in town, you experience laughter, goodwill, respect and care. There is a strong team spirit and camaraderie. You can find support everywhere at ROSA."

**Ogechi Onuoha**  
Human Resources Specialist

A warm and welcoming start off to  
*help you make a smooth transition to  
your new location.*



“Overall, the office is friendly, and the national staff are always welcoming and helpful. Some advantages of living and working in Kathmandu include lesser commuting time to the office, pleasant all-year-round weather, and the feeling of being a home away from home.”

**Azhar Abid Raza**

Regional Immunization Specialist



## 04

### Making you feel at home

Your first day at ROSA is all about making you feel valued, and our welcoming national and international staff will make sure that you are made comfortable and at home. A buddy will be assigned to provide practical guidance on life in Nepal and support the softer elements of your arrival. We also have a tradition of inviting new hires to the HR Chief’s office for coffee and cookies. And, as days pass by, be ready to experience the warm Nepalese hospitality.



# 05

## Most important things to remember

### We value:

Care, Respect, Integrity, Trust, Accountability, and Sustainability.

### We do not accept:

Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination.

***We embrace and connect with everyone without distinction.***

Our common goal is to advocate  
*for the protection of children's rights.*



"Each team member has defined roles and responsibilities that outline duties and commitments, holding individuals accountable for their work. In addition, we have a standard of conduct and values to which everyone must adhere and practice."

**Arisha Gurung**  
HR Officer

A growth mindset allows us  
to learn from mistakes to help us  
*move forward and grow.*



“With countless trainings and workshops under my belt, combined with a dynamic work environment, my professional and personal development has been greatly enhanced.”

**Kesang Bajracharya**  
Programme Associate



## 06

### Accountability & ownership

At ROSA, we trust you to do your best. You have the freedom and support to be creative and work independently—take risks and learn from failure. We practice delegation and empowerment, and we strongly encourage proactive decision-making. This culture of accountability and ownership motivates and increases our commitment to fulfilling UNICEF’s mandate. ROSA fosters an environment where staff are empowered to succeed, and contributions are recognized and valued because they make a difference.



# 07

## Team building to grow together

To elevate and propel a culture in which we work effectively as a team, every alternate month, we conduct mini-team coaching exercises and discussions in our all-staff meetings. We regularly conduct bi-annual team-building activities with retreats and action activities to increase motivation, promote cooperation and generate a positive culture of leadership, mentoring and collaboration.

**We are a small team, but  
*we are strong and resilient.***



“ROSA has a strong team spirit. We are highly collaborative and motivated; anyone can reach out to colleagues for suggestions, advice, and guidance, regardless of their position or level. Staff feels respected, cared for, heard, and trusted at ROSA.”

**Rabin Karmacharya**  
Programme Associate

There is continuous learning for *personal and professional development.*



“The trust of the leadership team and section heads ensures ROSA staff can lead initiatives without being micromanaged. Such demonstration of faith builds confidence and empowers staff, boosting morale and productivity.”

**Pravaran Mahat**  
Regional Communication Specialist



## 08

### Opportunities and growth

In addition to technical specialised training organised by ROSA or HQ, ROSA provides group and individual training with flexible learning guidelines. Internship opportunities abound, with young professionals adding energy and innovation to our team. Our training policy offers generous means for taking learning time for all staff. The Staff Exchange initiative fosters regional learning exchanges, allowing national colleagues to work for one month in another regional office, usually in a different role.



# 09

## Communication: Busting the silo approach

We try to break down barriers and the silo mentality; to breed and promote a productive and engaging working culture that brings out the best in you. We interact openly and freely, including those who work remotely, so that different pillars and other units of the organization can come together. And, during tumultuous global events such as COVID-19 lockdowns, we found creative ways to stay connected with our colleagues to sustain continued and strong communication.

**A strong, open and connected culture to build and sustain relationships.**



“ROSA is a safe space for every team member to share their views, and people are open to listening. During all staff meetings, there is direct interaction with the senior management, allowing everyone to contribute ideas and ask questions.”

**Yuko Kusamichi**  
Regional Chief of Operations

We believe that leadership can *work its way from the bottom up.*



“One of the many applaudable practices at ROSA is delegating young staff members to chair and lead the all-staff monthly meetings as part of the reverse leadership initiative. Nothing speaks louder than such practices to ensure that the voice of every staff is equally valued, especially the young ones.”

**Prajula Mulmi**  
Nutrition Consultant



# 10

## Reverse leadership

At ROSA, we practice a more inclusive and collaborative approach to leadership—reverse leadership. This bottom-up leadership approach has worked at ROSA because we foster a flat organizational structure with open communication and little hierarchy where ideas will be listened to and acted upon. We engage and motivate our young staff to take up responsibilities such as chairing the monthly all-staff meetings to boost better team dynamics and instil confidence in them to bring forth their inner leadership potential and qualities.



# 11

## Speak-up!

We foster and promote UNICEF's "Speak-Up Culture" of creating a safe, productive, and secure workplace. Colleagues are strongly encouraged to exercise the speak-up culture to share their grievances, ideas, and opinions with the confidence that they will be heard and recognized. There are also suggestion boxes placed in several discreet locations around the office. Our conversations on psychological safety focus on expectations for senior leaders, supervisors and supervisees to build trust for a healthier team.

Speak-up up because your voices matter so everyone *can learn, adapt and change.*



"ROSA promotes a speak-up culture; everyone is encouraged to discuss matters, raise concerns, and make suggestions with colleagues and supervisors. This constructive way of dealing with conflict can lead to new ways of working, coming closer together, and growing personally."

**Nicole Klaesener-Metzner**  
WASH Specialist and Staff Association

We build a healthy, confident and happy team by putting our people first.



“South Asia is where the bulk of UNICEF’s work takes place. Staff working at ROSA for a year feel like they have gained five years of rich experience. Considering the complexity of working in the region, we provide flexible work arrangements for staff at ROSA. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we were the region that introduced regular days off for staff to rest and recuperate.”

**Dung Thi Hai Tran**

Regional Chief of Human Resources



# 12

## Work-life balance and your wellbeing

Working for UNICEF undoubtedly plays a significant part in our lives, but we want you to maintain a healthy work-life balance. At ROSA, we focus on family-friendly, flexible work arrangements, appreciating our diverse roles and responsibilities, and working to sustain good health, well-being, and quality performance.



# 13

## Equity & equality: A gender-balanced culture

At ROSA, we take gender equity very seriously and strive for equity, empowerment, and inclusion without discrimination based on sex and gender identity.

We create an environment where  
*we make it clear that everyone must  
be treated with respect and dignity.*



“At ROSA, we practice what we preach. The UNICEF mandate practiced at ROSA is one of the unique attributes I appreciate most and which I practice in my personal life, home, social gatherings, and society. My work motivates me to share my knowledge concerning mental health among youth and standing up for children’s rights.”

**Smriti Shrestha**  
Executive Associate

A culturally diverse team offers a *mixture of ideas, perspectives and learning opportunities.*



“Interacting with my international and national colleagues made me respect diversity on many levels. It is an enriching experience to work with such a diverse set; it enables me to adapt easily to similar multicultural environments.”

**Babu Ram Panthi**

Programme Associate-WASH, Emergency & Climate



14

## We celebrate diversity

We are a rich blend of ethnicity, talents, skills, experiences and cultural diversity. We recognize, embrace and celebrate these rich dimensions of diversity at ROSA. Also, being in the heart of Nepal, international staff can experience, participate and celebrate the richness of Nepali culture and national holidays organized by our amazing Nepali national staff.



# 15

## We are conscious of the kind of impact we need to have

### **Towards a menstruation-friendly office**

We recognize that providing resources and support for menstruating colleagues is crucial in creating a more inclusive and equitable workplace, so we act!

### **Sustainability**

By continuously implementing green initiatives in our office, we improve the health and well-being of our staff and do our part in creating a better future for everyone.

We endeavour to take *active and positive sustainability roles.*



By continually implementing green initiatives in our office, we do our part as good stewards of the environment in creating a better future for everyone. We strive to enhance our staff's health and well-being by adopting new attitudes to nurture emotional, physical, and social well-being.

We are a vibrant and energetic team  
and we live up to the phrase  
*work hard, play hard.*



“The best part of working at ROSA would probably be retreats, family gatherings, and outings to prevent work fatigue. Having a little space for fun brings out the best in us because active minds function much better than tired minds. Feel-good activities such as our mini-dance sessions during lunch break boost colleagues’ spirit.”

**Dr. Diksha Pokhrel**  
Mental Health Consultant

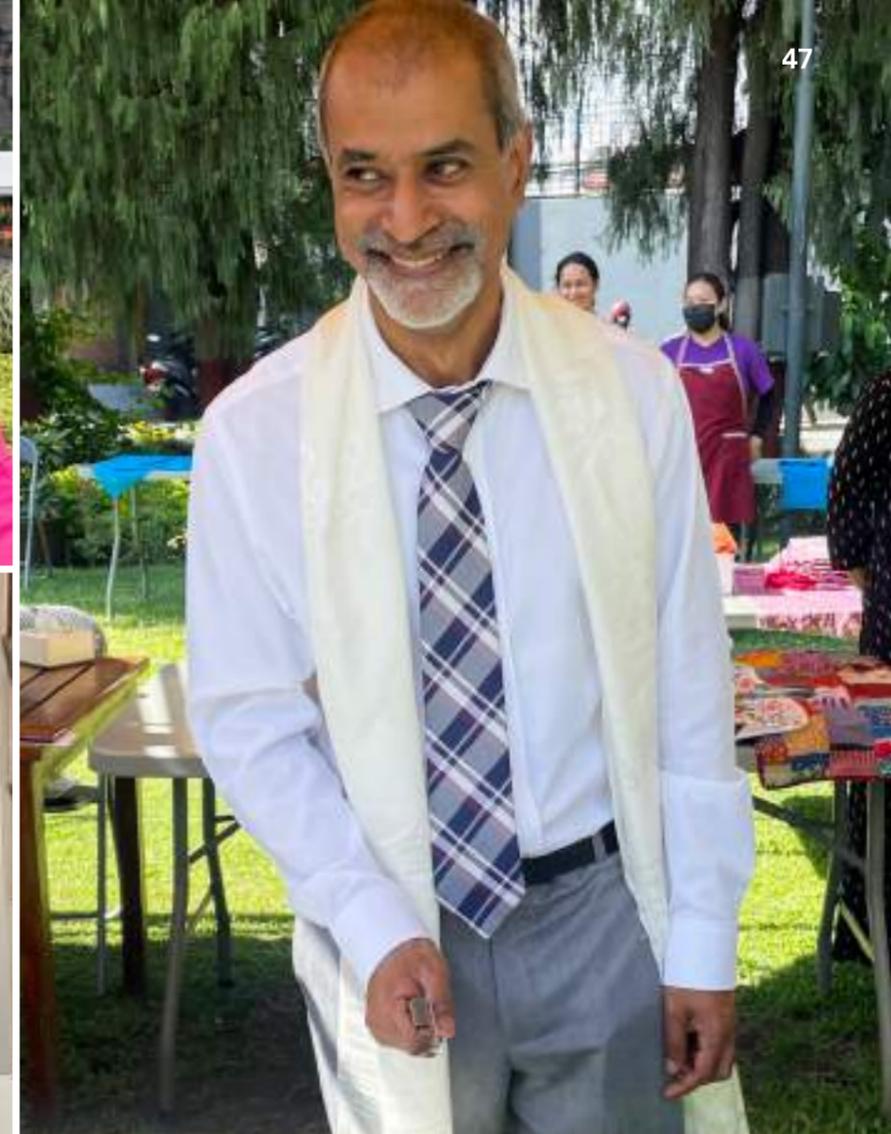


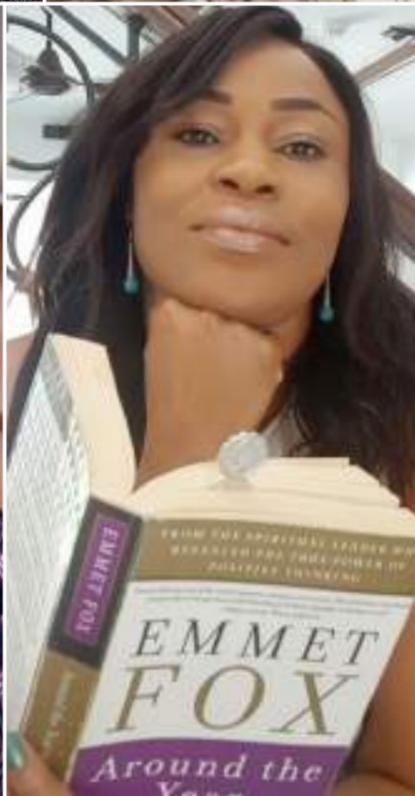
# 16

**And finally, it’s about having fun and making every day a fun day at ROSA**

We create a positive and happy workplace so colleagues can connect and engage emotionally with their work, workplace, and each other to build beautiful memories at ROSA.







# ROSA in the time of Covid-19

The 'we are all in this together' approach at ROSA blazed through during those challenging moments. We spontaneously connected with everyone, ensuring everyone else was doing alright.

We were resilient right through the COVID-19 pandemic. We adapted to the new normal with high spirits and positivity.



**UNICEF South Asia**  
 Regional Communication & Advocacy Network Meeting

unicef   
 for every child

unicef   
 for every child

11-13 April 2022  
 Katmandu, N

**Thank you for reading!**

If you're new, welcome to ROSA!  
*We are delighted to have you on board.*

For every child  
Whoever she is.  
Wherever he lives.  
Every child deserves a childhood.  
A future.  
A fair chance.  
That's why UNICEF is there.  
For each and every child.  
Working day in and day out.  
In more than 190 countries and territories.  
Reaching the hardest to reach.  
The furthest from help.  
The most excluded.  
It's why we stay to the end.  
And never give up.

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